

# BOSTON IRISH

Vol. 2, Issue 2

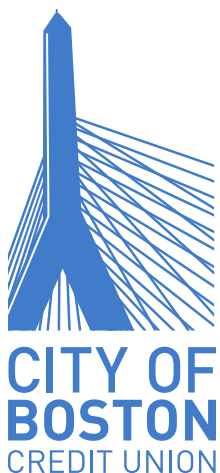
Summer 2021

BostonIrish.com

## The Welcome Flag Is Going Back Up!

The Causeway Coast, Co. Antrim, Ireland.

Art Ward photo, courtesy Tourism Ireland



### Now you can build your savings and have a chance to WIN!



With WINcentive® Savings\*, a prize-linked savings account offered by City of Boston Credit Union you can watch your savings grow and have the chance to win in monthly, quarterly and annual drawings. By saving with a WINcentive Savings account you earn entries into prize drawings based on how much you save! For complete details please visit [cityofbostoncu.com](http://cityofbostoncu.com)

617-635-4545  
[Cityofbostoncu.com](http://Cityofbostoncu.com)

\* Annual Percentage Yield (APY) of WINcentive Savings is .10% APY and is accurate as of 1/1/19. APY is subject to change without notice. Must be a member in good standing of City of Boston Credit Union to open WINcentive Savings. Only one WINcentive Savings account allowed per member. Business and trust accounts or other non-consumer accounts are not eligible. Unlimited deposits allowed, but per calendar year prize pool entries are earned by month-over-month balance increases with each \$25 deposit increase equal to one (1) entry with the following maximum entries per drawing period - maximum number of entries per month equals 4, maximum number of entries per quarter equals 12 and maximum number of entries per year equals 48. Account holder is only eligible to win once per drawing pool period. At least one account holder must be 18 years or older. Account must be open and active to win any prize during drawing period. Early withdrawal penalties apply; first withdrawal \$10 fee, second withdrawal \$25 fee, third withdrawal account closure is required with no penalty. If WINcentive savings account is closed member is ineligible to open another WINcentive savings account with City of Boston Credit Union for a period of 90 days, all earned drawings at the time of account closure are forfeited. Minimum deposit of \$5.00. After twelve (12) consecutive months of saving, WINcentive savings account holder may do any of the following penalty-free during the one year anniversary month (month 13) of account opening; keep balance in WSA account, (any roll-over balance that remains at the end of the anniversary month will be treated as a new deposit for eligibility into applicable prize pools for the subsequent first monthly, quarterly and annual savings period); Transfer funds into another savings product offered by City of Boston Credit Union; Withdraw all funds but keep \$5 on deposit in WSA to maintain account; Close account. Offer may be withdrawn at any time.

Federally Insured  
by NCUA



# Hallelujah! We survived

BY ED FORRY

BOSTON IRISH PUBLISHER

Saturday night, June 12, was a very unusual night for me, an evening of a new-found sense of freedom. It was only a few days after Gov. Charlie Baker had sounded the all-clear signal beginning June 15 for the state of emergency, ending most of the Covid restrictions that had kept us socially distant from friends and neighbors – indeed, all other people – for more than a year. We were now free at last to resume activities that we once took for granted.

With warm late spring breezes flowing off Boston's waterfront, we took the occasion to venture into the city. After parking at a curbside meter on Atlantic Ave as twilight was turning to dusk, we wandered among the fascinating sights and boisterous sounds along the Rose Fitzgerald Greenway.

Everywhere we went, from a visit around the Aquarium to a stroll to Boston's Long Wharf and through the public access area of the Marriott for a quick view of Columbus Park, there was a sense of life having returned to our town. We joined dozens waiting for the pedestrian light to allow a crossover to Quincy Market, where a queue for the second-floor dance party stretched for a half block. And then, back to the Greenway, where some children and a handful of teens in their street clothes cavorted in the delightful water spray feature that's become a such a welcoming attraction for tourists and locals alike.

All over Boston town, in this second weekend of June, there had been a return to life: Our city was teeming with humanity with scores of people back to living their lives together in our city. The way it used to be and, please God, will be again.

There was one concern: Very few wore masks. Many of the happy smiling faces we encountered were people in their 20s and 30s, out celebrating the return to the nightlife, exulting in seeing each other for the first time in many months.

(Continued on page 16)

## The News

# Ireland on track to welcome all, says Taoiseach, while noting that vaccinations, tests will come first

## July 19 is the date

BY BOSTON IRISH STAFF

DUBLIN – On Friday June 18, as the European Union was recommending lifting its ban on nonessential travel for visitors from the United States, Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin confirmed that foreign travel is “on target” to return on July 19, noting in a news conference that the country will sign onto the Europe-wide Digital Green Certificate, which will allow cross-border travel to return for those who are fully vaccinated or can provide a negative test result.

The Taoiseach added that Ireland is on track to allow foreign travel to return as planned, beginning July 19, telling reporters: “As we move on, more data and more research give us greater confidence in terms of the decision making around Covid and around reopening society.

“The 19th of July is some weeks away yet,” he said, “but we are certainly on target to be a part of the European framework in terms of the Covid Digital Certificate, which I think is an important milestone, and also gives a signal to the aviation industry that things are getting better for them as well.

“Because we do from an Irish perspective understand the centrality of aviation to the connectivity issue, Ireland is a small open economy and connectivity is very important in terms of the growth of that economy.

“There is no real evidence that there is a significant issue here,” Martin said, “but we are appealing to people that when you get the call to get the second vaccine to take it up, because it will give you protection, it will give your family protection, and it will give wider society protection. The uptake rate has been very positive and from our perspective we want to maintain that.”

While the European bloc means to take a coordinated approach to travel this summer, its recommendations are nonbinding, with each member state allowed to set their own requirements.

In anticipation of the reopening in July, Tourism Ireland has launched a \$4.2 million promotional campaign to build anticipation for holidays in Ireland this summer, with phase one involving a major digital video campaign. Called



Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin talking with reporters on Friday, June 18.

Photo courtesy Irish Examiner

“Let's Get Back to Ireland,” the online video will build anticipation for travel to the old sod. It will be promoted via online video platforms on social media, mobile devices in nine different markets, including the United States.

Said Niall Gibbons, chief executive of Tourism Ireland: “We are delighted to unveil our new campaign which will help build anticipation for trips to Ireland this summer, among holiday-makers in our key overseas markets. We know from our research that there is significant pent-up demand among overseas visitors to return to Ireland as soon as possible.

“However, we also know that there will be significant competition, as every destination across the globe has experienced the impact of Covid and will be seeking their share of the recovery. As international travel begins to restart, the priority for Tourism Ireland will be to keep the island of Ireland front and center in consumers' minds. Our kick-start campaign will need to punch through the noise and create an immediate desire to visit.” Before the pandemic, overseas tourism had recorded nine consecutive years of record growth, with 2019 surpassing all previous records when Ireland welcomed 11.3 million overseas visitors to its shores. Two million of those global visitors were from North America, delivering revenue of around \$2.3 billion

for the Irish economy that year.

With Ireland set to reopen its doors to international travelers on July 19, both the five-star Merrion Hotel in the heart of Dublin and the 800-year-old five-star Ashford Castle in County Mayo are ready to welcome American guests again.

The Merrion has introduced an opportunity to reconnect with nature with the Wicklow Wellness Experience. Guided by an ecotherapy expert, guests will spend the morning forest bathing in the Knocksink Nature Reserve, located just 40 minutes from Dublin. The Merrion has also recently introduced its very own non-alcoholic Irish spirit, called Artonical, a distilled non-alcoholic gin made with natural botanicals including juniper, angelica root, lemon, orange and grapefruit.

At Ashford Castle, Executive Chef Philippe Farineau has been busy foraging on the 350-acre estate, picking wood sorrel, violet flowers, wild garlic and Irish strawberries to use in signature dishes and cocktails. The summer months are the perfect time to take advantage of the countless activities on the grounds, including kayaking, biking, fishing, falconry, golfing, stand-up paddle boarding and zip-lining.

For more on travel in Ireland, see Judy Enright's report on Page 10.

## New deal for Irish passport applicants

Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defense Simon Coveney TD recently announced that Irish citizens in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States of America can now apply for their first Irish passport using Passport Online, reports Shane Caffrey, Ireland's Vice Consul/Boston, in a conversation with *Boston Irish*.

“The Irish Passport Service has rolled out an online passport application system for all applicants - including children



and first-time applicants applying from the United States,” Caffrey said, adding:

“This service is now live and is available at [dfa.ie/passports](http://dfa.ie/passports). The processing of a simple adult renewal Passport Online application is up to four times as fast as a paper application. Simple adult renewals continue to have a ten-day turnaround time. In addition, the cost of renewing a passport online is cheaper than alternative methods.”

### BOSTON IRISH

is published quarterly by:

Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.,  
150 Mt. Vernon St., Suite 120, Dorchester, MA 02125  
[newsroom@bostonirish.com](mailto:newsroom@bostonirish.com) [www.bostonirish.com](http://www.bostonirish.com)

Mary C. Forry, President (1983-2004)

Edward W. Forry, Publisher

Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., Managing Editor

William P. Forry, Editor

Peter F. Stevens, Contributing Editor

News Room: (617) 436-1222

Ads: (617) 436-1222

Fax: (617) 825-5516 [news@bostonirish.com](mailto:news@bostonirish.com)Every day at [BostonIrish.com](http://BostonIrish.com)

Date of Next Edition: Autumn 2021

Deadline for Next Issue: Friday, Sept. 10, 2021 at noon

The Boston Irish is not liable for errors appearing in advertisements beyond the cost of the space occupied by the error. The right is reserved by the publisher to edit, reject, or cut any copy without notice.

The Éire Society of Boston  
2021 Gold Medal Dinner & Award Ceremony  
Saturday, September 18, 2021 - 6pm  
Seaport Boston Hotel



Dr. Christine Kinealy  
Quinnipiac University



Dr. Maureen Murphy  
Hofstra University

*Honoring Esteemed Irish History and Famine Scholars*

For more information, tickets, or sponsorship: email William J. Smith at [WJSBoston@gmail.com](mailto:WJSBoston@gmail.com) or call Paul Doyle at (781) 331-5188

Tickets are \$150.00 per person  
[eiresociety.org](http://eiresociety.org)



An Roinn Gnóthaí  
Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of  
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Administrative Officer  
Consulate General of Ireland, Boston

*The Consulate General of Ireland promotes and protects Irish interests through its work with the Irish community in the New England region, supporting the strong partnership between the US and Ireland, and providing a range of consular services.*

The Consulate General of Ireland in Boston is seeking a dynamic, motivated and resourceful **Administrative Officer** to assist with the work of the Consulate in providing consular services, strengthening relationships with the Irish community and promoting Ireland's interests in the US. The successful applicant will work alongside other locally engaged staff of the Consulate, and will report directly to the diplomatic staff.

All applicants must have a permanent legal right to reside and work in the USA (US passport/ US birth certificate/ US naturalization/ valid Green Card). Candidates will be subject to US employment and taxation law.

Candidates should submit a résumé of not more than two pages, and a letter of application addressing your suitability for the position and interest in working with the Consulate General of Ireland in Boston of not more than one page, by email to [boston.recruitment@dfa.ie](mailto:boston.recruitment@dfa.ie) with the subject line 'Administrative Officer Application' followed by your name by 9am EST, 5 July 2021.

For further details on the role, please see [dfa.ie/boston](http://dfa.ie/boston)

**PASSPORT ONLINE**  
Now expanded to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.  
[www.dfa.ie/passports](http://www.dfa.ie/passports)

Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Returning to normality ... but deliberately

WICKLOW, Ireland – During recent weeks, a sense of relief and – dare I say it – joy has been palpable in this country as the tight restrictions imposed by the government after Christmas celebrations led to a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases are gradually loosened. Inter-county travel is back, we golfers (and tennis aficionados) had our lost paradise restored on the 26th of April and pubs began outdoor service again on the 5th of June.

The last engendered a particular exuberance summed up perfectly by *Irish Times* columnist Róisín Ingle in a piece written from Grogan’s Pub in Dublin city centre as she drank a pint of Guinness at 10:30 a.m. on what was “a special day” for her and many others, yours truly included.

The partial reopening of pubs was nearly overwhelmed in the run-up by scenes of young people in Dublin, Cork, Galway, and elsewhere drinking on the streets, in parks, and in other spaces. A small number caused mayhem and there was widespread outrage at public urination, littering, and worse instances of malfeasance.

One can condemn the excesses of a minority while simultaneously recognising that young men and women have already sacrificed an awful lot since March of 2020 and that politicians and health officials have been calling for an “outdoor summer.” There was no excuse for an abject failure to prepare for what was, in the main, an understandable release of tension and renewal of socialisation.

At a personal level, I was delighted to receive my first dose of the Pfizer vaccine on May 29 in Greystones, Co. Wicklow at a centre that was run with ruthless efficiency. The rollout here

was considerably slower than it was in the United States – almost all of my friends back in Boston have been fully vaccinated – but the pace has picked up. I should have my second jab before the 4th of July.

As such, I know there are many people in my old and new homes who have very itchy feet. The vast majority on this side of the Atlantic, though, seem to have long resigned themselves to not leaving the country until late 2021 or early 2022. And, indeed, the government advice is still to avoid all non-essential foreign travel.

That is likely to change in July, yet most holiday bookings have been made and the usual hotspots up and down the west coast and in the cities will be thronged right through August with domestic tourists. It will be wonderful to see my fellow Americans start reappearing on this island once it is safe and feasible to do so. We need you.

•••

There are signs that Irish politics is also emerging from the state of suspended animation that it has been in since the pandemic arrived. A by-election to fill a seat in Dáil Éireann (lower house of Parliament) is in the works following the resignation of Eoghan Murphy, a former housing minister, in the Dublin Bay South constituency. And it is the issue of housing that is to the fore in the return to Irish politics as usual.

There is a severe shortage of supply. The dearth is being felt especially acutely in the capital city and other urban areas. Young couples, even those with two good salaries, find it very difficult to get a mortgage for a residence within a reasonable commute of their jobs; and buying a home is even harder for a single person.



Inter-county travel is back, we golfers (and tennis aficionados) had our lost paradise restored on the 26th of April and pubs began outdoor service again on the 5th of June. That date called for a particular exuberance summed up perfectly by *Irish Times* columnist Róisín Ingle in a piece written from Grogan’s Pub in Dublin, above, as she drank a pint of Guinness at 10:30 a.m. on what was “a special day” for her and many others, yours truly included.

Increasingly, Irish people reject the idea that there is a market-based solution to the problem and feel that the two traditionally dominant centrist parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have neglected the next generation on this front. Accordingly, although this is one of the most affluent constituencies in the country and a Fine Gael stronghold, the insurgent Sinn Féin decided to parachute a high profile, extremely capable politician, Lynn Boylan, into Dublin Bay South to contest the race.

The choice was not made lightly. Sinn Féin apparently views the by-election – which will garner massive media attention because it is the only show in the land – as an unmissable opportunity to tout its more radical policies to ameliorate the housing crisis to a national audience. Even a second place finish in this relatively unfriendly territory would be cast as a victory insofar as it would suggest that some wealthy people are so aggrieved at the plight of their children and grandchildren that they could cast a ballot for the erstwhile

political wing of the Irish Republican Army.

The vote will be held on July 8 and it is Fine Gael’s to lose (it is worth noting that the Labour Party has a chance, too), but it is one that will be watched intently by Sinn Féin’s supporters in Irish America.

•••

On a final lighter – or heavier, depending on how you look at it – point, I’ve been reading about the June heat wave in Boston and have seen reports that it hasn’t been as hot since 1925. I keep hearing the same complaint from my brother and others: “It’s horrendous.” Our weather was very wet in May and mixed in the first days of June. Met Éireann says that better temperatures are on the way, however. Here’s hoping you all cool off and we warm up!

Larry Donnelly is a Boston-born-and-educated attorney, a Law Lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a regular media contributor on politics, current affairs, and law in Ireland and the US. Twitter: @LarryPDonnelly.

Online at BostonIrish.com

Summer 2021

Page 4 Boston Irish



**Michelle Wu**  
Boston City Councillor



**Andrea Campbell**  
Boston City Councillor



**Annissa Essaibi George**  
Boston City Councillor



**Jon Santiago**  
State Representative, 9th Suffolk District



**John Barros**  
Boston Chief of Economic Development



**Kim Janey**  
Acting Mayor of Boston

On the subject of politics, my friends and relations in the Boston area find it incomprehensible that after decades away my ear remains so close to the ground when it comes to all things political in Massachusetts. I’d guess that an embarrassing percentage of the out-of-state hits on local news websites and downloads of “The Scrum” podcast from WGBH or MassInc Polling Group’s “The Horse Race” emanate from my home in Wicklow or my office in Galway.

I am grateful for these brilliant resources and, while I am sure that the *Globe* will ramp up its coverage as the Sept. 14 primary approaches, it is regrettable that this unprecedented campaign hasn’t featured more prominently to date in the newspaper of record.

From this geographic and temporal remove, I can’t help but think that there are good-sized lanes to the Nov. 2 final for Acting Mayor Kim Janey and City Councillor Michelle Wu, and a slightly

larger lane for City Councillor Annissa Essaibi George. My suspicion about the latter’s lane is predicated on a belief that a substantial bloc of long-time city dwellers, who will be disproportionately represented in the primary electorate, will opt for the daughter of immigrants and Dorchester native.

It is much too soon to shut the door on former Boston School Committee member and Marty Walsh’s director of economic development John Barros (my

BC High classmate), City Councillor Andrea Campbell, or state Rep. Jon Santiago. There is a potential path for each. All are compelling candidates and it is crucial to remember that the early polls showing them lagging well behind the rest are just that – early, with plenty of undecided voters to play for.

At any rate, a fascinating political battle lies ahead and I will be monitoring it with keen interest thanks to modern technology. – LARRY DONNELLY

# Ireland and Boston: Fairness vs. Excellence

"In fairness" ... "In all fairness" ... "To be fair" ... "Let's be fair" ... "Be fair now, lads!" ... "Fair play" ... "Fair play to you" (or to her, to him, to them et al).

All are common phrases referring to the concept of fairness that is invoked in everyday conversation in Ireland. They are used so frequently in the banter that their meaning is hidden in plain sight, but the importance of fairness in Irish culture runs deep.

Last year's general election in Ireland was defined by how the competing parties would make Ireland a more fair society. Immediately after the election, the Covid crisis tsunami de-prioritized everything else. The inspiring message of solidarity – that everyone in Ireland was in the same Covid boat and that together the country would overcome the challenge – united the people. Ireland imposed and has endured the longest lockdown of any country in the world. The government has supported the shuttered businesses and the unemployed by massive subsidies. The performance of the government's response to the pandemic will take years to analyze but on the total Covid death count, Ireland compares well to Massachusetts, which has approximately the same population as the island of Ireland (North and South: 6.8 million). As of this writing, the total of Covid deaths on the island of Ireland are 10,600. In Massachusetts, deaths are put at 17,852, per the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent global health research center at the University of Washington.

As the pandemic tide recedes, the issues that were facing the country at the outset of 2020 and that defined the general election – affordable housing, equitable and equal access to education and health care, ending of the scourge of homelessness – will become visible again like large boulders resurfacing as the tide rolls out. The common granite of all of these boulder issues is fairness.

Perhaps it is the cultural memory of being the victims of the extreme and prolonged injustice of conquest, dispossession, and landlordism/tenant farming, a form of serfdom akin to slavery. The scars of that history, endured by the ancestors of most living Irish people, heighten the Irish sensitivity to unfairness whether it occurs at home or around the world.

In the images of Syrians driven from their homes by famine and war, the Irish see themselves "but for the grace of God." Similarly, the Irish instinctively identify with the Palestinians whose homes have been stolen and bulldozed by Israeli settlers and who were pulverized yet again this May, by Israeli airstrikes, with high tech weapon systems provided by American taxpayers. Ireland condemned Israeli aggression and became the only member of the United Nations to define Israeli policy explicitly as annexation.

## Fairness during the Pandemic

Unfairness, or the appearance of it, is deeply offensive to Irish society. When political leaders or other powerful people in Ireland appear to be profiting from their privileged positions, or to be somehow above the law, the backlash can be swift and ferocious. Several incidents during the pandemic illustrate that the positive message of solidarity and equality can morph into anger and retribution.

## Golfgate

"It was like this that all terrible things happen to a man, casually."

– Patrick Kavanagh

In August 2020 during a temporary partial easing of Covid restrictions on movement and in-person gatherings, Phil Hogan, then the EU Trade Commissioner, attended a golf dinner sponsored by the Oireachtas (Irish for Government) Golf Society.

The dinner was held in a hotel in two adjoining dining rooms. Had the partition between the rooms been fully closed, the gathering would have been within the Covid regulations of the time, but because the partition was not complete, the dinner exceeded

the recommended capacity. Subsequent reports also indicated a laxity of mask wearing. Even so, in terms of scandals, this seemed small potatoes to me, particularly in the Trump era, barely worthy of a news story at all. Not so in Ireland.

The backlash was immediate: wall-to-wall coverage in print, radio, and on TV. The new Minister of Agriculture, who was also in attendance, was forced to resign, and a Supreme Court justice's position was imperiled.

The most shocking outcome was for Phil Hogan. Each EU member country has one commissioner assigned to head various committees and Hogan's role as the Commissioner for Trade is considered one of the most prestigious in the EU. He was universally respected in Ireland and in the EU for his competence, experience, and integrity. Even more important was the fact that last summer when the EU was in the throes of painful and consequential Brexit negotiations with Boris Johnson's government, Hogan's steady hand and knowledge were considered irreplaceable to the EU and Ireland.

At the beginning of the scandal, his position seemed secure and the offense minor, but as public outrage mounted, Hogan made a series of public apologies, to no avail. With each passing day, his position became less and less tenable. When the prime minister himself recommended that Hogan "consider his position" (an Irish euphemism for resigning), he did so.

Hogan's transgressions seemed trivial and his resignation a disproportionate and counter-productive reaction. Public outrage was fueled by the frustration of everyday citizens who had been unable to meet their grandchildren, attend wakes, funerals, and weddings during the Covid crisis. The image of the rich and powerful attending what became known as 'Golfgate' seemed outrageously unfair and enraged the people.

## Jumping the Vaccine Queue

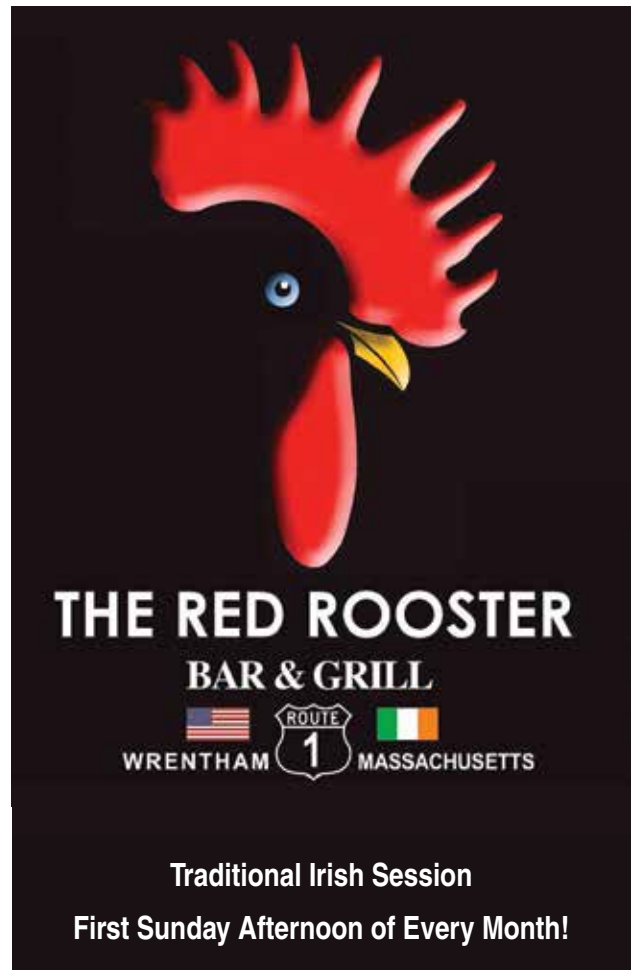
When the vaccination program finally began in earnest in Ireland (later and slower than in most countries), reports emerged of several instances of hospitals like the Coomb, Mater, and The Beacon where "extra" vaccines were left over at the end of a shift. In the early days of the vaccination program, the recommendation was that vaccines be administered right away as they could not be preserved for long periods of time. In each of these cases, a dozen or so vaccine doses were given to either family members of staff, or in the case of the Beacon, to teachers at a nearby school attended by The Beacon CEO's children.

These stories of jumping the queue based on

connections would simply not have made the news in Boston, but were national scandals here. Calls for resignations of the heads of the hospitals or other punishments were widespread. In response, the government shut down The Beacon Hospital's free vaccine center which had been part of the Health Service's vaccination rollout.

The retribution for perceived unfairness had adverse consequences for the country. Hogan was replaced on the commission by a very capable leader but at a less senior level and on a less powerful committee. Most close observers think that had Hogan still been in his position, he would not have allowed the EU's misstep on invoking article 16 of the NI protocol for several hours in late January, which raised concerns about the imposition of a land border on the island of Ireland. At a basic level, shutting down The Beacon

(Continued on page 7)



**THE RED ROOSTER**  
BAR & GRILL  
WRENTHAM MASSACHUSETTS  
Traditional Irish Session  
First Sunday Afternoon of Every Month!



**Gormley**  
Funeral Home  
2055 Centre Street  
West Roxbury, MA  
617-323-8600  
Burials in Massachusetts  
or Ireland  
www.GormleyFuneral.com

# What better place than Galway?

My wife Pauline and I quickly realized that Galway was the perfect place to be locked down during the Covid crisis. Of course, that may not be the view of those living on their own, in apartments, or in houses without a garden. We are in the privileged position of living in a rural area within the city boundary. For the period during which we were advised to remain at home, our large garden gave us space in which to relax and when we were confined to two kilometres from our home, we could return to our regular three-mile loop-walk, which starts at our front door and didn't breach the rules. Weather permitting, we tried to be on the road every weekday. The loop is never boring as we frequently stop for a chat with other walkers and enjoy views of Lough Corrib and regular changes to the livestock in the fields; cattle, sheep, donkeys, horses, pigs (if we make a slight detour), and even a few hens that had escaped from their coop.

•••

We were doubly lucky in that just five months before the first lockdown, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. There had, therefore, been nothing to limit the celebrations and we were joined by family from other parts of Ireland and from Scotland and England. To mark the occasion, we also had elaborate travel plans, including a lengthy cruise which ended in late November 2019. Early in the pandemic, the fear of spreading the virus prompted many countries to turn cruise liners away from their ports. While such stories were making the news here, we were thinking that had the virus surfaced three months earlier, we could have been stuck on board a ship on the other side of the world.

•••

Prior to the first lockdown we purchased paint for the exterior of our house, a job we planned to do ourselves. We didn't have a start date but with the onset of the lockdown and the good spell of weather that came with it, we managed to apply two coats without interruption. That passed the time and provided the opportunity to chat with younger neighbours, not affected by the stay-at-home advisory, who were out for their daily walk.

•••

The good weather and the lack of other distractions allowed us to carry out work on our garden - weeding and clearing - that probably would never have been done. We, of course, missed seeing our family, but again we were lucky. We happen to have a son staying with us and he provided company and did all the shopping. Our Edinburgh-based son was visiting when the lockdown started and stayed on for a few weeks. He was also able to come back again during the summer. Our eldest son, who is married with three children, lives nearby so we were never really deprived of grandchildren. We did miss seeing our four Dublin grandchildren, their parents, and our youngest son and his wife. Weekly



Liam and Pauline Ferrie and their walled garden, above.

All photos Liam Ferrie collection

family Zoom meetings went some way to filling this void, as did occasional videos of our 12-year-old grandsons playing fiddle and banjo, and playing very well, too.

•••

Empty supermarket shelves were widely reported in the early days, but these had little effect on us. We still have access to a cash-and-carry store and a few weeks earlier we had replenished our stock of rice, pasta, kitchen paper, and toilet rolls. As I have been baking my own brown bread for the past few years, I felt a bit aggrieved at reported shortages of wholemeal flour. I overcame that by finding a few neighbours who were interested in sharing and I ordered a 25kg bag online.

•••

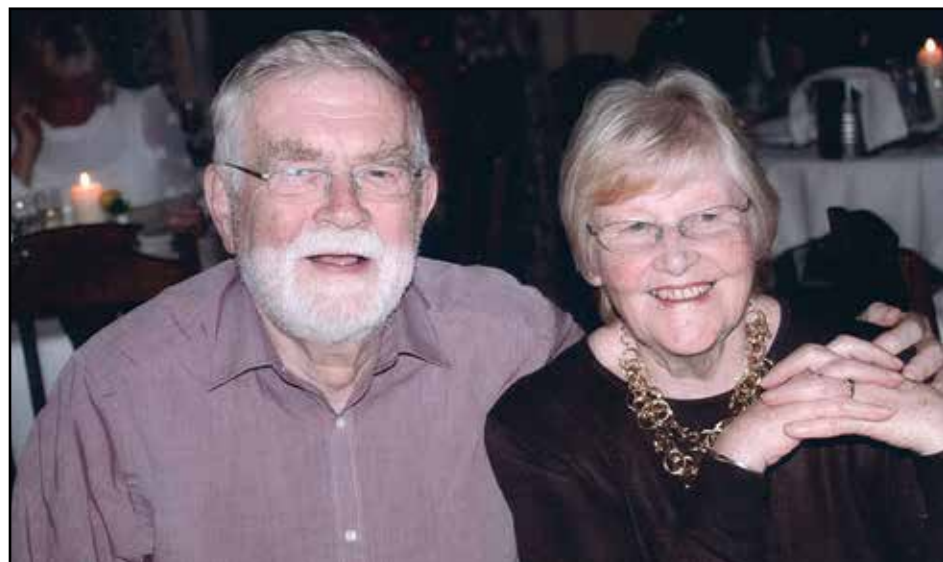
When travel restrictions eased somewhat during the summer, both Dublin families were able to visit us. That more than made up for the cancellation of a week-long holiday in Corsica in July. We had also planned to spend a few weeks on the Camino in April-May but that was easily forgotten as we hadn't made any bookings. We were again in luck when our 51st wedding anniversary came round. Travel was permitted within the county and we spent a most enjoyable weekend in Clifden.

•••

Christmas was, of course, different but could have been worse. The Dublin contingent made it to Galway before the latest lockdown was imposed but our usual 18-strong Stephen's Day lunch had to be abandoned.

•••

In early 2019 we both volunteered to help out with events during Galway's year as European Capital of Culture. As Wavemakers, we were involved



in one or two events before the pandemic forced the abandonment of most the Galway 2020 programme. In the autumn, the easing of lockdown measures did allow us to act as Gallery invigilators at the Galway City Museum for the "Monument" exhibition on one day per week for a number of weeks. Although we have in the past visited all three Aran Islands, we learned much from the exhibition.

•••

I must say that throughout the pandemic, I have never been at a loose end. In fact, I have always had more on my plate than I can deal with. I was educated in Scotland and so was not exposed to Irish at school, but learning to speak the language has long been an ambition. In early 2019, I finally decided to treat it more seriously. Almost three years later I still spend an hour or more each day on the Duolingo course. I should be fluent by now - Nilimse, ach táim ag feabhsú.

•••

With Pauline, I have walked a number of Caminos and kept a diary while doing so. Lockdown gave me time to marry

this diary with photographs taken at the time and to create online blogs of four of our Caminos. I also have differing levels of involvement in eight organisations, which means participating in Zoom meetings, Webinars and email correspondence.

•••

I've been working with computers for over 50 years, so it's not surprising that I still spend a great deal of time on my laptop or smart phone. I found time to digitize a small part of my collection of 35mm slides but have many more to do. I have dabbled in researching the family tree for decades, but it was only in recent weeks, with the help of Google, that I tracked down two second cousins in the US. I am in touch with one who lives Westwood, Massachusetts. She had no idea which part of Ireland her grandmother (my great aunt) came from, and I think I have overwhelmed her by providing her with the names of her grandmother's 13 siblings and many of their innumerable descendants.

•••

I had been hoping to hear from a woman in South Carolina who, I'm  
(Continued next page)

# A study in green in Galway

told, saved my life more than 70 years ago. I was 4 and she was 11 when she snatched me from an oncoming bus. I was seriously injured but made a full recovery and, although we haven't met since, her name is engraved on my mind. I recently tracked her down via the Internet but she hasn't responded to the letter I sent two months ago.

•••

Living in a close-knit community makes lockdown much more bearable. Our neighbours are great at looking out for each other, stopping for a chat, offering to do the shopping, working together to decorate the area at Christmas and, when the case arose, creating socially distanced guards of honour for funerals.

•••

Travel restrictions within Ireland are now lifted and our family members in Dublin have been to Galway to see us. We are leaving a visit to our Donegal holiday home until the end of the month, when our Edinburgh-based son will fly into Belfast. We have two family events to attend in England in August and between the two we hope to have that cancelled holiday in Corsica. We are also looking forward to getting back on the Camino in the autumn and to some winter sunshine in Fuerteventura later in the year.

*Liam Ferrie is the founder and former publisher of the Irish Emigrant, a newsletter about contemporary events in Ireland. He and his wife Pauline Ferrie were regular contributors to the Boston Irish Reporter for a quarter century. They make their home in Menlo, a rural village of Galway city on the east side of the River Corrib and south of Lough Corrib.*



View of Lough Corrib and Connemara mountains and a pasture scene from our daily walks.



## Ireland and Boston: Fairness vs. Excellence

(Continued from page 5)

Hospital's vaccination center reduced the country's capacity to administer vaccines. After the hospital scandals, there have been no further reports of extra vaccines being given to family and friends but common sense would suggest that hospitals have "binned" (thrown in the trash) subsequent extra doses rather than risk negative press. All examples of Ireland's cutting off its nose to spite its face.

### Fairness vs. Excellence

While Ireland is obsessed with fairness, Boston's culture is defined by the pursuit of excellence. Boston prides itself on being the "city on a hill" that is home to the finest schools, universities, medical schools, hospitals, libraries, museums, and the greatest sports teams. The list of Boston superlatives is long, as my colleagues from other parts of the country who have endured my effusive praise of Boston as the Athens of America - probably to their annoyance and, hopefully, to their amusement - could attest. Boston is all about being the best.

It obviously has amazing hospitals. When Adele needed her vocal cords fixed, when Ted Kennedy required

experimental medical care, or when the Shah of Iran sought cancer treatment, they came to Boston. Our schools, colleges, and universities attract some of the best students and professors in the world. But the pursuit and achievement of excellence leaves some behind. The healthcare and educational excellence in Massachusetts is too often available only to the wealthy and powerful.

Massachusetts's striving for excellence can also result in a type of fairness as a byproduct. The state executed a world-class vaccine rollout, achieving the highest percentage of people vaccinated in the shortest time frame. Most residents are pleased with the efficiency of the rollout and ignore its inequity. Put another way, most people would agree that getting everyone vaccinated quickly, even if unfairly, is better than getting everyone vaccinated slowly but fairly.

In Ireland the pursuit of fairness has delivered excellence as a byproduct. John Hume began his career as a teacher and entered the public realm by starting a credit union in Derry to give fair access to banking services to the Catholic community across the six counties. This led to a decades-long career pursuing

equality for his people and his winning of the Nobel Peace Prize, the ultimate symbol of excellence, and an award he did not seek.

Reading the foundational documents of Ireland and the US provides some clues as to attitudes toward fairness and equality. The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal" as a "self-evident truth" although, in fairness, (there it is again!) it did also enshrine slavery and ignore women. The Constitution mentions equality only once, in the 14th amendment in 1868, and then only in reference to equality before the law.

The Irish Proclamation of the Irish Republic of 1916 goes a little further:

"The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities of all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past."

In the 1937 deValera-revised Irish Constitution, "equality" is mentioned

only once and, like the US Constitution, in regard to equality before the law.

The cultural attitudes toward fairness are deeper than the founding documents of either country portray. Discussing fairness sounds to American ears like participation trophies or namby-pamby socialist talk to be written off as unrealistic, utopian gibberish. Americans are more likely to accept the reality that there are winners and losers in life. As JFK himself said in 1962:

"There is always inequity in life. Some men are killed in a war, and some men are wounded, and some men never leave the country, and some men are stationed in the Antarctic, and some are stationed in San Francisco. It's very hard, in military or in personal life, to assure complete equality. Life is unfair."

It is dangerous to attempt to speak for the dead, but I suspect that JFK might have wanted to add to his oft-quoted remark that while life is obviously unfair, we should endeavor to make life as fair as possible for all people.

This leaves us with the question: Is it possible to create a society that strives for both the fairness to which Ireland aspires and the excellence Boston demands?

# Return of the J-1 Irish Work & Travel Visa is in the works

## The goal: Applications in August; starts in '22

Many organizations look to Rian's year-long J-1 Irish Work and Travel (Graduate) visa program to help support their businesses, and as we move into the summer months, many US businesses have reported feeling the pinch in terms of not being able to call upon J-1 exchange visitors to complete internships.



This visa allows Irish University graduates to come to the US for up to 12 months to work in an

internship related to their area of study. However, the program is also suffering due to the travel restrictions and reduced embassy activity. Feedback from employers point to the J-1 visa as greatly supporting their businesses through, but not limited to, helping with short term projects, adding fresh ideas to a business, and, of course, adding a touch of diversity and international perspective in the workplace.

The arrival of Covid in 2020 led to a suspension of all the J-1 visa programs, and while that suspension has now expired, travel bans and the fact that the Embassies have not yet begun processing non-immigrant visas means we are not to date welcoming

any new J-1 exchange visitors to the US.

Rian Immigrant Center is planning on reopening applications for the J-1 visa program in August, with visa start dates hopefully from November onward. Demand is certainly there. We already have approximately 400 Irish University graduates on our visa waitlist, all looking forward to embarking on their own J-1 exchange programs and gaining great work experience that will help them when they return home to Ireland to start their careers.

If your business is interested in hiring a J-1 exchange visitor to start in early 2022, please do reach out to our director of Learning Exchange Programs, Jude Clarke (jclarke@riancenter.org) and he can connect you with those graduates on our waitlist who have the skills, knowledge, and ambition to support your business.

# Employment: Know your rights

**Q.** I recently became a naturalized US citizen. I've been looking for a new job, and it seems to me that some prospective employers have been hassling me unfairly about my immigration status. This may be because of my accent or the country I originally came from. Is there anything that I can do?

**A.** In the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice there is an Office of Special Counsel (OSC) for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices. This office investigates situations like yours, as well as those involving other people authorized under federal law to work in the US, such as legal permanent residents or employment visa holders. In appropriate cases, OSC will sue employers who discriminate against people based on their immigration status or national origin.

OSC has published the following guidance on this topic:

**Citizenship/immigration status** - Generally, an employer may not treat you differently because you are, or are not, a US citizen. [Note: One exception would be certain jobs with the government or a

government contractor requiring US citizenship for a security clearance.]

**National origin** - An employer may not treat you differently because of your place of birth, native language, accent or appearance.

**Document abuse** - An employer may not, on the basis of your citizenship status or national origin, demand more or different documents than necessary for completing the I-9 Form, reject reasonably genuine-looking documents, or treat you differently when using E-Verify.

**Retaliation** - An employer may not retaliate against anyone who files a complaint with OSC or cooperates with an OSC investigation, or who asserts his or her rights under the anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

A person who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination for any of these reasons can call OSC at 1-800-255-7688 or visit the agency's website at [usdoj.gov/crt/osc](http://usdoj.gov/crt/osc).

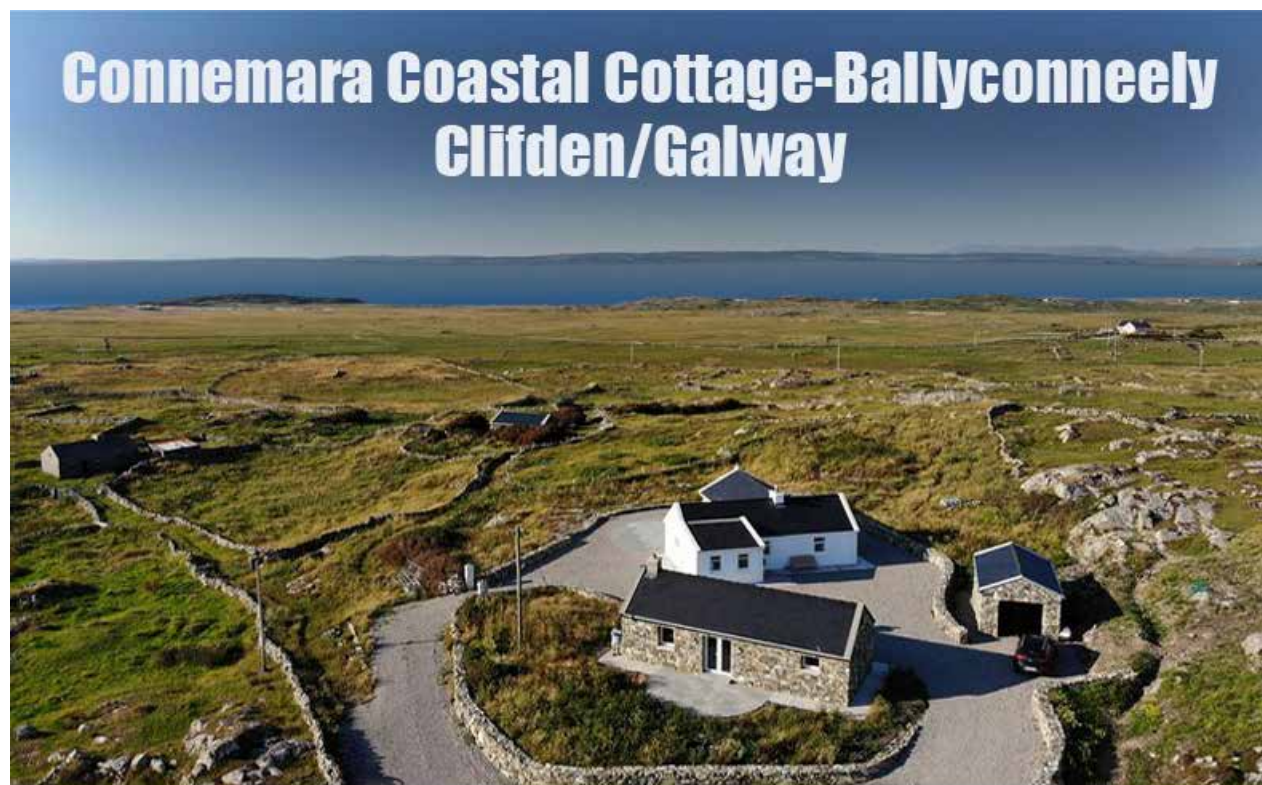
There are other avenues to relief from various types of employment discrimination, including filing a complaint with the federal Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission or the relevant state agency. Choosing the right course in a particular case generally will require the advice of a lawyer specializing in employment discriminations issues, particularly as they relate to immigration status or national origin. Rian can make a referral to such a lawyer in appropriate cases.

Rian attorneys are available to provide advice on any immigration matters. Our walk-in immigration clinics have been suspended due to COVID-19, but our attorneys are providing free immigration consultations over the phone and will be happy to speak with you. Please call 617-542-7654 to schedule a phone consultation.

**Disclaimer:** These articles are published to inform generally, not to advise in individual cases. Immigration law is always subject to change. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services and US Department of State frequently amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of Rian's immigration legal staff.

**Rian Immigrant Center**  
One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109  
Telephone (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655  
Email: [immigration@riancenter.com](mailto:immigration@riancenter.com) Website: [www.riancenter.org](http://www.riancenter.org)  
An organization accredited by the US Department of Justice



## Connemara Coastal Cottage-Ballyconneely Clifden/Galway

Spectacular 360 views of ocean, lake, 12 Bens and Castle  
2 Bedroom cottage and guest cottage sleeps 8. Perfect for golfers, families and couples  
Google video "Paddy Carroll's Cottage"  
Email: [john@carrolladvertising.com](mailto:john@carrolladvertising.com) 617-872-1777

**MILTON MONUMENT COMPANY INC.**

BRONZE MARKERS • CEMETERY LETTERING

*"Serving Greater Boston since 1971"*

1060 N. MAIN ST., RANDOLPH, MA 02368  
phone: **781-963-3660**  
fax: **781-986-8004**  
[www.miltonmonument.com](http://www.miltonmonument.com)  
email: [miltonmonument@gmail.com](mailto:miltonmonument@gmail.com)





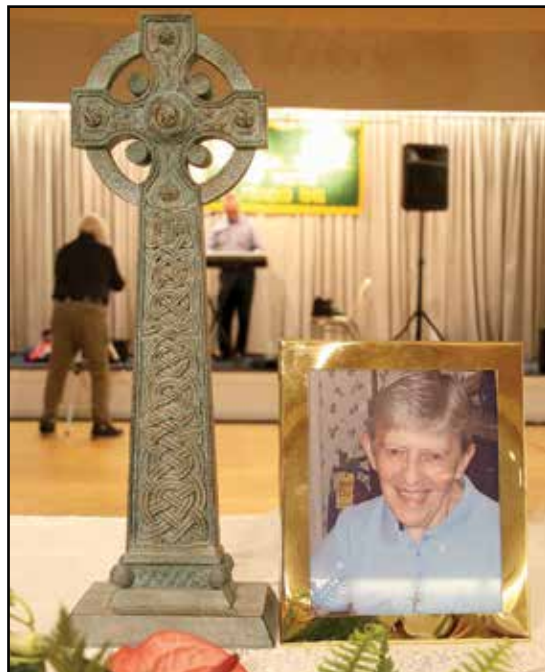
*A Local Support Network, serving  
Boston's Irish Community since 1987*

Subscribe to Monthly Newsletter- Call IPC at 617-265-5300



## Remembering Sr. Marguerite

Former IPC Director Sr. Marguerite Kelly passed away during the Pandemic. We were sad because we couldn't honor her legacy at that time. On June 10 we gathered at the Irish Social Club to celebrate her life with a community Mass and delicious meal from the Greenhill's Bakery. It was a fitting tribute. Sr. Marguerite will be forever remembered as a kind and gentle friend to all. May her lovely, Galway soul Rest in Peace.



## IPC Welcomes New Board Chair

The IPC is delighted to welcome our new Board Chair, Maryellen Brett. She is the Associate Dean of Corporate Education at Canton's Massasoit Comm College, and a higher education and workforce development. A Dorchester resident with family in Cedar Grove and Savin Hill, her grandparents hail from Co. Sligo. She joined the IPC board in March 2020, & also serves on the Ctr for Collaborative Leadership board at UMass Boston.



## Solace Sunrise Walk Appreciation

We'd like to say we strolled at dawn through a soft misty rain - but it poured buckets at Castle Island during our June 12 Solace Sunrise Walk. We gathered together to show support for those feeling alone while remembering those we have lost to suicide. The rain did not deter the many walkers who joined us! It was a tremendous success, showing strong, local support for those who are struggling with mental health. Our thanks Cape Cod crew, led by Sophie Kirby, who walked at the same time in solidarity.

Our Boston Walk raised funds for IPC's emotional support programs; elsewhere teams in NY, NJ, TX & CA also walked-- a mighty effort indeed!

Thank you to Solace House USA for coordinating this local walk to benefit the IPC. Thanks to all who volunteered, donated, and our community partners: Rian IC, Boston GAA and the ICC who walked with us! Go raibh mile maith agaibh! We are very grateful! Donations for our Emotional Support Programs can be sent to the Irish Pastoral Centre, 512 Gallivan Blvd, Dorchester MA 02124

## Immigration and Citizenship Support Services Program

The IPC's Immigration and Citizenship Program provides info & support to immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere including obtaining legal status, adjusting status, matters related to Green Card applications and renewals, visas, U.S. Citizenship eligibility, and applications for U.S. Citizenship, and also Irish passport info.

Staff is available during normal business hours to help with questions and direct people to appropriate resources. IPC also offers bi-monthly Legal Immigration Clinics offering free and confidential phone conversation about their particular immigration situation with volunteer attorneys. Advance appts required. To schedule a phone consultation with an attorney, contact IPC's Maryann Casavant, 617-265-5300 or [mcasavant@ipcbboston.org](mailto:mcasavant@ipcbboston.org).

### Upcoming Clinic dates:

Tues. July 6, Tues. July 20, Mon. Aug 2 & Tues. Aug 17.

Check the IPC's website or Facebook page for current schedule.

## Senior Cafés Return Along With New Programs

We are so excited that our Café Clubs are back! The IPC hosts weekly Cafés for our retired and Senior community with tremendous help from many volunteers! Our new temporary locations are:

**Mondays-** Cara Club at the Elks on Washington St., Brighton 1- 3 pm.

**Wednesdays-** Café Eireann at the IPC in Dorchester, 10 am- 12. noon.

**Thursdays-** Crossroads Café at the Elks on Morrill St. West Roxbury, 1 - 3 pm.

**NEW:** The IPC is planning a Tuesday Café in Weymouth in July. Call the IPC for details.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

### New Programs here at our Centre include:

**Fr. Dan's Men's Coffee Club-** Alternate Friday morning at 8 am. Next: July 16 (no meeting July 4 weekend).

**Cards Night-** Every Wednesday at 8pm, join us for "25"!

**Knitting Club** - Alternate Thursday mornings at 11am. Next: Thursday June 24.

**IPC Sobriety Support Group** - every Saturday evenings at 6 pm. All are welcome.

**First Friday Fish and Chips Supper Club** - 5 - 7 pm. Next: August 6 (No meetings in July).

*Please call 6172655300 for more information and visit us online at [ipcbboston.org](http://ipcbboston.org).*



### Introducing our 2021 Boston Marathon team:

The IPC is most grateful for this Annual Fundraiser. Our thanks to our terrific team: Lorna Riach, Christine O'Brien, Patricia Deasy, Maria McMahon, Robin Jennings and Sinead McGlynn. We look forward to supporting your journey!

# Optimism breaks out as Ireland begins to open up

BY JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

Ireland, like the rest of the world, has struggled with the far-reaching impact of the Covid-19 virus. But the availability of vaccines has stemmed the tide and travel, tourism, and optimism are returning to the Emerald Isle and other vacation destinations. The country is moving slowly and sensibly to make sure everyone is safe before restoring full services. The projected date for a total return to normalcy is July 19. Please keep a close watch on what the government has to say about tourists' responsibilities leading up to that date.

For all that, there's a palpable feeling of excitement in the tourist industry now that wasn't there six months ago. And that is great news for tour operators, travel agencies, Ireland's tourist board, and the numerous businesses in Ireland that count on visitors for their survival. It's also great news for many here who can't wait to get back to the old sod to see relatives and friends or experience Ireland in all its beauty for the first time!

## TRAVEL

Many travelers take great pride in booking their own trips online, but in these dodgy days of viruses, vaccines, mandatory isolation, airport and flight disruptions, travel authorities strongly recommend booking through agencies whose employees deal with these requirements every day and are experts on what you should do and how to do it.

Travel agents can quickly determine what best suits your interests and needs, keep you within your budget, and come up with a workable itinerary. Many who travel to Ireland are returning to their roots and that experience, the travel industry knows, can be very emotional, so it's important to have a good feeling about the entire trip.

Those who visit Ireland are certainly familiar with Crystal Travel, a local family business. Co-founded in Boston in 1985 by Jim Kelly and his wife, Teresa, the company has provided area groups and travelers with tour packages and tickets over those many years.

Sean Kelly, Crystal's operations director, spoke with us about the impact of Covid restrictions on Ireland. "Things are opening back up," he said, "and Ireland is getting back to some semblance of normalcy. People want to get going after staying isolated." He added that in 2019, US and Canadian visitors "eclipsed two million for the first time ever."

Since April of this year, foreigners looking to visit Ireland have had to provide proof that they either had Covid and recovered or were vaccinated. If they had no proof, they were required to self-isolate for up to 14 days. But, Kelly says, as of July 19, Ireland, in an effort to restart the economy, will participate in the European Union's acceptance of vaccination proof that exempts testing and isolation. As of this writing, the details were still being worked out.

## ATTRACTIONS

Across Ireland, various attractions are open but enforcing timed entry so that only a certain number of visitors are inside at one time. I well remember being in the Titanic exhibit in Belfast a few years ago when there were so many people in front of each display that it was nearly impossible to see anything, so I am all for keeping the numbers down at attractions when possible.

There are so many worthwhile attractions to be seen in each and every county so it's good to see the country rebounding.

## HOTELS

As I have written before, my favorite family hotel in Ireland is Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Recess, Connemara, Co. Galway, and returning there as I do whenever I'm in Ireland is like going home. It's a small, charming country house and every single employee is welcoming and warm and wonderful. Maire O'Connor, the owner, knows good staff and chooses them well. Staying there as a solo, female traveler is completely comfortable and I cannot say that about every hotel.



Cyclists enjoy the Great Western Greenway when it opened in 2011. *Judy Enright photos*



Cyclists gathered outside Nevin's Newfield Inn for the inaugural ride on the Great Western Greenway in 2011.

Lough Inagh, of course, adheres to the Covid restrictions and lists them on their website: Meals can be provided in the bar, dining room, or bedroom throughout the day; sanitizer points are available at the front door, reception, main hall, and back of house; staff are continuously trained and updated in best practice including hand washing, wiping surfaces, handling money, etc. All glasses, plates, cutlery, etc. go through a high temperature wash to be sterilized. Guests are asked to pay by card.

Be sure to check with any hotel you plan to visit before going as many have not opened for the season.

## KYLEMORE ABBEY

A very popular tourist attraction in Connemara is Kylemore Abbey. The Abbey, like most all attractions,

has established a series of visitor guidelines and will follow strict guidelines and opening protocols.

There will be hand sanitation points for guests and staff, increased cleaning schedules with frequent sanitizing of "touchpoints," equipping staff with face shields and individual hand sanitizers, introduction of one-way systems and floor marking to reinforce social distancing, increasing staff training, temporary closure of the To Go Café, Head Gardener's House, The Vinery and Wild Play area, removal of candle lighting facilities and brochures. Guests are still welcome to visit this beautiful property and walk the grounds.

Enjoy Ireland whenever and wherever you go, but be mindful that there are Covid restrictions there, too.

# Boosted by pandemic limits, the virtual/livestream format is strutting its staying power

## Virtual Celtic/Sean Smith

"Virtual Celtic" explores online concerts, festivals, workshops and other events that feature or include Celtic music. Please note that details may have changed, or the events may have been postponed or cancelled, since press time.

•••

A little preamble here: While virtual/livestream music events were around well before 2020, there's no denying they took off in a big way when the pandemic shut down venues and in-person concerts and festivals. Even as performers, presenters, and the public all yearned for the return of truly "live" music, there seemed also to be a widespread, tacit understanding that even when this grand reopening occurred, the virtual/livestream format would retain a significant presence, and that indeed seems to be the case.

There are a number of reasons for this (a subject for a whole separate article) but, in any case, examples abound: Witness Club Passim's July 4 **Summer BCMFest** (previewed elsewhere in the magazine), combining live, in-person performances with pre-recorded ones, all of which will be presented at the club and also available via livestream.

And then there is the July 17 concert by self-styled Celtic violinist **Máiréad Nesbitt**, organized by Rockport Music at the Shalin Liu Performance Center. In addition to two socially distanced live, in-person shows, at 5 and 8 p.m., Nesbitt's concert will be available to stream 48 hours after the Shalin Liu performance, and then available on-demand for seven days following.

Presumably, Nesbitt doesn't need much of an introduction here, and certainly not to audiences in Greater Boston, where she has often toured. A Tipperary native from a family with strong ties to Irish traditional music, she proved to be a major reason for the popularity of the original "Celtic Woman" production, drawing on her classical training and wide-ranging influences - from Itzhak Perlman and Sligo fiddle legend Michael Coleman to American singer-musician Alison Krauss and pop stars David Bowie and Sting - to present a kinetic complement to the show's vocal star power. She also appeared in other popular extravaganzas like "Lord of the Dance" and "Feet of Flame." In 2017, Nesbitt affirmed her trad roots with the release of "Devil's Bit Sessions," an album of traditional tunes recorded with 13 members of her family, including her parents and siblings.

Also at Shalin Liu, on July 22, will be Grammy-winning Boston-area native **Aoife O'Donovan**, whose musical career has encompassed Celtic, Americana, and her own brand of folk/acoustic-pop songwriting. O'Donovan has been a member of trailblazing bands like Crooked Still and I'm With Her (their single "Call My Name" won a Grammy for Best American Roots song)

while forging a highly successful solo career that includes three well-received albums, among them "Man in a Neon Coat," which was recorded at The Sinclair in Harvard Square, and assorted EPs. Her collaborations and special appearances have included "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn" and Childsplay as well The Goat Rodeo Sessions.

O'Donovan's performance will follow the same format as that of Nesbitt: live, in-person shows at 5 and 8 p.m., and then the concert will be available to stream 48 hours later, and on-demand for seven days following.

See [rockportmusic.org](http://rockportmusic.org) for details.

•Spend enough time around Irish musicians, sooner or later you hear the phrase "**Willie Week**" invoked, generally with affection and wonder, if not awe. It's the more-or-less officially sanctioned nickname for the **Willie Clancy Summer School**, which is named for and commemorates the venerable uilleann piper of Miltown Malbay in Clare. Keeping with the spirit and legacy of Clancy, the school - longest running of its kind, established shortly after his death in 1973 - stresses the value of the oral/aural tradition. Besides the high quality and variety of its classes, and the renown of its instructors, Willie Week is highly regarded for the concerts, recitals, lectures, and exhibitions that take place under its umbrella - oh, and people have been known to get a session or two in while they're there.

Understandably, things will be different for this year's Willie Week, which runs online July 4-11. But per usual, the faculty is as abundant in eminence as it is in numbers: **Jimmy O'Brien-Moran, Kevin Rowsome, Sheila Friel, and Peter Browne** are part of the large corps of uilleann pipers, and the long list of other musicians and singers includes **Zoë Conway, Mary Bergin, John and James Kelly, Siobhan Peoples, Fintan Vallely, Johnny Óg Connolly and Cormac de Barra** (Conway, incidentally, will have her own online event on July 9, in which she'll perform and talk about her career; tickets at [antain-tickets.antain.ie/shows/873618295](http://antain-tickets.antain.ie/shows/873618295).)

Among the special events is "All the Ways to Galway," an overview of music from East Galway, featuring **Frankie Gavin, Maeve Donnelly, Máirin Fahy, Sean Moloney, Charlie Harris, Greg Cotter, and Pádraic MacDonnadhá**; music and song from Gaelic Scotland, with **Ewen Henderson, Ingrid Henderson, Calum Alex MacMillan, and Allan MacDonald**, among others; recitals of uilleann piping and traditional singing; and "Who Feared Not the Might of the Foe: Songs and Poems of the Irish War of Independence 1919-21," presented by historians **Francy Devine and Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc** with various performers.

Go to [scoilsamhraidhwillieclancy.com](http://scoilsamhraidhwillieclancy.com) for further details.

•The annual Irish Musical Arts and



Boston-area native singer Aoife O'Donovan appears July 22 at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport -- a live, in-person performance that also will be available online.

Dance Week - better known as **MAD Week** - will include a New England flavor when it takes place in virtual format July 18-21. A program of the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann O'Neill-Malcom Branch in Washington, DC, MAD Week is geared to musicians and dancers of all ages and skill levels, offering them opportunities to "build strong technique, connect with tradition bearers, add to their toolbox, deepen their cultural understanding, and collaborate and socialize with other musicians and dancers," according to the organizers.

Boston-area duo **Matt and Shannon Heaton** and Rhode Island sean-nos dancer **Kevin Doyle** are among the faculty leading this year's classes, which include instruction in flute, whistle, accordion, concertina, fiddle, uilleann pipes, tenor banjo, bodhran and other instruments, as well as in singing and Irish dance. Others on the roster include **Brian Conway, Edel Fox, Rose Conway Flanagan, Joanie Madden, Billy McComiskey, Angelina Carberry, Josh Dukes, Dylan Foley, Eileen Gannon, and Louise Mulcahy**.

Classes run primarily during 9:30-11 a.m. and 1:30-3 p.m. The schedule also includes "electives sessions" from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 3:30-4:30 p.m.; during those time periods, there will be "hangouts" for teens and tweens. In the evening, MAD Week faculty will give performances from 7-8 p.m. and host music sessions (slow, intermediate or fast) from 8-10 p.m.

Find out more at [ccemadweek.com](http://ccemadweek.com).

•The **Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School** in Mayo is named for a beloved educator and administrator whose commitment to teaching traditional music to children achieved something of a classic underdog tale when his tiny village of Kilmovee won two youth ceili band competitions in the 1976 All-Ireland Fleadh and a third eight years later. The school is bringing back its weeklong "**Facebook Lives**" series of online tutorials June 28-July 2. Pupils get the opportunity to learn a tune, a song or a dance every day; each tutorial lasts for approximately 45 minutes.

Among the "Facebook Lives" presenters will be **Oisín Mac Diarmada** (fiddle), **Breda Shannon** (concertina), **Michael Hurley** (tin whistle), **Theresa O'Grady** (banjo), **Laura Ganley** (sean-nós dance), and **Caoimhe Kearins**



Sheila Friel will be among the faculty/performers at this year's "Willie Week" - AKA the Willie Clancy Summer School - from July 4-11. Sean Smith photo

(traditional singing).

It's all free. The school adds that viewers can make a donation to the school's chosen charity during the week. Get all the particulars at [www.smgsummerschool.com](http://www.smgsummerschool.com).

•**Boston College Irish Dance** was able to present its annual spring performance in the university's Robsham Theater Arts Center just before the 2020 COVID lock down, but was not as fortunate this year due to pandemic restrictions. So the student-organized troupe put together a virtual showcase, "**Illuminate**," which it released on its YouTube channel.

The nearly hourlong video features traditional, contemporary, and hybrid dance numbers choreographed by the nearly two-dozen BCID members, including their long-time staple "Shipping Up to Boston," to the Dropkick Murphys song. Most of the performances were recorded in an auditorium/multiple-use room setting with a single stationary camera, others on the Robsham stage (without an audience) using multiple cameras and lighting effects; another was filmed at this year's reduced-capacity BC Arts Festival.

The highlight is unquestionably  
(Continued on page 12)

# Summer BCMfest, a mix of performances sure to delight, is set for evening of July 4

BY SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Performances by some of Greater Boston's best Celtic musicians will provide a festive climax to the Independence Day holiday weekend, when the seventh annual Summer BCMfest (Boston Celtic Music Fest) takes place in Harvard Square's Club Passim on July 4 at 7 p.m.

Summer BCMfest will feature both in-person and pre-recorded performances. A limited number of tickets will be available for those wishing to attend (the pre-recorded performances will be screened at the club); the complete event also will be livestreamed at [passim.org/streams](http://passim.org/streams). The BCMfest website is at [passim.org/bcmfest](http://passim.org/bcmfest).

This year's line-up includes the duo of fiddler **Hanneke Cassel** and guitarist-vocalist **Keith Murphy**; uilleann piper **Joey Abarta** with fiddler **Nathan Gourley**; **Rakish** (Maura Shawn Scanlin and Conor Hearn); and the trio **Calico**.

Summer BCMfest – the warm-weather counterpart to the winter BCMfest, and a program of Cambridge non-profit Passim – celebrates the area's richness of music, song and dance from Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic traditions.

A look at the Summer BCMfest 2021 performers:

• **Hanneke Cassel and Keith Murphy** – An ongoing, long-time partnership between masterful musicians makes a welcome return to BCMfest. Cassel is known for her expressive, emotive, and energetic brand of American Scottish fiddle, featuring many of her own compositions as well as tunes from Scottish and Cape Breton traditions, and has been a highly influential as well as popular figure in the Celtic music world. She recently released her seventh solo album, "Over the Sea to Skye," in remembrance of her foundational musical

experiences during a 1993 trip to Scotland. Murphy has been a mainstay in the New England folk music scene for years, renowned for his percussive, infectious guitar rhythms and tender, expressive singing, with a repertoire that encompasses Irish, English, Canadian, Quebecois, and French traditions. He and his wife, fiddler Becky Tracy – two-thirds of the pioneering trio Nightingale – released "Golden" last year, their first full-fledged recording as a duo in nearly three decades of playing together.

• **Joey Abarta and Nathan Gourley** – Two continually active, high-profile members of Boston's Irish music scene, Abarta and Gourley have drawn praise for the energy and purposefulness they bring to traditional music, individually and in various collaborations.

Abarta's skill on the uilleann pipes, honed through his relationships with master pipers, has been recognized with the top prize at the 2014 An tOireachtas – the first such achievement for an American-born piper in more than four decades – and a traditional arts apprenticeship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Gourley, who has taught and performed at festivals in Ireland, New Zealand, and throughout the United States on fiddle and guitar, is part of a duo with Laura Feddersen and a member of the now world-famous "Virtual Behan Session" – a quartet of regular musicians at the Brendan Behan Pub that continued its weekly sessions online during the pandemic. A crowning achievement for Abarta and Gourley was their album "Copley Street," named for the street in Boston where they lived at the time they recorded it, but also in reference to the legendary record label that issued recordings of some of Boston's most prominent Irish musicians.

• **Rakish** – Maura Shawn Scanlin (fiddle, vocals) and Conor Hearn (guitar, vocals) combine a solid grounding in Irish and American folk traditions with a shared interest in and love for chamber music and jazz. Scanlin, a two-time US National Scottish Fiddle Champion and a winner of the Glenfiddich Fiddle Competition, wields the technical range of an accomplished classical violinist and the deep sensitivity of a traditional musician. Hearn, a native to the Irish



The duo Rakish (Maura Shawn Scanlin and Conor Hearn) are in the line-up for this year's Summer BCMfest, July 4 at Club Passim Harvard Square.

music communities of Washington, DC, and Baltimore, has played for a number of traditional music acts and bands. Rakish has appeared on Front Row Boston, The Burren Backroom series, and broadcasts of WGBH's "A Celtic Sojourn," as well as the 2020 "Christmas Celtic Sojourn." Rakish released an EP in late 2018 and is at work on a new recording.

• **Calico** – The trio of Casey Murray (cello), Jesse Ball (guitar, mandolin, accordion, feet) and Eric Boodman (fiddle, feet, vocals) explores the multi-faceted music traditions of New England in idiosyncratic fashion, from old-timey cello to Quebecois fiddle and foot percussion to rousing contra dance tunes. They describe themselves as "a wind-up toy gone crazy" – having so much fun playing together, it's hard for them to stop. Calico has played for contra dances and listening audiences alike throughout the region.

For more about BCMfest, see [passim.org/bcmfest](http://passim.org/bcmfest).

## Virtual Celtic / Sean Smith

(Continued from page 11)

BCID's salute to Harry Potter, a six-minute compilation of choreographed pieces inspired by the popular book/movie franchise. Performed in BC's Conte Forum, with appropriately spooky lighting, the miniproduction utilizes high-quality videography and editing. BCID entered the Harry Potter video in the Collegiate Irish Dance Association's virtual competition and won first place.

If you haven't followed college-age Irish dance ensembles, don't expect to see the tried-and-true traditionally styled routines or adherence to competition protocols. Dancers are more likely to use pre-recorded pop, rock, and hip-hop as their musical accompaniment, and interpolate movements and sequences reflective of modern dance alongside the traditional Irish elements.

Sure enough, "Illuminate" includes a slip jig piece danced to "Road to Errogie," by popular trad-influenced Anglo-Irish quartet Flook, which is followed by the sassy, vibrant "Kings and Queens," to the titular song by Ava Max. Another dance is matched to the high-octane electronica of NGHTMRE & Slander's "Gud Vibrations," and another to Natalie Cole's R&B hit "This Will Be" (a video-and-real-time collaboration between BCID and the student jazz ensemble BC bOp!).

If this sounds like blasphemy, consider that many of these students' association with Irish dance goes

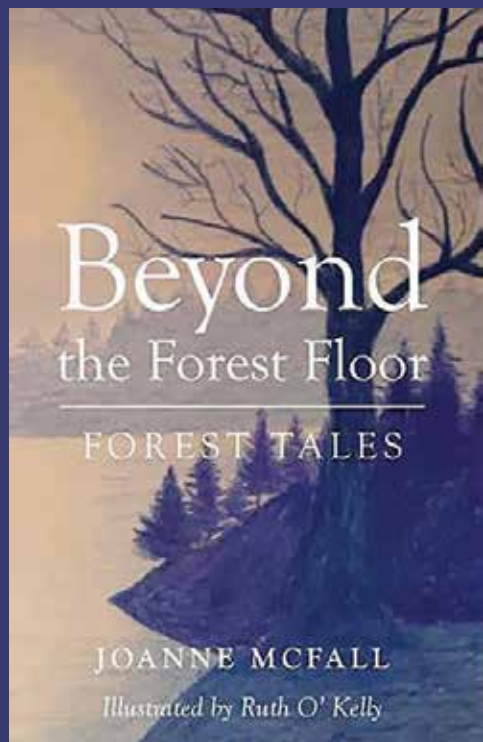
back to elementary school age, or earlier, and has included numerous competitions and fleadhanna; a college-age troupe offers the opportunity to innovate and go beyond their experience, try things out just for fun – and to have what may be one last go-round in any kind of organized Irish dance experience.

In that respect, "Illuminate" also is a kind of video scrapbook and memoir for BCID. Members recorded introductions for each piece, allowing them to share personal memories and thoughts about their BCID experiences, and a compilation of informal group video clips plays out at the very end. The team also maintains its tradition of saluting BCID graduating seniors, bringing out each of the five Class of 2021 members for a brief solo, to raucous applause and cheers.

"Throughout all of our lives, Irish dance has remained a constant, during the elementary school years, awkward middle school phase, and all throughout high school," reads a section of the "Illuminate" program (available on PDF through the BCID Facebook page, [facebook.com/bcirishtdanceclub](https://www.facebook.com/bcirishtdanceclub)). "Now, more than ever, Irish dance has given us the opportunity to connect with each other during the trials and tribulations of the Covid-19 pandemic."

You can view "Illuminate" at <https://youtu.be/o24L249qEL4>.

(Full disclosure: I have served as a BC Irish Dance volunteer advisor for several years, but am not involved in its day-to-day operations and organization.)



Beyond the Forest Floor and other Forest Tales is an enchanting traditionally illustrated collection of short stories evoking sights and sounds of the wild Irish landscape.

Available to order online from Barnes & Noble or Book Depository.

# The soft strains of ‘My Gentle Harp’ suffuse his remembrance for Grandmother Bridget

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

For years, Boston-area musician Julian Loida tried to find a way to properly commemorate the life of his beloved Irish grandmother Bridget Patricia Albright (née Foody), who died in 2016, and what she meant to him.

It wasn't just the fact of her passing that motivated Loida. A Belfast native who immigrated to the US in 1955, Bridget had died practically on the eve of a major multi-media performance event at New England Conservatory for which Loida – then a student at NEC – served as organizer and producer, and in which he was appearing. Reluctantly, though with the support of his parents, he had decided to stay in Boston to continue preparations for the show rather than go to St. Louis for her funeral.

Loida was saddened at having missed the funeral, but it was when he visited St. Louis a short while later that he experienced an even greater sense of loss.

“I came home and I saw my family, and heard them talk about the funeral,” he recalls, “and I had the feeling of having missed out on something huge.”

This revelation would help spark Loida's interest in affirming his family heritage by becoming involved in the Boston Irish/Celtic music scene, culminating in his production earlier this year of a short video project, “My Gentle Harp,” that serves as an elegy for his grandmother. The video features a narration by Loida and a montage of photos from Bridget's life interspersed with solo choreography by Kieran Jordan, the Boston-based Irish dance performer, teacher, and choreographer – all to the accompaniment of the old Irish song “My Gentle Harp,” which Loida plays on vibraphone.

“In Ireland, funerals are celebrations of life as heard in this major key,” he says in the narration, “soaring with childish wonder, while in the end falling to its final descent, like a casket lowered beneath the surface – with a pedal lifting like the last clump of dirt covering our buried loved ones.”

For Loida, these past five years have been a demonstration of how grief can be a catalyst for growth, change, and self-discovery, and – with the right alignment of friends, acquaintances, circumstances, and events – lead us to more fully appreciate the bonds we've shared with loved ones, even after they're gone.

“I grew up with Irish music, and I loved it, but I didn't know how to locate it in my life,” says Loida, who is outreach manager for Cambridge nonprofit Passim (which operates Club Passim in Harvard Square) and has been an assistant producer for the “Celtic Sojourn” Christmas and St. Patrick's Day productions. “What I've come to discover was that it was inside of me all along.”



Julian Loida: “I grew up with Irish music, and I loved it, but I didn't know how to locate it in my life. What I've come to discover was that it was inside of me all along.”

The namesake and unifying feature of Loida's video is the song credited to Thomas Moore (1779-1852) as part of his famous “Irish Melodies” collection. The first of its four stanzas begins:

*My gentle harp, once more I waken  
The sweetness of thy slumbering strain  
In tears our last farewell was taken  
And now in tears we meet again.*

As often happens in both folk and literary traditions, over time “My Gentle Harp” became associated with different melodies, including “Londonderry Air” – also the music for “Danny Boy.” In some instances, the song has been performed or recorded purely as an instrumental piece.

A percussionist whose musical experiences and collaborations involved classical and jazz as well as folk genres, Loida knew “My Gentle Harp” as a funeral ballad, and after hearing of Bridget's death he dedicated himself to learning it on the vibraphone as a means of honoring her memory as well as her Irish roots. But that wasn't enough; he sought to connect the song more directly to her in a meaningful way.

Even as he contemplated how to do that, Loida's career began to take shape. He and other NEC students formed a multi-genre band, Night Tree, some of whose members had backgrounds in Irish and other traditional music. Night Tree caught the attention of Seamus Egan, co-founder of the Irish American group Solas, and he wound up producing the band's two albums. Loida also deepened his producer/organizer credentials by working on the “Celtic Sojourn” stage shows and with Passim, for whom he began managing the Boston Celtic Music Fest in 2019, all of which brought him into more contact with Boston's Celtic music community.

Then, during the winter of 2020, Loida had the opportunity for a free recording session at Dimension Sound Studios in Boston, whose operator, Dan Cardinal, wanted to record him on the vibes, so Loida played “My Gentle Harp.” Now with a professional-quality recording of the song, Loida hatched the idea of using it for a dance video, and contacted Jordan, with whom he had become

acquainted through his growing ties with Boston-area Celtic performers.

“For me, there are lots of common threads between Irish and contemporary dance,” says Jordan. “The kind of Irish dance I focus on, *sean-nos*, is all about improvisation. And most of what I do in contemporary dance is improvised. It's a matter of listening, and then going into the empty space and trying something and building on it, with the finished choreography coming later.”

There followed a goodly amount of brainstorming between the two, as Loida strove to refine and explain his artistic vision while Jordan endeavored to realize it through the mode of dance. Jordan concluded that, instead of a straightforwardly expressive interpretation, the dance – and the video itself – should tell a story, and she suggested Loida write a narrative that could be used as a voice-over while also providing a guide for her creative efforts.

“That was a big moment of clarity, where I said to Julian, ‘You have to tell the story of Bridget in your own words, what she meant to you, what you felt about her,’” recalls Jordan. “The other ‘Aha’ moment was him understanding that I wasn't only interpreting his grandmother, but I was also interpreting him and his part in the story.”

While there was still more revising and editing to be done before it was ready, Loida felt the project was on the right track: Besides providing a biographical sketch of Bridget, the video – with his words and his rendition of “The Gentle Harp” – underscored the deep connection he felt to her.

“I grew up in a classic Irish Catholic community, and my grandmother was definitely part of that,” says Loida, who recites memories of being at her house for Christmas, with a holiday dinner and Mass as part of the visit, or of Bridget buying baked goods but insisting she had made them “even though we could see they were wrapped in plastic.” She also loyally attended Loida's soccer games, and it was at one of them when a teammate remarked to

him, “Oh, your grandma's Irish.”

“It never really occurred to me that she might have grown up in a different country. I had never heard her as having a ‘different’ accent.”

Such a direct connection to an Irish native was a point of pride in his community, and Loida – whose father's side of the family was of Austrian descent – found himself gravitating more to his Irish side. That meant, among other things, attending St. Patrick's Day festivities, where he would see Irish dance performances. But for all that, Loida did not develop an interest in Irish music: “It just didn't stick with me.”

If Bridget was disappointed that her grandson didn't take up Irish music, she never showed it. She cheered his enrollment in NEC, expressing confidence that he was sure to become famous, and as Loida says, “would even write her a symphony one day.”

A death in the family sometimes has unexpected after-effects that may exacerbate the tragedy or, as in Loida's case, make one believe that the universe can behave in strange but wonderful ways. At his older brother's wedding some months after Bridget's death, Loida met her twin brother Paddy, and learned there was a whole part of the family back in Ireland he hadn't yet met – some of whom played Irish traditional music. Loida established contact with these distant relatives and discovered one of them, Conal O'Grada, had often toured the US, including Boston.

And then, when Loida shared the “My Gentle Harp” video with O'Grada, he found out that O'Grada knew Kieran Jordan.

“I think the whole world just opened up to me then,” he laughs.

Somehow, improbably, a key linchpin in Loida's life turned out to be this resilient little woman from Belfast who had come to the US on a whiskey freighter and lived out the classic immigrant success story. It's a story Loida himself is part of, and is gratified to be able to tell in such a personal, heartfelt way.

“You think about all that's happened: what it took for my grandmother to go to America, start a family, have a grandson who decides he wants to be a musician, comes to Boston, gets to know the Irish music community, finds a collaborator in Kieran Jordan who it turns out knows someone I'm related to – and it's because I wanted to do something to show how important a person my grandmother was to me. It really feels that there was a plan for me to do what I've been doing.”

“So I feel now that there's so much more to do. I want to learn more, see where else I can go with Irish music. I wish she could see what I've done; I think she'd be proud.”

“My Gentle Harp” can be viewed on YouTube at [https://youtu.be/Y\\_XmChO-ZElo](https://youtu.be/Y_XmChO-ZElo). For more about Julian Loida, see [julianloida.com](http://julianloida.com).

# BOSTON IRISH Album Reviews

BY SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR



• **Brian Finnegan, "Hunger of the Skin"** • Look, it's pretty clear that many, if not most, music recordings dating from roughly late 2019 to now, and probably into next year, are going to have at least some pandemic-related association, explicit, overt, or implied. Those earliest in the timeline may exhibit a summer-before-the-war kind of character to them, to be plumbed for signs and portents (real or implied) of the upheaval to come. Most everything after that is about coping with or capturing the zeitgeist of the pandemic and its effects, micro and macro, personal and societal. Of course, these recordings can and should be judged on artistic merits, but other criteria will revolve around what aspect of the pandemic the artist chooses to explore, and how successful he, she, or they are at doing so.

Which brings us to "Hunger of the Skin," the brainchild of Armagh native Brian Finnegan, best known for his phenomenal flute and whistle playing as part of the trad-rooted but label-defying Irish-Anglo quartet Flook. As the first pandemic lockdown took hold, Finnegan was struck by what he calls the "recalibration of life" that followed, in particular the diminution of intimacy – not only the near-absence of physical closeness of love and friendship but also the emotional and intellectual stimulation in human contact: "shared mind, stories, music, and dreams, of real connection, not virtual, and real embodied joy." So, he set about composing an assortment of pieces to express what he and so many others were experiencing and enlisted more than two dozen musicians and vocalists around the world to help him make "Hunger of the Skin" a reality.

It's not just that the album is exquisitely arranged and full of outstanding musicianship – five of the tracks interpolate recitations of poems. Throughout there is an urgency to it, sometimes at the forefront, sometimes below the surface but always present: The "Hunger" in the title is quite appropriate. Finnegan is the driving force, of course, with his unparalleled mastery of both flute and whistle – yes, he plays fast, but the way he can articulate, shape, curl, and bend notes so clearly and flawlessly is a thing of beauty.

Finnegan's flute and whistle, and some of the guest musicians – including his fellow Flook members Sarah Allen (alto flute), Ed Boyd (guitar), and John Joe Kelly (bodhran) – constitute the Irish strand amidst the weaving together of different musical genres and nationalities: funk and rock in "Dust/An Damhsa Dubh"; jazz (with a

trombone solo by Paul Dunlea), and a bit of electronica on "Fathom"; a gorgeous interlude by Indian sitar player and vocalist Sheema Mukherjee on "Chase the Shouting Wind," set against Ian Stephenson's rumbling electric bass and crashing percussion by Liam Bradley, both of whom provide an invaluable rhythmic foundation all through the album; and several tracks are graced by string arrangements from Patsy Reid and Niamh Dunne.

But it's the ubiquitous Sean Og Graham – perhaps the Donal Lunny of his generation – who deserves special notice: He not only contributed guitars, keyboards, mandolin and a few other instruments on the tracks but he also was Finnegan's right-hand man in producing and engineering the album, which involved integrating multiple remote recordings from the other musicians.

A highlight of the album is "Flow, in the Year of Wu Wei," which starts with a quintessential Finnegan tour-de-force – accents and syncopations to the fore – over a smooth-as-silk guitar backing by Graham and a quiet-but-rocking drum part by Bradley, gradually evolves into an exotic whirligig with Anton Boiarskikh's trombone adding to the colorful palette, and finally eases into a meditative state. "Trigger's Lament/Jig for Amélie/Red Plant Blues," meanwhile, comes closest to the Flook template, not least because of Kelly's versatile bodhran beats.

As expressive and emotive as the music on "Hunger of the Skin" is, it's the voices and words that truly animate the album, and reinforce its imploration for us to remember our humanity, in death as well as life. Gearóid Mac Lochlainn offers his "Dust/An Damhsa," written in Gaelic, which includes the lines: "Worlds fall apart/You come out of the void/A wail from the heart of the universe/Welcome, to the black dance." Boris Grebenshikov intones, in Russian, his "Bird Crusade" during "Flow, In the Year of Wu Wei": "So word becomes flesh/flesh becomes dust/and lips are burnt/with the fear of dumbness/but in the eyrie of summer stars/here, at the end of the road/oh, my joy/who, if not you?" During "Crossing the Rubicon/Ollin" – with Reid's plaintive strings giving assent – Northern Irish singer/songwriter Colum Sands reads "The Coming of the Light" by Mark Strand: "Even this late the bones of the body shine/and tomorrow's dust flares into breath."

It is "Dare," a musing on vulnerability, strength, and compassion written and delivered by Finnegan's sister Morna that, in addition to being excerpted during "Fathom," serves as the album's coda on the final track:

"If all the years  
on all of earth  
in all of time  
reached out their hand,  
and circled back again,  
and lived?  
They have.

Put out your hand.  
Touch what you love."

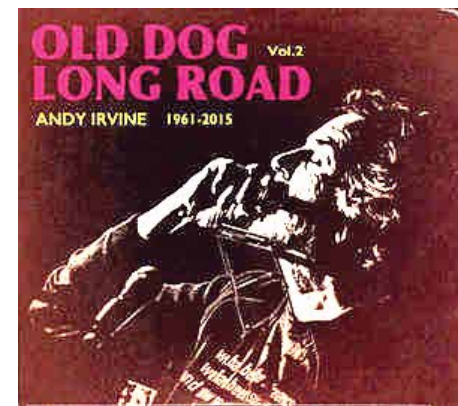
• **Andy Irvine, "Old Dog, Long Road, Vol. 2"** • When Irvine released "Old Dog, Long Road, Vol. 1" two years ago, he suggested the possibility of a follow-up: "If this album is well received," he wrote in the liner notes,

"there will be a clatter more!" Irvine fans have apparently done their part, because here's another double-CD helping of rare or previously unreleased recordings from 1961 to 2015 of Irvine, solo and in various collaborations, made in studios, concert halls, clubs, and pubs, and even at home. It's one more welcome opportunity to appreciate the talents, skills, inventiveness, and imagination of this most influential singer, songwriter, and musician, a cornerstone of the modern Irish music revival.

As with Volume 1, there's no chronological order to the tracks, and some of the material, particularly the live recordings, will be familiar to those who have listened to Irvine through the years. Or rather, somewhat familiar, as is the case with a 1970 home recording of "A Blacksmith Courted Me." The song has long been regarded as one of Irvine's signature creations, taken from the UK folk tradition and joined to a driving Eastern European rhythm and bouzouki accompaniment; it became an instant showstopper for Planxty, which in 1970 was still a couple of years away. But while Irvine was already using the trademark Balkanesque arrangement then, here he plays the song in a more "conventional" time signature to a mandolin backing. Easy to speculate, but perhaps Irvine, having come up with such an innovative approach to "Blacksmith," felt like connecting with the song on a more basic level and affirming its fundamental narrative and emotional character. Suffice it to say, he does.

Speaking of Planxty, there's a live track of "As I Roved Out" – one of two different songs by the same name they recorded on their second album, one led by Irvine, the other by Christy Moore – from 1975, near the end of the band's "first run" when the line-up consisted of Irvine, Liam O'Flynn, Johnny Moynihan, and Paul Brady. It's certainly a treasure, given that this incarnation of Planxty never did release an album, and more so because of Irvine's masterful delivery. Volume 2 also contains two fine representations of Mozaik, the unique Irish/American/Pan-European quintet he and former Planxty mate Donal Lunny co-founded: his "The Wind Blows Over the Danube," a reminiscence of his travels in Hungary, from the band's 2019 album; and "The Snows," an exquisite traditional Greek song Mozaik recorded with guest vocalist Chrysoula Kechagioglou but ultimately left off the album.

We also encounter more samples of Irvine's great interest in American folk music, and specifically Woody Guthrie, such as in the 1961 home recording of an 18-year-old Irvine singing Guthrie's "Hobo's Lullaby" – complete with a reasonable facsimile of an Oklahoma drawl (perhaps worth noting that at this time Irvine was still pursuing an acting career). "Facing the Chair" – which he first recorded with Patrick Street, and plays solo here – was inspired by Guthrie's song project on Sacco and Vanzetti; in addition to researching the case, Irvine even made a visit to the courthouse in Dedham where much of the infamous trial took place. And finally, there's a 1969 recording of Irvine's "You Fascists Bound to Lose," clearly in the spirit of Guthrie's "All You Fascists Bound to Lose," with



barbs aimed at, among others, German neo-Nazis, dictators António de Oliveira Salazar and Francisco Franco, and, closer to home, Rev. Ian Paisley.

Among Irvine's hallmarks as a songwriter are his musical biographies, intelligently and eloquently blending historical detail and context with first-person perspective to make the events compelling (think of a good TV mini-series, like "John Adams" or "Chernobyl," and you'll get the idea). Volume 2 provides examples such as the aforementioned "Facing the Chair," as well as "Rude Awakening" (recorded live at Northampton's Iron Horse Music Hall) – his portrayal of the ill-fated Shackleton Antarctic expedition – and arguably his best one, "Douglas Mawson," about a Shackleton survivor who later endures another Antarctic ordeal: Irvine starts with a pensive three-verse prelude that abruptly transitions to a gripping, up-tempo recounting of the unimaginable horrors which befell Mawson and his colleagues; the live solo version here gives the song, and Irvine's enthralling performance of it, a pulse-pounding empathetic quality that lingers (you'll never complain about clearing snow off the sidewalk again).

Most of all, both "Old Dog, Long Road" volumes attest to Irvine's well-deserved stature in Irish folk music. The Irish song tradition has long been the showcase for Irvine's artistry, and his respect toward those who have kept the tradition alive – he has always been quick to credit traditional singers like Brigid Tunney (from whose recording he learned "As I Roved Out"), Robert Cinnamond ("Jack Mulroe"), and Eddie Butcher ("Carrowclare," "Banks of Newfoundland") as sources. And Irvine does such justice to the songs, and the tradition, by putting the words and story at the center even while skillfully weaving countermelodies and harmonies on bouzouki or mandola – the effect is all the more striking on a couple of tracks with accompaniment by Lunny on bouzouki ("The Blind Harper") and guitarist Rens van der Zalm of Mozaik ("Sweet Bann Water").

Which is not to overlook Irvine's ability in the instrumental tradition: Listen to his 1983 duet on mandolin with fiddler Nollaig Casey on a set of hornpipes, a solo bouzouki rendition of the jigs "Contentment Is Wealth" and "Shores of Lough Gowna," and another solo, on mandola, of the unbelievably intricate "Drunken Sailor" hornpipe, which deserves a points-for-degree-of-difficulty rating.

This October, Irvine is scheduled to perform with Paul Brady to celebrate their landmark 1976 album, so it's reassuring to see that his long road still has some miles left on it. [andyirvine.com]



Ship in the Clouds (L-R Nathan Gourley, Laura Feddersen, Natasha Sheehy and Anna Colliton) performing at the 2019 Boston Celtic Music Fest.

Dylan Ladds photo

## Born and bred in pre-pandemic days, the debut album by Ship in the Clouds delivers the goods in melodic breezes

BY SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

The band's name comes from the title of a fiddle tune found in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and all but one of its members are natives of the American Midwest. Still, the musical pedigree of the Boston-based quartet Ship in the Clouds is unmistakably Irish.

Formed in 2018, Ship in the Clouds is fueled by the melodic chemistry between Indiana-born fiddler Laura Feddersen and accordionist Natasha Sheehy, who was born and raised in West Limerick, and the outstanding rhythmic habitat provided by guitarist Nathan Gourley (from Wisconsin by way of Minnesota) and Illinois native Anna Colliton on bodhrán.

These qualities, as well as a diverse, appealing selection of instrumentals – from the familiar to the obscure – are in great abundance on Ship in the Clouds' debut album, released around the turn of the year and available for download at [shipintheclouds.bandcamp.com](http://shipintheclouds.bandcamp.com).

There was a stroke of good luck in the album's creation. The band's Boston members, Gourley, Feddersen, and Sheehy, have full-time jobs and other commitments, while Colliton lives and works in New York City. As a result, they weren't able to take on a lot of gigs – although they did perform at both the winter and summer versions of BCMFest in 2019 – and had to make the most of their opportunities to play together. In the fall of 2019, they decided it was time to make a recording, so the four gathered in the Copley Street house in Roxbury where Gourley and Feddersen live – and in which Gourley has set up a recording studio.

As it turned out, that was the last time all four were in one place together, thanks to the pandemic.

But the Copley Street sessions yielded plenty of usable material, so in the months that followed, the band listened to and critiqued the recordings, and finally sent them off to be mixed and mastered at Dimension Sound Studios prior to releasing the album.

As far as Gourley and Feddersen are concerned, late is far better than never.

"I'm rather glad we're slow workers," says Gourley. "We had the album in the can for a long time, but I think that actually brought us closer to Anna and Natasha. It gave us something to work on together over quarantine, when all of us were trying to stay sane. When you get down to it, doing a project with people you like and respect is a joy."

In the Irish session scene, it's not just who you know, but under what circumstances you play music with them. While Feddersen and Gourley had been acquainted for some time with both Sheehy and Colliton, it was a matter of right time-right place to help spur the idea of forming a band.

"Nathan and I were at the Brendan Behan Pub session in Jamaica Plain one day in the summer of 2018, and Nathan wound up sitting next to Anna for the first time – and something just clicked," recalls Feddersen. "Then some time later, Natasha and the two of us played at this pub in Cambridge, and again, we just felt some good

energy between us. So, you put those two experiences together and you think, 'Hey, what would the four of us sound like?'"

Well, as the album demonstrates, pretty darn good. There are a number of candidates for a signature track, and certainly one is a trio of jigs, beginning with Charlie Lennon's "The Dawn Chorus": Feddersen and Sheehy breeze through the first tune in their characteristic unison – Feddersen plays the B part an octave lower the second time, making for a lovely contrast – and ease into "The One That Was Lost," a minor-key composition by Paddy O'Brien, before finishing up with the splendid old "Castlebar Races" (not a sporting event but a reference to the British army's retreat during the 1798 rebellion), Feddersen again playing the octave to add some depth.

There are instances where the musicians' respective instruments simply achieve a symbiosis – they just sound perfect together – and such is the case with Sheehy's four-voice Paolo Soprani and Feddersen's Roth violin.

Gourley's guitar enhances the Feddersen-Sheehy dynamic with a relaxed but substantive presence, and a very pleasing pallet of chord voicings, patterns, and harmonies, such as on the second time through "The Dawn Chorus" A part or during the final run of "Castlebar Races." Colliton, instead of settling into a repetitive, metronome-like pulse, seeks to align her drumming with each tune's individual character, adding variations along the way that complement Gourley's accompaniment.

Another track comprises a set of archetypal, lovable pub-session reels, "The Holly Bush" (by Cork accordionist Finbarr Dwyer)/New-Mown Meadows/Free and Easy." Sheehy and Gourley are featured on the first tune, which makes for a grand entrance on the part of Feddersen and Colliton for "Meadows," what with its bracing A part. And, happily, the four endorse the idea that you can't play "Free and Easy" too many times.

The band also gives a nod to Sliabh Luachra, with a set of slides (Peadar Ó Riada's "Slide Do Caoimhin" followed by "The Whistling Thief" and "Con Cassidy's") that is paradise in 12/8, and a trio of polkas concluding with "O'Callaghan's" and its ear-catching opening bars – the version here is taken from that by former Boston-area Eric Merrill fiddler, who gave it a Scandinavian feel on his album "The Western Star," which Feddersen and Sheehy enhance to great effect.

"The polkas and slides are very dear to me," says Sheehy. "I think they're a very solid representation of the music I like to play and listen to. Polkas are simple and lyrical and not in the slightest bit pretentious, however much you might try and dress them up. My favorite music is like that – simple, uncomplicated and accessible."

For a real change of pace, the quartet bundles together a pair of old-time waltzes based on popular traditional songs, "Brosna" and "Báidín Fheidhlimidh (Feilim's Little Boat)." The latter, well-known to most Irish schoolchildren and a retelling of a heroic but tragic Ulster legend, has an especially poignant air to it (and

Colliton also demonstrates the right way to accompany a waltz on bodhrán).

Another appealing aspect of the album is that its middle portion spotlights the band's melodic leads, as Feddersen and Sheehy each get a solo track (albeit with Gourley and Colliton along for the ride), allowing for a better appreciation of the elements Feddersen and Sheehy bring to the band's sound. Sheehy has a go at a pair of jigs, "Apples in Winter/Dancing Eyes," which not only exhibit her prowess on the melody end but also highlight her rhythmic abilities and use of bass notes, reflecting the influence of Danny O'Mahony, one of the more highly regarded accordionists in Ireland today.

Feddersen plays a pair of hop jigs, "The Surround" and "The Silver Slipper," the latter from legendary Donegal fiddler Johnny Doherty – and if you haven't experienced the wonderful idiosyncrasies of hop jigs, this is a treat – before transitioning nimbly into a serious-business reel, "Dogs Among the Bushes."

"I enjoyed all the tracks, but I love hop jigs in particular, and 'The Silver Slipper' is a little unusual in some really fun rhythmical ways," says Colliton.

The album's sleeve notes are appropriately enlightening, but not overtly academic. In fact, the entry for a trio of reels ending with "The Ivy Leaf" has a rather unusual, and delightfully irrelevant, reference to the tune – namely, that an ivy leaf has musical properties similar to a blade of grass, if properly utilized (there's a longer anecdote related to this, which involves an episode of the British TV talent show "Opportunity Knocks" – and yes, you can Google it).

Like most everyone else, musicians and non-musicians alike, the members of Ship in the Clouds have been dealing with the sense of dislocation wrought by the pandemic. Although Feddersen and Gourley have been able to spend time with Sheehy, the quartet as a whole has not been together for what seems an eternity. Immensely grateful to have finished the album, they also describe some complicated emotions about the experience in the context of COVID.

"It was like a letter from the past to hear that album when we released it – a little like a musical time capsule," says Sheehy. "Even though it had only been a few months prior, it felt like things had shifted so much since the recording. It was a little surreal to think we'd sat in such close proximity and breathed the same air during that weekend of recording and suddenly we couldn't see each other and didn't know when we would. I felt very lucky that we'd recorded when we did. I don't know that it ever would have happened if we'd not done it before the pandemic. Projects like that need momentum, and the pandemic stole a lot of momentum from life."

"Spending three days recording in a stuffy little room with three other people is kind of unthinkable now," says Colliton. "What a luxury that was, and we took it totally for granted!"

To follow or to contact Ship in the Clouds, see their Facebook page at [facebook.com/shipinthecloudsband](http://facebook.com/shipinthecloudsband).

# Hallelujah! We survived, and our city is alive

(Continued from page 2)

Although fully vaccinated, we chose to keep our masks with us, and when going indoors in the marketplace area, we put them back on.

For some, the return to crowded public areas may seem premature, even dangerous. For sure, there's still plenty of signs that Covid 19 continues to be a danger, but our state is among the nation's leaders in vaccinations, and now many are inoculated against the deadly consequences we have been so careful to avoid over this long siege.

Indeed, we can be considered survivors, and while we remain wary of those who refuse to get the vax, we're also determined to return to living our lives.

•••

There continue to be great signs of normal life returning all over town. Here are some of them:

**Irish Network Boston** - "It's been far too long since we have enjoyed the company of Irish Network Boston," the organizers say. "With the weather finally turning and restrictions lifted, what better way to celebrate than to

join us on June 24 at The Lawn on D, 420 D St, South Boston for our first SummerSocial! All members (and their friends) are very welcome for this free event. Enjoy some apps and the first drink is on us! Register online at [lnkd.in/ePbs8TB](https://lnkd.in/ePbs8TB)

**Irish Social Club** - President Richie Gormley says the ISC resumed Sunday socials on June 6, featuring Erin's Melody with Margaret Dalton. "We have really missed seeing Margaret and the boys and hearing their great music. We are also looking forward to seeing all our Sunday night regulars and watching our spectacular dancers," the IPC said on Facebook. "Coffee, tea, and light refreshments are served. Admission: \$10 Time: 7-10 p.m. Founded in 1945, the Irish Social Club has made its home in West Roxbury since 1980 and serves as a gathering place for the Irish community in Boston.

**JFK Library** - The Library and Museum will reopen to the public on weekends with reduced hours beginning Sat., July 3, and will be open on

## Irish Network/Boston gathers at Lawn on D



THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021 AT 6 PM EDT - 9 PM EDT

### 2021 Summer Social!

420 D St, Boston, MA 02210-1905, United States

Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Advanced timed ticket reservations will be required, and the last ticket will be available for a 12:45 p.m. entry each day.

"We are so pleased to welcome our visitors back," said JFK Library Director Alan Price. "We know this year has been incredibly hard on individuals and families across our city, state, and country. We hope by making admission free this summer that many can come and find some relief by visiting our museum on beautiful Columbia Point. We are grateful to all those who helped get us through the pandemic safely."

In appreciation of the significant sacrifices that were made by everyone over the past year to keep people safe, admission to the museum will be free in July and August. Tickets will be made available to reserve at the JFK Library's website beginning on June 27.

**Irish American Partnership** - The 30th Annual Newport Golf Tournament resumed this year on June 15. Said IAP leader Mary Sugrue: "The highlight was when gifted college athlete and aspiring young Irish golf professional Paul Murphy from Rosslare, Co. Wexford addressed our group. We are delighted to name him our first Partnership Golf Scholar, and wish him the very best of Irish luck as he embarks on his inspiring journey to Golf Pro."

The Partnership plans its next two big events in the new year 2022 - Jan. 6 in Boston and Jan. 12 in Washington D.C.

**Irish Pastoral Centre** - "We'd like to say we strolled at dawn through a soft misty rain - but it poured buckets at Castle Island this morning, June 5," new IPC Executive Director Mary Swanton said. "However, it did not deter the many, many walkers who joined us" for an early morning fundraising walk. The center is close to resuming full on-site schedules; see more information on Page 9.

**Irish Cultural Centre** - The ICC collaborated with the Irish Consulate in Boston for a mid-day Bloomsday celebration on June 20 in the ICC tent. The campus is open again to the public with Friday night sessions in the Pub and GAA games every weekend. Also, the ICC plans a number of Tent Concerts this summer, among them: Strawberry

Hill on July 17 and Devri on July 25. See more details on Page 17.

**Sligo Assn. of Boston** - The club sold-out its June 4 golf tournament at Brookmeadow CC in Canton and has resumed meetings at Waterford's Restaurant & Pub. The club may be reached by postal mail to County Sligo Association of Boston, 62 Cass Street, West Roxbury, 02132

**Rián Immigration Center** - "We have been providing services remotely and have been able to support more families and from a wider geographical area," Executive Director Ronnie Millar reports. "We intend to return to the Center in a phased approach and will continue to provide services both in-person and remotely. We continue to provide emergency cash assistance to immigrant families impacted by Covid and we helped form the Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative to raise funds for families.

"Our Solas awards are on the evening of Nov. 9 and it will be a virtual event with a number of satellite 'watch parties' hosted by a number of Rian sponsors and friends."

**Eire Society** - The society will honor two educators with its 2021 Gold Medal at a dinner and award ceremony on Sat., Sept 18, at the Seaport Hotel. Dr. Christine Kinealy of Quinnipiac Univ and Dr. Maureen Murphy of Hofstra Univ will be the honorees. The Society held its annual meeting on June 13 via Zoom, and re-elected Mimi McNealy Langenderfer as president. Two new board members elected that day were Kelly Matthews, professor of English and coordinator of Liberal Studies, Framingham State University, and P.T. Sullivan, second generation Irish American artist, photojournalist, and consultant focused on community arts and education-based projects.

**Boston Irish Honors** - The annual luncheon designed by *Boston Irish Magazine* to "tell the stories" of exemplary Irish families and persons with Boston and Irish heritage will resume on Oct. 29 after a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

An event committee is currently being formed to select the honorees. Serving as co-chairs are previous honorees Mary and Jim Judge.

June 26th and 27th, 2021  
Governor Hutchinson's Field

# MILTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

Come and enjoy food, drink, family games, and dancing.

<p><b>SATURDAY AT 5:00PM</b></p> <p>Cherry Orchard Big Party Orchestra</p>	<p><b>CELTIC SUNDAY AT 12:30PM</b></p> <p>Erin's Melody      Sean and Caroline Brennan The Dooley Brothers      The Skills The Old Brigade      The Fenian Sons Curragh's Fancy</p>
--	---

Presented by We Are Milton | [miltonmusicfest.org](http://miltonmusicfest.org)



# Irish Cultural Centre of New England's

31st Annual

**GOLF**

## TOURNAMENT

**Friday, July 23rd, 2021**  
Registration at 1pm

**Brookmeadow Country Club**  
100 Everendon Rd, Canton, MA 02021



ICC | 200 New Boston Drive, Canton, MA | 781-821-8291 | www.irishculture.org

### ICC Children's Summer Workshops

July 12 - 16  
Location- ICC Fields & Marquee Tent | Ages 6-14

**9AM -11AM: IRISH SPORTS MEDLEY**  
Introduction to: Rugby, Gaelic Football, Hurling, Soccer, Rounders, What time is it Mr. Wolf, Red Rover Red Rover....  
Fee: \$145 | ICC member \$120 - 5 days/ 2 hours per day

**11:30 - 2:30: IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE IN IRISH CULTURE**  
Introduction to: Irish songs, poetry, language and Celtic stories. Irish geography, flora & fauna will be explored through art. Exploration of Irish life in the 1800s with a trip to the ICC cottage. And more..  
Fee: \$225 | ICC member \$180 - 5 days / 3 hours per day

**3-4PM: INTRODUCTION TO SEAN NOS DANCING**  
A fun-filled introduction to traditional/sean-nós jigs & reels! Using dance & exercises, students will work on rhythm and technique, and develop an appreciation of Irish music with Jackie O'Reily.  
Fee: \$75 | ICC member \$60 - 5 days / 1 hour per day

Children who sign up for 2 or 3 workshops will be supervised by the program leader and can move from program to program. Discount available for multiple workshops.  
For more information email: [mdoohier@irishculture.org](mailto:mdoohier@irishculture.org)

ICC | 200 New Boston Drive, Canton, MA | 781-821-8291 | www.irishculture.org



## Irish Cultural Centre announces the return of workshops

The Irish Cultural Centre is excited to announce the return of its annual summer workshops, from July 12-16. While we had to miss last year, we are so happy to kick off our 4th year of the program by inviting children back on campus. All three workshops, meant for children aged 6-14, offer different learning experiences. This year, we will be offering:

**Irish Sports Medley with Padraic McDonough-** In this fun and active workshop, students will be introduced to Gaelic Football, Hurling, Rugby, Soccer, Rounders, and more. Padraic McDonough is a longtime member of the ICC and the Director of Wolfhounds Youth Rugby. He is also the rugby coach at Hanover High School.

**Immersive Experience in Irish Culture with Bríd O'Donnell-** In this interactive workshop, students will be introduced to a number of different aspects of Irish culture, including songs, poetry, language, art, and stories. This course is taught by Bríd O'Donnell, an Irish language teacher from County Mayo in Ireland. She graduated from the University of Limerick in 2016 where she received a BA in Irish Music and Dance. Bríd has traveled throughout Eu-



rope and the US performing traditional Irish music. She is also the member of a

band called Billow Wood. Introduction to Sean Nós Dance with

Jackie O'Riley- In this lively and upbeat workshop, students will learn traditional Irish jigs and reels working on their rhythm and technique. Jackie O'Riley is an Irish set dancer based out of Boston. She teaches courses in the US, Canada, and Ireland. She founded, directs, and teaches O'Riley Irish Dance, a unique, non-competitive dance program for kids and teens.

One of the highlights of the program is on the last day, when a "tea party" is held in the Irish Cottage. In 2019, we were lucky to be joined by Celtic violinist Mairead Nesbitt that night who played for the children as they showed off some of the new dances they had learned through the week, including the Siege of Ennis. For those interested in signing up for more than one workshop, discounts will be available, and children will be supervised by program leaders with the ability to move from program to program.

All workshops will take place at the ICC located at 200 New Boston Drive in Canton. With any questions or for more information please contact [mdoohier@irishculture.org](mailto:mdoohier@irishculture.org) or call (781) 821-8291.



**Irish Cultural Centre**  
200 New Boston Drive., Canton, MA  
781-821-8291 [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)

# ON THE PICKET LINE

## The Boston Police Strike of 1919

*The following is taken from the recently published "Untold Tales of the Boston Irish," by Peter F. Stevens, a longtime contributor to Boston Irish.*

At 5:45 p.m. on September 9, 1919, as the Tuesday evening shift of the Boston Police began, 1,117 of the city's 1,544 officers walked off the job. Nearly three-fourths of the department had gone on strike, most of them with Irish roots. To the horror of many Bostonians, the streets belonged to criminals for the moment.

That the Irishmen on the force had a long list of justifiable grievances and had sought to negotiate them meant little to Police Commissioner Edwin Upton Curtis. When the men in blue appealed for a modest increase in pay, they might as well have tried to squeeze blood from the proverbial rock.

Of equal concern to the financially strapped officers were their overly long shifts, which included grueling special details and a night in the station house every week, and the condition of those quarters. Rotting floorboards, cots infested with cockroaches and lice, crumbling plaster — these torments awaited the officers each day and night.

Founded by officers in 1906, the Boston Social Club had been the force's grievance outlet. As word spread that the police intended to form a union, Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge reaffirmed his publicly stated opposition to, and unwillingness to deal with, any such "Local." Four days before the police officially organized, on August 9, 1919, for a union under an AFL (American Federation of Labor) charter, Curtis had amended Rule 35 of the department's Rules and Regulations to ban any police organization from aligning itself with any outside group except veterans' organizations. Bostonians waited to see if the police would back down and obey Curtis's edict.

The officers stuck together. Curtis responded on August 26 and 29 by putting 19 officers on trial for disobeying his amendment. On September 8, 1919, the 19 men were convicted of union activities, and their suspensions were extended. Within a few hours of the verdict, the Boston Police voted 1,134 to 4 in favor of

a strike. They walked off the job late the following afternoon.

By 8:00 p.m., unruly crowds had gathered in downtown Boston. Suddenly, several miscreants broke into a tobacco store and ransacked it. As if on cue, mobs tore up and down Hanover and Washington Streets, looting, brawling, and terrorizing people. The upheaval soon spread to South Boston.

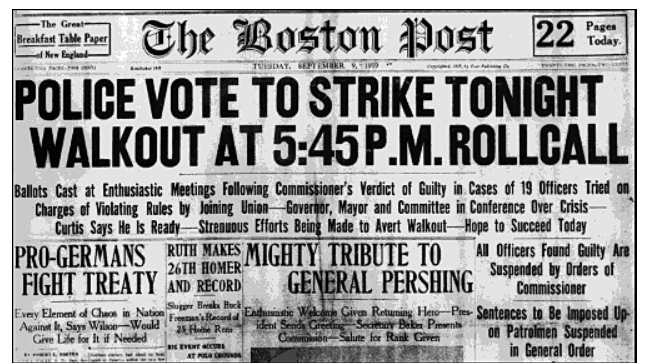
The undermanned police — 72 percent of the 1,544-man force refused to report for work — could not contain the violence, and by daybreak, shattered windows, looted stores, and scores of battered citizens led Governor Coolidge to call out the Massachusetts State Guard. Commissioner Curtis mobilized his "volunteer police force," condemned as scabs by the striking officers whose pleas for redress had been ignored and now condemned by the city and state governments. On Wednesday, the mobs returned, battling with the volunteers, but as the guard was deployed in force that evening, some semblance of order returned. Although violence continued for several more days, with gunfire breaking out in downtown Boston, by the weekend, the troops had taken back the streets.

To the collective fury of Bostonians, and especially Yankees, who loathed the Irish, eight people had been killed — five by guardsmen — and many others wounded; property damage was extensive.

Despite the anger of many toward the striking policemen, city and state officials feared that Boston's other unions would walk off their jobs in support of the officers, crippling transportation and other services. That scenario never developed. The police stood alone.

Some of the strikers began to waver, and feelers about a compromise went out to Curtis and Coolidge. AFL president Samuel Gompers sent Coolidge a telegram requesting that the police be re-instated and their concerns addressed later. "Silent Cal" responded with words that, in large part, would carry him to the White House: "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime."

With the Massachusetts State Guard still patrolling the streets, Curtis filled out the ranks of his new



Some of the strikers began to waver, and feelers about a compromise went out to Gov. Calvin Coolidge, at right, and he responded with words that, in large part, carried him to the White House: "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime."

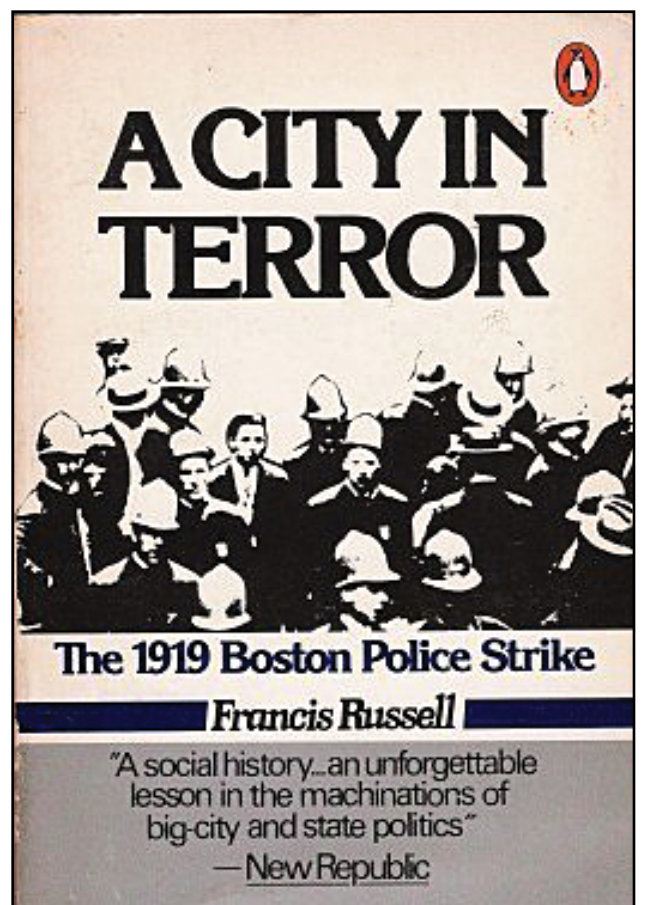


police force, adding many more "real Americans." The term "Good American Yankees do not strike" was the sentiment of letters imploring Curtis to shave Irishmen from the force. He was only too happy to swing with the anti-Irish tide.

None of the officers who walked from their stations on September 9, 1919, got their jobs back. Most were Irish. The bitterness of the fired policemen and their families endures among their descendants to the present day. While the issue of public safety was — and still is — debated, many in the community long viewed the Boston Police Strike as Yankees versus Irish.

On two facts, historians largely seem to agree: the heavily Irish police force did have legitimate grievances; however, the walkout did result in a crime spree on Boston's streets, posing a genuine threat to public safety.

Still, one can only speculate what might have happened if Curtis and company had responded earlier and more sympathetically to the men in blue's legitimate concerns. The strike remains a controversial chapter in the history of Boston, labor, and America.



# THE JOURNEY OF THE ‘IRISH GIRL’

## From Achill Island to Boston’s MFA

By PETER F. STEVENS  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

The girl’s auburn tresses, roseate wind-kissed complexion, and startlingly blue eyes remain frozen in time. From the moment over a century ago that the famed American artist Robert Henri (1865-1929) immortalized her on canvas on Achill Island, Mary O’Donnell’s pretty and innocent visage testifies to a remote Irish landscape that, art historian Margaret Stenz writes, for the painter “was a scene out of [J.M. Synge’s] ‘The Playboy of the Western World.’” This haunting image of a vanished Ireland resides today not in a Dublin museum, but in an erstwhile Proper Bostonian bastion – the Museum of Fine Arts.

Robert Henry Cozad was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1865, his father, John Jackson Cozad, a suave, itinerant professional gambler with a sizable ego and a knack for making enemies. The father shot and killed a man over a financial dispute in the Nebraska town of Cozad, which he had founded and named for himself. Although he was judged to have acted in self-defense, the prospect of the dead man’s family hunting down Cozad sent him, his wife, and his children fleeing the region and heading eastward. Later, Robert Cozad and several of his siblings adopted new surnames in hopes of distancing themselves from their father’s checkered reputation. Robert Henry Cozad changed his name to Robert Henri (pronounced Hen-rye).

A gifted artist from an early age, Henri honed his burgeoning talent first at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and then at the prestigious Academie Julien in Paris. By 1891, he had earned admittance to the vaunted Ecole de Beaux Arts, and he was splitting his time between schools he ran in Paris and Philadelphia, where he married Linda Craige, one of his students.

Henri experienced a breakout year in Paris in 1899, when five of his paintings were awarded space on the walls of two of the city’s foremost galleries. He returned to the United States with his reputation as one of the art world’s rising stars taking shape. In 1905, however, the death of his wife after a string of illnesses and a miscarriage devastated the painter.

Three years later, two profound events, one personal, the other professional, changed the course of Henri’s life. The 42-year-old artist fell in love with and married 22-year-old Irish-born Marjorie Organ, a student at his school in New York. That same year, 1908, he and seven other painters dubbed “The Eight” sent tremors through the art world with gritty works capturing images of America’s poor. This effort was in keeping



**Robert Henri (1865-1929) wrote of his portrait of Mary O’Donnell that she was “shy and speechless in the presence of strangers” but was a sight to be seen racing around the island on horseback and gathering sea grass.**



with his portraits of rural peasants and impoverished city dwellers in Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Ireland during summer sojourns to Europe.

In the summer of 1913, the couple was traveling in Ireland and took a detour to Achill Island. There they befriended local Pat Sheridan, a noted seascape painter and the owner of the Slievemore Hotel, in Dugort. Sheridan and the island’s rugged beauty persuaded the Henris to stay the summer. The artist, captivated by the island’s faces, began a love affair with Achill that would last for years. His enthusiasm was stoked in large part by a friendship with elderly islander Brian O’Malley, a man who knew every inch of the island.

Most summers they rented Corrymore House, a vast, brooding residence near Dooagh and Keel once owned by the infamous Captain Charles Boycott, an English land agent who was ostracized by the natives of the island for his work on behalf of Great Britain. His legacy is the name given to the practice of withholding purchase of certain goods for one cause or another. Henri and his wife bought the mansion in 1924 and returned there for four consecutive years.

He painted portraits of dozens of the island’s people and was especially determined to render with brush oil the faces of Achill’s children. In his book “The Art Spirit,” he declared: “If you paint children you must have no patronizing attitude toward them. Whoever approaches a child without humility, without wonderment, misses in his judgement of what is before him....Paint with respect for [the child]....[The child] is the great possibility, the independent individual.”

In the summer of 1913, Henri brought every aspect of that approach in his portrait of a young girl named Mary O’Donnell, the daughter of Corrymore’s caretakers. He paid her the current “model’s wage” of half a crown, a welcome stipend amid the hardscrabble existence of most of Achill’s families.

In a letter to John T. Spaulding, a renowned Boston art collector who lived in a Beacon Street manse, Henri wrote that Mary was “shy and speechless in the presence of strangers” but was a sight to be seen racing around the island on horseback and gathering sea grass. Enthralled, Spaulding bought the painting in 1921 and eventually donated it to the Museum of Fine Arts. The canvas was the only one of Henri’s works purchased by Spaulding.

While many of Boston’s old guard families were hardly as enamored of “The Irish Girl” as Spaulding, Mary O’Donnell, her shyness notwithstanding, commands attention still as the face of a bygone era of rural Achill Island. She deserves her place among the treasures of the Museum of Fine Arts.

## Irish Consulate launches virtual tour of Frederick Douglass visit to Dublin

By ED FORRY  
BOSTON IRISH PUBLISHER

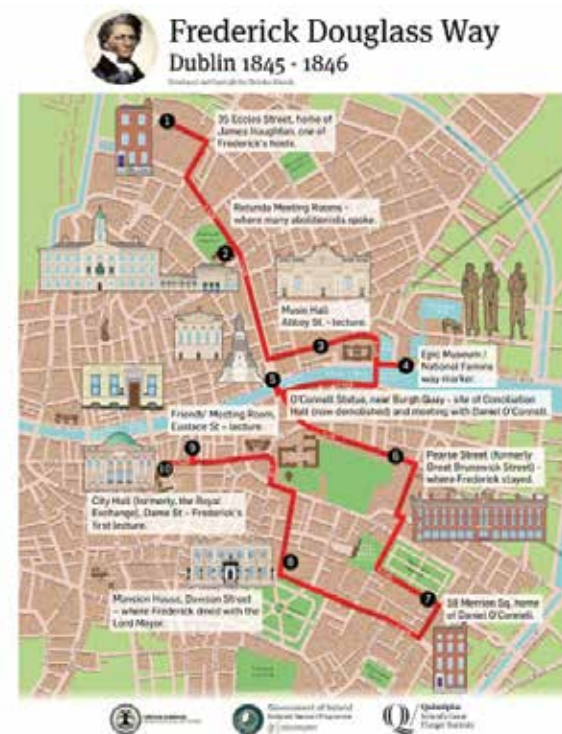
A historical map that traces Frederick Douglass’s walking route through Dublin, Ireland will have a be launched on Friday, May 14. The project, “Frederick Douglass Way, Ireland,” was funded by an Irish government grant. The Consulate General of Ireland in New York and the African American Irish Diaspora Network will host a virtual launch of the map at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 14. The launch will include a one-hour live webinar. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/uxu7cvvp>

In August 1845, a 27-year-old American man, designated by his government to be a ‘fugitive slave’, arrived in Dublin. He had intended to stay in the city for four days, but the warmth of the welcome he received meant that he stayed in Ireland for four months. He described his time in the country as ‘transformative’ and the ‘happiest time of his life’. Professor Christine Kinealy, author of ‘Black Abolitionists in Ireland’, has created the Way, which will allow Dublin natives and

visitors alike to follow in the footsteps of Frederick Douglass and retrace his visit to Dublin in 1845.

Kinealy said the map highlights 10 locations in Dublin visited by Douglass, including the home of Daniel O’Connell, an Irish nationalist and transatlantic abolitionist and a hero to Douglass and many other enslaved peoples; the Mansion House, home to the Lord Mayor of Dublin where Douglass was invited to dine; and the EPIC Emigration museum (then a warehouse for ship cargo), which was possibly the first place Douglass saw when he arrived in Dublin. The area is also home to Rowan Gillespie’s stunning famine statues that acknowledge the suffering and start of the Great Hunger in Ireland in 1845.

“While in Ireland, Douglass experienced a sense of freedom and equality that he had never felt before,” Kinealy said. “But he was also shocked by the poverty that he witnessed. His time in Ireland was an important step in Douglass’ road to becoming an international champion of human rights, whose words and wisdom remain relevant today.”



# Bay State Rep. Cronin of Easton seen likely Biden pick as Irish envoy

## BOSTON IRISH STAFF

President Biden has already nominated several ambassadors, including appointments to Israel, Mexico, and NATO, and it's expected he will continue to fill out his diplomatic roster in coming days and weeks. One upcoming selection that will resonate to special effect in Greater Boston, with its deep Hibernian roots, is that of ambassador to Ireland.

As the announcement from the White House nears, the main attention has focused on Claire Cronin, an Easton Democrat and the sitting majority leader in the Massachusetts House of Representatives who has been named Biden's choice by one Irish news outlet.

Cronin was a prominent figure in the state and across the country during Biden's successful campaign, supporting him against local favorite Elizabeth Warren and announcing the

final tally for Biden at the Democratic National Convention last summer.

An attorney specializing in mediation who grew up in Brockton, Cronin has politics in her bloodline. She told Commonwealth Magazine earlier this year that she is the third generation of her family to serve in the Massachusetts House citing a great-uncle who served in the 1920s and an uncle who was in the House in the late 1940s and later served as mayor of Brockton.

The mother of two, she is married to Ray Cronin, the founder of a consulting business that works on the operations of private clubs.

Cronin was chair of the House Judiciary Committee before she moved into the majority leader's office earlier this year. From that office, she had substantial influence over the passage of major criminal justice, abortion access, and policing accountability laws. In her

lawyer's role, she was involved in the mediation aspect of the Catholic clergy sex abuse settlement.

She was first elected in 2012, is a graduate of Stonehill College and Suffolk University Law School. She is a member of the Massachusetts bar and admitted to practice in U.S. District Court and before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Other names bandied about since Biden's election on the Boston Irish website and elsewhere include: former US Sen. Paul Kirk, former Boston Police Commissioner Kathy O'Toole, former Massachusetts lieutenant governor and current public affairs activist Tommy O'Neill, Democratic strategist and philanthropist John Cullinane, New England Council CEO Jim Brett, Harvard Kennedy School's Richard Cavanagh, and Bank of America vice chair Anne Finucane.

Going back 45 years to the Carter



The Biden-Cronin team on the campaign trail last year. *Facebook photo*

Administration, six individuals with Bay State credentials, personal or otherwise, have represented the interests of the United States in Dublin, among them Jean Kennedy Smith, the GOP's Margaret Heckler, EMC founder Richard Egan and the journalist William V. Shannon. We'll soon know if Claire Cronin will be added to the listing.

Irish Central, the outlet that first named Cronin as the president's pick, had this to say about her candidacy: "Having a political fighter who is also a human rights lawyer and determined advocate for the underdog sure feels a better choice to me than another billionaire boyo like departing Donald Trump ambassador Edward Crawford, who left very little stamp on the place."

# Protect Yourself. Protect Your Family.

## IT'S OPEN TO EVERYONE

- Anyone who lives, works, or studies in MA can get the vaccine.
- Getting vaccinated won't affect your immigration status.
- Security may be present; but is only there to keep you healthy and safe.

## IT'S SAFE

- Getting vaccinated is a powerful tool against COVID-19.
- The vaccine is safe and effective.
- The more people who are vaccinated, the safer we all are.

## IT'S FREE

- The vaccine is free.
- No health insurance needed.
- No ID needed.

**No ID or Insurance Needed.**

**Anyone 12+ can get their COVID Vaccine**



Trust the **FACTS**  
Get the **VAX**

SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT AT  
[mass.gov/CovidVaccine](https://mass.gov/CovidVaccine)



Commonwealth of Massachusetts



# IRELAND IS WAITING

Powerscourt House and Gardens, County Wicklow

Waiting for the right time. For the time when we can once again enjoy things together, from feasts with family and friends to soul-stirring traditional music in the legendary Irish pub.

And for a time when we can share all that we love so much about Ireland. The castles and grand houses filled with intriguing stories. The rolling green hills where High Kings once reigned supreme. The cities where echoes of the Vikings mix with culture, creativity and charm. This is a place where smiles are broad and the 100,000 welcomes are legendary.

They say good things come to those who wait.

*Find your way home at*

 **Ireland.com**

MARTIN J.

A Boston Irish Magazine Special Report

# WALSH

## SECRETARY OF LABOR



Mayor Walsh celebrated his election victory on Nov. 3, 2013 at Boston's Park Plaza Hotel.

Chris Lovett photo

## The Man and the Politician We Know

BY BILL FORRY  
EDITOR

What should Americans expect from their new Secretary of Labor? Funny you should ask.

The *Dorchester Reporter* has been writing about, observing, and scrutinizing Mayor Martin Walsh— now US Secretary of Labor Martin Walsh— since 1996, when the 29-year-old union laborer, Little League coach, and civic activist launched his first campaign for state representative.

No other news organization has devoted more hours, ink, and keystrokes to chronicling his career in public life. Many of the highlights from those years of coverage are included in this special supplement, which is presented in the main as a

look-back, not as a look-ahead. But this deep dive into our archives reveals much about the man and the politician who will now — upon swearing an oath in Washington, D.C.— be 11th in the line of succession to the US presidency.

In 2014, when he was inaugurated for his first term as Boston's mayor, we shared some of our thoughts about the "kid" from Dorchester who we'd been keeping tabs on since he was a baby-faced civic president in Columbia-Savin Hill in the mid-1990s. Much of what we published then is true today, so it bears repeating and expanding upon.

We wrote back then: "For folks from Dorchester, he is now the vessel of their own

aspirations: the kid from the three-decker on Taft Street who has beaten cancer, a drive-by bullet blast, and 'the disease' to grasp his city's ultimate brass ring. Marty has become living, breathing proof that we can tame our own demons and even harness them for the purposes of a greater good— like ministering to an emerging generation of Bostonians whose futures are similarly imperiled by bullets and booze."

Walsh's mayoral record is imperfect and incomplete— and one that will be more fully plumbed in the coming weeks in our pages— but as he lets loose his grip on City Hall, Marty leaves behind a weary Boston that has been battered by pandemic and bruised by

the related economic fallout. And yet, his has been a sure and steady hand during a time of unprecedented crisis. And until Covid hit, his seven years in office were marked by remarkable growth and relative peace and prosperity.

In an era marred by the most depraved and degrading presidency in US history, he has led this city with compassion, empathy, and the good nature that made him a compelling candidate in the first place. He has acquitted himself well.

So, what else does Joe Biden see in the mayor of Boston? What makes him tick? There's no better person to ask than Marty's mentor and his earliest political conscience, Danny

(Continued next page)



Martin J. Walsh, a candidate for state representative, as seen in 1997.

Harry Brett photo

# Jim Brett on Marty Walsh: A leader from a young age

By JAMES T. BRETT

Watching him as a young man playing sports in the ballfields and basketball courts of Dorchester, you could see that Marty Walsh was a born leader who grew into those skills by being a good listener, by caring about others and his community, and, simply, by being a good friend.

Having known Marty for nearly 35 years, I can say that I am not surprised at what he has achieved. I am also very proud of him as a fellow Dorchester resident and lifelong civic servant.

Marty has always had a great way of making friends. He has also been a role model for so many young people in Dorchester: He worked hard at his job and worked equally hard helping others.

He was involved as a Little League coach for many years in Savin Hill. He got to know the kids and their families. I'd see him at the Little House playing basketball with the neighborhood kids or at the Ryan Playground. I'd also see him at church.

He was the consummate community leader, among the youngest ever to serve as an officer of a civic association in Dorchester. I remember attending many meetings of the Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association, where Marty and other community leaders tackled the issues that mattered to the neighborhoods.

Marty was also interested in politics at a young age. I served as a state representative for Dorchester for 16



In June 2019, Mayor Walsh presented the 'Originally from Dorchester' award on behalf of the Dorchester YMCA to former State Rep. James T. Brett, whom Walsh succeeded as the state representative from the 13th Suffolk district in 1997. Brett is now president and CEO of the New England Council.

Isabel Leon/Mayor Walsh's office photo

years and he worked on all of my campaigns. He liked meeting people and learning and discussing the issues.

We both attended St. Margaret's school and the Sisters of Charity always spoke highly of him. He was a good student and a solid young man.

Among Marty's many friends over the years was Joe Biden, who, I think, saw in Marty what we all saw - a caring, good person.

In addition to our Dorchester roots, Marty and I share our Irish heritage. We are both first generation Irish. My parents emigrated in the 1920s from Sligo. His parents came in the 1950s from Galway and Rosmuc. That experience led to a deep appreciation

of family values, respect, and the value of work. We are very proud of our neighborhood and our roots.

When I moved on from the Legislature to lead the New England Council, Marty ran for my open seat at the State House. He was elected in a special election in 1997 and served in that position for 16 years. In that office, he took on many of the issues that I continue to work on, including improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. He also served on committees and supported programs to help individuals struggling with substance abuse.

When Marty moved on to become the mayor of Boston, it was another moment of great pride for my friend. Knowing how monumental the job was, I only called him on occasion when I would get requests from people in the neighborhood who were looking for help for a loved one with substance abuse problems. No matter how busy, he would always respond right away and be there to help.

It is clear that he loves that work - making a difference in someone's life. I have met so many people who said "Marty was there for me."

Looking back at his first election, for example, Marty did very well across the city. He was supported by all groups, all ages, throughout the neighborhoods. He was a mayor for all of the city. He demonstrated that in his work ethic. He was out in public constantly, working on issues

of education, public health, safety, affordable housing. He was also fiscally responsible and maintained the city's top bond rating.

He had an open door policy; Marty just wanted to help Boston be a great city. He welcomed everyone on that mission. He brings people together.

Marty possesses a quality rarely seen in politicians. He doesn't hold onto a score card and list who was with him and who was against him. His office has always been open to all who had good ideas.

Marty may be a good speaker, but he's a better listener.

The Secretary of Labor position is the perfect job for him. He will be an advocate for all workers. He will also be in a position to help people with disabilities as the community continues to work on issues like equal pay and access to the workforce. He will have a lot on his plate, but I believe Marty is up for the challenge. He will do a great job. Of all of the Secretaries of Labor in our history, the one people will remember will be Marty Walsh.

Marty has always been an advocate for the 'little guy' as a state rep and as the mayor, and now he will be the same on the national stage. He will be that same person in Washington, D.C. - defending the dignity and quality of life for all, while never forgetting his Dorchester roots.

Congratulations, Marty!

## The Man and the Politician We Know

(Continued from previous page)

Ryan - known around the 'hood as "Budso from 13-10."

"Marty chose people over power, and by empowering other people, he empowered himself," Ryan once told me. "He's addicted to helping people."

That virtue is at once his best quality and, potentially, his biggest liability, one that his opponents have tried, but largely failed, to exploit. He aims to please, to leave everyone smiling, to defuse confrontation and focus on the things people have in common. But that doesn't make him a pushover, either. He can, and does, say no every day - and not just to drink, a vice he dropped in his mid-twenties but battles against relentlessly to this day.

Marty's roots are in a hard-scrabble corner of rural Ireland called Connemara, a rocky and unforgiving landscape that has flung more than its share of migrants to Boston's neighborhoods. That deep sense of the immigrant experience (Gaelic was the language of choice in Mary and John Walsh's home) was formative for the man who would one day proclaim that immigrants facing threats of deportation could find shelter in his City Hall offices.

His dad was obsessed with two Boston blood sports: ice hockey and politics. His son Martin caught the electoral bug early and became a volunteer for the city's most powerful political force of his generation, Bill Bulger, whose wife Mary also has Connemara

roots. He pitched in to help Jim Brett's campaign for mayor in 1993 and he butted heads frequently after with the ultimate winner that year, Tom Menino.

What he didn't learn from his dad, Marty gleaned from his uncle, Pat Walsh, who ran the Laborer's Local 223 - known in most circles as the "Irish local." Generations of mainly Irish workingmen were card-carrying members within days or even hours of stepping off the Aer Lingus flight from Shannon or Dublin. The nation's new Labor Secretary has been a dues-paying member of 223 since June 30, 1988. A few months after his 21st birthday, he put on a hard hat and started working at a construction job at Commonwealth Pier on the city's waterfront.

The union and its affiliates have been his natural base throughout his career - even, and particularly, when his political judgments failed him. As disciplined as he is in his personal life, Marty did, at times, seem to flail about politically. In the Legislature, he backed the wrong horse in two House leadership fights, and his influence waned inside the building as a result. In 2002, he came this close to leaving the House to take a low-profile appointment as Suffolk County Registrar Register of Deeds, hardly a job to be coveted by a politician with higher aspirations.

But within days of making that news public, he hit the brakes and ran for re-election. "I've sat in the House chamber looking around, and this job

is the best job I've ever had and for as long as the people of Dorchester will have me, or until I decide to move on, this will be the best job for me," he told the Reporter at the time.

More often than not, this paper tracked Marty's career with routine reports about bills filed, bridges built, and campaigns won. He showed guts on many occasions and defied expectations on others. He crossed an unhappy civic association crowd that wanted to block the Pine Street Inn from converting a dilapidated six-family house on Pleasant Street into transitional housing for the homeless. In the fight over building dorms on the UMass Boston campus, he defied his fellow union chieftains and stood alongside his Savin Hill neighbors in opposing dorms. And well before the Supreme Judicial Court's Goodridge decision, he would tell anyone who cared to listen that he'd happily vote to give gay men and women the right to marry.

"If you want to label me a liberal because I'm supportive of people who are trying to get sober and trying to recover, and trying to stop infectious diseases, they can label me as a liberal all day if they want," Marty told former Reporter news editor Jim O'Sullivan in a 2004 profile that is included in this supplement.

In 2008, another profile by O'Sullivan for the State House News Service portrayed Walsh as the "go-to" man for the state's labor interests, but also for people across Boston and beyond

struggling with substance abuse. He recounted a speech that Marty gave that year to persuade his colleagues to fund more beds for detox.

"The chamber hushed for his emotional account of the one time in his House career when he'd missed a phone call from a constituent looking for a detox bed. 'I missed that phone call and I called the person back who called me, and I left a message for them,' Walsh told his silent colleagues. 'On the Monday morning, a call came to my office to let me know that they no longer needed my services because the young man that they were calling for had passed away of a heroin overdose. This is real-life stuff,' he said."

As he worked to advance his agenda on Beacon Hill, Marty's dual-track career as a union leader became more prominent in 2010 when he took the top position at the Boston Building Trades Council; it was a move that further cemented his influence on the region's labor movement and positioned him well for the next step: a run for mayor, the job he always wanted.

This week, he leaves all that behind for a new job, one that a young Marty Walsh and his parents could scarcely have imagined possible. But, as Marty himself told us back in 2010: "One thing you learn in politics is you just don't know what's going to happen. Politics is funny. It's like recovery: a day at a time."

Bill Forry is editor of the Boston Irish Magazine.

# Marty Walsh the mayor: A change agent, but not by himself

By CHRIS LOVETT  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Marty Walsh served as Boston's mayor for a little more than seven years, a time that unfolded mainly as a dashboard of growth and inclusion, with units of progress, stasis, or lost ground. But in a less granular future, he will be judged more as the mayor who helped the city out of one crisis only to contend with another.

He announced his first candidacy for Mayor of Boston in April 2013, less than two weeks after his predecessor, Tom Menino, whose fifth straight term had been hampered by a series of health problems, made it known he would not seek a sixth. Neither decision was very surprising.

As a state representative and labor leader from Dorchester, Walsh spent years building alliances, navigating through differences of race, neighborhood, and social agenda. With his attention to personal contact and individual needs—including jobs in the building trades and help with recovery, he was groomed as one more exponent of the “retail politics” associated with his most recent predecessors—Menino and Ray Flynn.

## Political Template and Personal Contact

Interviewed only a month into his campaign, Walsh defined himself as a political product of the city who started out as a young foot soldier in local campaigns. “Being able to help somebody, a family member, get into detox, give counselling to a parent or something like that,” he said, “that means an awful lot to me, and I’ve done it my whole career. It’s what I love, it’s my passion. I love helping people. And that’s why I’m running for mayor.”

At the same time, Walsh praised Menino’s role in the resurgence of large-scale development in downtown Boston and the emerging Seaport District, both of which were accompanied by consistently high bond ratings for the city. Vowing to be the “CFO of the City of Boston,”



Mayor Walsh, who spent many years coaching baseball at Savin Hill’s McConnell Playground, tossed a pitch to a youngster in the Martin Richard Challenger Baseball program’s opening day on May 6, 2018.

Photo by John Wilcox/Mayor’s Office

Walsh stressed the importance of jobs as the way to raise revenue and solve problems. It was an update of the same growth credo that had held sway in City Hall since 1949, when John B. Hynes defeated James Michael Curley.

Less than three weeks after Menino’s announcement, the city was rattled to its core by the bombing near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. It was a blow to Boston’s standing as a world-class city, but also something personal for Walsh. One of the victims, eight-year-old Martin Richard, played in the same Little League where Walsh was a coach. A few nights after the bombing, 3,000 people responded with a vigil

at Garvey Playground in Dorchester. Walsh was there, looking very much like the same figure stockpiling one-on-one contacts with voters at a polling place or a candidate forum.

Through the rest of 2013, Menino presided over the beginning of recovery – and also summoned the duck boats for another World Series championship celebration. But the Walsh for Mayor campaign signage—matching the colors of the Boston Red Sox—also channeled the spirit of “Boston Strong” that would later be revived in the “One Boston” events on the bombing’s anniversary.

Seven years later, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, a mayor used to personal contacting and full-throated gatherings found himself governing as a model of face mask attire and social distancing. When the spread of infections and fatalities overlapped with the national surge of protest over the racial divide exacerbated by the use of force by police, the transition from continuity to change became all the more urgent. As marchers took to the streets in Boston and others across the country – and almost three months after racial disparities were spotlighted by City Councillor Ricardo Arroyo – Walsh declared racism a “public health crisis.”

## Entrenched Divides, Struggles with Progress

If there was a racial reckoning for Walsh, it would be inaccurate to say it was sudden. Even though his co-finalist in the November 2013 election

was a fellow Irish-American, John Connolly, both were pressed to make the cast of city government a closer match for Boston’s increasingly diverse population.

In November 2014, as protests raged around the country after a jury refused to indict a white police officer for the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Walsh took part—mostly as a listener – in a speak-out at Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury. The discussion touched on racial profiling and accountability for the actions of police. Walsh said the problem was also something deeper, which could be understood as acknowledging its seriousness, but also the limited powers of a single mayor.

He did bring racial diversity to positions with high profile in his administration, most visibly with the city’s first Asian-American school superintendent and the first African-American police commissioner, but also with cabinet appointments for economic development and health and human services. What changed very little was the disproportionate share of people of color in positions with lower visibility and pay.

Walsh also set more ambitious goals for diversity and the hiring of Boston residents on major construction projects in Boston. But as late as 2020, community advocates were continuing to express frustration with the lack of progress. And metrics for city spending on goods and services continued to show a wide racial gap, even as late as early 2021.

During Walsh’s tenure, the dropout



Mayor Walsh used an excavator to ceremonially kick off construction for One Seaport Square on Nov. 14, 2014.  
Mayor’s Office photo by Don Harney



rates for the Boston Public Schools showed an overall decline and the high school graduation rate climbed to an all-time high in 2018, only to decline the following year. The lack of overall progress was enough to trigger a heightened threat of intervention from the State Department of Elementary Education, coming less than two months after the newest Boston School Superintendent, Brenda Cassellius, released her five-year strategic plan. She is the fourth superintendent to serve under Walsh, making for the highest turnover rate of that office under any Boston mayor since at least the beginning of the 20th century.

### Growth, Displacement, Arrested Development

In his first term, Walsh tried to spur new kinds of growth, even for the hours when Boston's vibrancy could be open for business. The possible selection of Boston for hosting the Olympics in 2024 caused some fleeting euphoria, but even more questions and push-back. Nor did any benefits materialize from an abortive proposal to use parts of the Seaport District for an IndyCar race.

Probably the most impressive growth metric under Walsh was for housing production.

He exceeded the pace in his Boston 2030 plan and even raised the bar in 2018, after expectations were also revised upwards for Boston's population growth.

The 2018 revision set a goal of 69,000 new units by 2030, with 16,000 of them income-restricted, to be made possible by higher linkage contributions from developers and zoning largesse from the city.

A Boston 2030 report cited a modest decline in the cost of renting the city's older housing, but other figures showed some of the most affordable areas were faced with a higher rate of evictions—even before the economic crisis triggered by the pandemic. Along the Fairmount/Indigo rail line—a prime conduit for transit-oriented housing, many residents of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park faced displacement or steep increases in rent.

The same population growth that fed the supply of housing and jobs also resulted in more traffic congestion. Walsh oversaw efforts to diversify transportation, with more lanes for bikes and buses. But, after a succession of fare increases on the MBTA, the same population struggling disproportionately squeezed by the housing market struggled with the cost of transportation and, in many cases, substandard service.

### From Crisis Candidate to Anti-Trump Personage

The first crisis to confront Walsh as mayor was the closing of the Long Island Bridge, with a need to find immediate replacement for the loss of the island's recovery programs and shelter capacity. He responded with new facilities and new gains for transitional housing. But the



Mayor Walsh, surrounded by members of the Boston City Council and Superintendent Brenda Cassellius, announced the district-wide closure of all Boston Public Schools as the Covid-19 pandemic hit the city in March 2020.

*Isabel Leon/Mayor's Office photo*

troubling spectacle of unmet needs around homelessness and drug activity at Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard—much of it gravitating to Boston from other communities—remained in place, and, during the pandemic, became even more alarming.

In March 2020, when Boston had suffered only its second death from the pandemic, Walsh brought on the retired four-star general Stanley McChrystal as an emergency consultant for pandemic response. Following severe outbreaks in northern Italy and New York City, there was an intense focus on stopping infections and adding capacity for treatment—even if it meant shutting thousands of people out of work and closing schools.

Pandemic response also meant an extensive relief effort—in some cases building on grassroots efforts and support from business leaders. By January of this year, the “Boston Resiliency Fund” had distributed more than \$30 million, mostly for basic needs and help with remote learning, along with support for first responders and healthcare workers. By the city's count, more than half the grants went to organizations headed by women or people of color. Walsh had to simultaneously be a mayor for neighborhoods and downtown, but in a way not foreseen seven years earlier.

The racial disparities in Boston's pandemic figures were dramatic early on, with Blacks accounting for more than 40 percent of the spread almost through the end of April 2020. Though that figure would gradually decrease to less than 25 percent, the number of fatalities remained

disproportionately high.

Walsh also had to contend with the division between people who could work or study from home and those who depended on in-person contact for income and education. As he was making his transition to become President Biden's Secretary of Labor, questions about the balance between shutdown and reopening were still being debated, most critically about whether a different mix of leadership and resources could have speeded up reopening of schools, at least for early grades.

As he was looking to another election year in 2021, Walsh could have followed the playbook of Donald Trump: boasting of the economic growth before a pandemic inflicted from outside, or even reinforcing a division between the champions of

reopening and proponents of caution. Instead, the mayor cast himself as the anti-Trump, as he had geared up his re-election campaign four years earlier, in 2017.

If Trump claimed to be the one and only person who could restore greatness on a national scale, Walsh cast himself as the city's listener, learner, and problem solver. By approving reforms in police accountability—advanced by his own task force in 2020, but following a push by many other elected officials from Boston—Walsh did invite the question of what might have been accomplished sooner had he been more assertive. Even if his tenure provided less continuity than expected, he was still Trump's opposite: an agent of change, after all, but not on his own.



Rep. Walsh on Election Day 2013 outside of the Cristo Rey School in Savin Hill, a polling location for voters in Ward 13, precinct 10. Walsh is flanked by Danny Ryan, left, and Roger Croke, right. *Walsh campaign photo*

# How it started: Marty Walsh's first campaign

By BILL FORRY  
REPORTER EDITOR

Marty Walsh is undefeated when his name has appeared on ballots in Boston. By our count he's 22-0. Not too shabby.

But there's an asterisk involved: He did, technically, come in *third* in his inaugural election day effort.

Confused? Well, buckle up. A strange thing happened on the way to Walsh's first-ever victory in March 1997 when he, then 29, won a six-way race to fill the vacant 13th Suffolk state rep seat held by Savin Hill's Jim Brett.

But the March 1997 special election was not Walsh's first effort to replace Brett, who had announced his plan to leave his seat vacant the previous September. Walsh, and several other would-be successors, first sought to "beat" Brett during the November '96 general election by using stickers.

It was an awkward political dynamic. Brett, who had run for mayor and lost to Tom Menino in 1993, was a popular figure in his district. But once it became apparent that at least one candidate— Neponset's Charlie Burke— was intent on seeking to win the seat outright using a sticker/write-in campaign, everyone else

in the field followed suit. All, that is, except a political newcomer, an assistant district attorney in Middlesex County, who had just recently settled on Pope's Hill, and who ended up urging her supporters to vote for Brett. Her name: Martha Coakley.

In one sense, the sticker campaign didn't work out for those who participated. Brett, who had already moved on to lead the New England Council, piled up 4,144 votes, in large part because his name was the only choice on the ballot for the state rep's seat. In second place: "Blanks" with 2,896. Marty Walsh was next in line with 1,953, well ahead of the fourth-place finisher, Charles Tenvan, an attorney rooted in Ashmont-Adams who managed to get 847 sticker or write-in votes.

Despite coming up short, Walsh showed considerable organizational strength in his rookie electoral outing. He blew away all other hopefuls in his home base precincts in Ward 13, where he was born and raised. But he also won in Ward 16, which included precincts in Neponset, Fields Corner, and the St. Mark's Area. It was a signal to his supporters and rivals that the fresh-faced, red-head-

ed baseball coach was more than just a contender. Suddenly, he was a front-runner for the special election that would no doubt come next.

In the first week in January, the Speaker of the Massachusetts House— Mattapan's Tom Finneran— set the date of the special election to fill Brett's seat: Tues., March 11. It was going to be a sprint, but the field that had taken form months earlier was still largely intact. In addition to Walsh, Burke, Coakley, and Tenvan, there was another young attorney, James Hunt III, who could mine from deep political and civic veins in Neponset. Hunt had served as chief of staff to state Sen. Paul White, who then represented the area and was a beloved figure. Another candidate, Ed Regal from the St. Mark's area in Ward 16, also joined the fray.

Another compelling candidate was Rosemary Powers, a well-known civic figure in Columbia-Savin Hill and a vocal proponent of toughening Boston's residency requirements. She and Walsh were seen as rivals and shared a base in Ward 13. Her husband Coleman had replaced Walsh as president of the influential Columbia-Savin Hill

Civic Association the year before.

Powers was impressive — she went on to run state Sen. Jack Hart's office, served as a key aide to Gov. Deval Patrick, and now runs the Cristo Rey School in Savin Hill. She and Walsh would've carved up the Savin Hill vote to devastating effect for each candidate.

But on Jan. 9, she withdrew from the race and threw her support to Walsh telling the *Reporter*: "I'm going to work hard for Marty. I'm going to ask people I know to do the same." Walsh told us: "It's nice to have. I welcome her support. I have to go out and touch every vote. I'm going to try to outwork everyone else."

He and his campaign manager, Michael McDevitt, could now stop worrying as much about an internecine fight among Savin Hill's tightly packed three-deckers.

As I wrote at the time: "Now that Walsh is the sole master of Ward 13, he can pour all of his considerable support into the breach while the six Ward 16 candidates chew each other up."

But the field of possibles was not yet done contracting. Barry Mullen, a St. Mark's Civic Association leader who had toyed with a run himself, decid-

Online at BostonIrish.com



DoubleTree Boston Bayside, Dorchester, MA



Bayside Office Center, Dorchester, MA



Harbor Point on the Bay, Dorchester, MA



Keystone Apartments, Dorchester, MA



Savin Hill Apartments, Dorchester, MA

Summer 2021

Boston Irish

Page 26

CORCORAN  
JENNISON  
Companies

Is proud to salute

Mayor Martin Walsh

Wishing you every success as you embark on a new phase of your career in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for your services to our great city and especially to all of our CJ Communities.

corcoranjennison.com | cjapts.com | cmjapts.com



The candidates for 13th Suffolk state representative were shown during a candidate's forum in Fields Corner in Jan. 1997. From left: Charles Tevnan, Martha Coakley, Charlie Burke, James Hunt III, Martin J. Walsh and Edward Regal. *Bill Forry photo*

ed not to after Powers made her exit, throwing his support to Hunt, saying: "I feel he's doing it for the community and not for his own personal gain."

After the first of several candidate forums on Jan. 28 in Fields Corner, the Reporter's front page trumpeted: "Fireworks Begin in 13th Suffolk Race." Walsh, recognizing that the contest would likely be a two-man race between him and Hunt, targeted his rival directly for not having a public safety plan. "I have the guts to put it in writing," Walsh told him.

Hunt fired back: "I don't have paid people writing for me and developing those plans." He sought to exploit the opening, describing Walsh's resume as "vague," adding, "after four months of campaigning against you, I still don't know much about you."

On Feb. 24, two weeks before the primary election that would decide the outcome among the all-Democrat field, the Reporter staged a debate at the John F. Kennedy Library. I was a panelist — and timekeeper — along with John Krall, president of the now-defunct Dorchester Allied Neighborhood Associations, and Jose Duarte, the principal of the Grover Cleveland

School. Rep. Charlotte Golar-Richie, who would one day compete with Walsh for mayor, was the moderator.

More than 400 people packed the Stephen Smith room for a 90-minute program that began with one of the six candidates, Charlie Burke, using his opening statement to withdraw from the race. (I was so stunned that I neglected to grasp the moment and rang a bell midway through his speech, not realizing that he'd be exiting stage left momentarily.)

Burke added intrigue to the moment by revealing that his own polling data revealed that it was a two-person race and he was not in the mix. "In this race, while I'm many people's second choice, you run to win, not to come close."

While he did not explicitly back any other candidate, Burke's exit was widely seen as an assist for Hunt, who was gaining traction as the number of dawns before election day could be counted on two hands.

The rest of the debate was substantive and, at times, testy, with most everyone challenging Walsh with tough questions. "I wish Charlie Burke were still here," Walsh joked at one point.

Hunt targeted Walsh for using an expensive hired consultant, Worcester Mayor Ray Mariano, to help direct his election, but Walsh was ready: "I, unfortunately, don't have an elected official helping me," he rejoined, a reference to Sen. White.

The ascendant nature of Hunt's campaign was again underlined when Tevnan noted that the 24-year-old, youthful-looking law student "lives at home with his parents." It was a line that elicited more than a few groans for Hunt's loyalists in the room.

Walsh finished the night still in control, but with a resurgent Hunt, buoyed by Burke's exit, gaining steam. A pre-election night rally at Florian Hall gave the rival camps a chance to flex their strength, and it was clear that the blue and red Hunt signs and the white and red Walsh signs would be the story the next day.

Election day turnout was steady throughout the day, but particularly strong in Walsh's Alamo — Ward 13, precinct 10, St. William School on Savin Hill Avenue, where he could count on a lopsided margin and a gauntlet of poll workers led by Danny 'Budso' Ryan, one of Walsh's closest allies throughout his career. He ended up with 436 votes at 13/10 on his way to winning 69 percent of the vote in Ward 13.

In Neponset, Hunt's forces countered by pulling 75 or so volunteers off the polls and sending them door-to-door onto the side streets of St. Ann's parish to track down and drag out his "ones and twos," campaign jargon for voters who had been identified as committed to or leaning towards a candidate.

It wasn't quite enough, though. When the clock struck eight and the first Bud Lights cracked open, the results quickly showed a Walsh edge. The unofficial tally was Walsh 2,085 and Hunt 1,839. Tevnan was strong with 1,039 votes. Martha Coakley, who would go on to become the state's attorney general, was a spoiler of sorts, plucking another 716 votes, mainly

from Neponset precincts. Eddie Regal rounded out the field with 612.

In context, Walsh had barely survived. He grew his total from the November sticker campaign by less than one hundred votes. To this day, some of Hunt's stalwarts say that another week would have changed the outcome.

But the numbers didn't take the edge off the sweetness of victory that night. Walsh gathered at the IBEW Union Hall on Freeport Street with several hundred supporters, many of them fellow laborers from the 223 local that his dad, uncle, and assorted cousins controlled. Stae Sen. Stephen Lynch and Rep. Jack Hart came by to congratulate him. Also in the crowd: one of his sandbox friends and super-volunteers, Annissa Essaibi, destined one day to win an at-large council seat and launch a campaign to succeed Walsh as mayor.

"I'm very happy and proud of the campaign we ran," Walsh beamed. "Everybody who helped me conducted themselves in a classy way." He added: "I look forward to working with all of my ex-opponents. As we said before, we'll all be friends."

On April 11, Walsh cruised to his second election victory as the unopposed Democratic nominee for state representative. He was seated two weeks later.

He never lost a bid for re-election, and was only challenged once, in 2002 by a former supporter, Ed Geary, Jr. It wasn't a contest.

Geary launched his campaign after it looked like Walsh would be leaving the Legislature. Secretary of State William Galvin had proposed that Walsh fill the vacant Registry of Deeds position, but after initially accepting Galvin's offer, Walsh reversed course and decided to run for re-election.

At the time, he told the Reporter that he wouldn't rule out running for another office in the future, saying, "I may still do that someday when the opportunity is right. Right now, I'm not done being a state rep."



The five candidates who competed in the preliminary election for 13th Suffolk were shown after a debate held at the JFK Library in February 1997. From left: Ed Regal, Charles Tevnan, Jim Hunt III, Martin J. Walsh and Martha Coakley. *Harry Brett photo*

# THANK YOU

## *Mayor Walsh*



Gregory T. Rooney  
*Chairman of the Board*

Neil Gordon  
*President/CEO*

Thomas J. Tinlin  
*Treasurer*

Brian Gill  
*Clerk*

### *Board of Directors*

Mark Bernard

Susan E. Connolly

James Driscoll

Coleman G. Flaherty

Stephen W. Green

Cecil R. Jones

Kevin Linskey

Neil C. McGonagle

Matthew Moroney

Timothy J. Smith, Esq.

Christopher Stockbridge

Mayor Walsh your leadership and dedication are clear reflections of your passion and pride for the people of the City of Boston. We wish you, a true son of Dorchester, the best as you move onto your new role as the United States Secretary of Labor.



**CITY OF  
BOSTON**  
CREDIT UNION®

[CityofBostonCU.com](http://CityofBostonCU.com)



Marty Walsh with Richie Gormley, Boston Funeral Director and President of the Irish Social Club of Boston.

## Congratulations to our good friend **Marty Walsh**

As you begin your new career as  
**US Secretary of Labor**

From your friends at the  
**Irish Social Club of Boston**  
Richie Gormley, president



“Thank you Mayor Walsh for your leadership, support, and friendship. I especially thank you for your collaboration with the City of Brockton in 2020 as we battled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Best of luck in Washington!”

- Mayor Robert F. Sullivan  
City of Brockton



# Congratulations to our Mayor **Marty Walsh**

as he begins  
his new post as  
U.S. Secretary  
Dept. of Labor



Greg and Brendan Feeney



**Feeney Brothers Utility Services**

103 Clayton Street  
Dorchester, MA 02122

# ‘A Legacy of Labor’ – the story of the Walsh clan

In 2000, when Rep. Martin J. Walsh was still a back-bencher in the Legislature, he and his family were featured in *World of Hibernia*, a now-defunct magazine that focused on the Irish diaspora. The story, titled “A Legacy of Labor: The Walsh Family of Dorchester,” was written by former Dorchester Reporter editor Eoin Cannon, who would go on to become a speechwriter for Mayor Walsh. It was accompanied by this photo of the clan gathered around a table at Greenhills Irish Bakery in Adams Village.

Shown, from left: The mayor’s mom Mary (O’Malley) Walsh, his brother, John Walsh, his cousin, Marty Walsh, his uncle Pat Walsh, then-Rep. Walsh, and his father, John Walsh.

The story recounted the family’s rise to prominence through union activism, primarily Laborer’s Local 223, headquartered in Dorchester. The mayor’s uncle Pat, who died in 2012 at age 90, led the union for decades. Today, his son Marty is the president.

Mayor Walsh’s father John died in 2010 at age 82. In his obituary in the Dorchester Reporter, Bill Forry wrote: “John died in his tidy first-floor bedroom on Taft Street, surrounded by family and the modest trappings of a hard-working life.

‘He would never, ever even think of moving somewhere else,’” said his widow, Mary (O’Malley) Walsh.

The mayor’s parents met at a Roxbury dance



shortly after they emigrated and married in 1965. “I moved all this way to marry a man who grew up 20 miles from me,” Mary told the Reporter.

The night back in 1997 — when Marty won a special election to replace Jim Brett in the State

House— “was the proudest moment in dad’s life,” recalled Johnny Walsh, the mayor’s brother. “He absolutely loved, loved, loved local politics his whole life. And for his own son to win... it was easily his proudest moment.”

Thank you and best wishes, Mayor Marty Walsh.

**TRINITY**  
DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT



“...We are committed in the City to continue to build more housing across all of our neighborhoods. Affordable and equitable are our guiding principals. We want to make sure everyone who wants to live here in the city of Boston, can. And we’re committed to making sure that our neighborhoods and communities thrive.”

- Mayor Martin J. Walsh



**Representative Walsh ... Mayor Walsh  
and now ...Secretary Walsh  
but always ...**

**MARTY!!**

**Congratulations to someone  
who has never forgotten where they came from ... or where they're going.**

**From all your family and friends in the Norwood "area"  
The O'Malleys • The Rogers Family • The Carroll Family  
The Sheehan Family • The Currans • The McDonoughs • The Conneelys  
Connemara Roots • 223 Proud**

**Thank you, Mayor Walsh.**

The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and our twenty-one Boston community health centers congratulate Mayor Marty Walsh on this next phase of his public service career. The League and its members are grateful for your longstanding support of community health centers in furthering their mission of providing a trusted local source of health care, hope and opportunity for individuals and families. Our patients and communities thank you!

Massachusetts League  
of Community Health Centers

massleague.org



# Even when you're in DC, you're always a part of

The Boston Red Sox congratulate Mayor Marty Walsh on becoming Secretary of Labor and thank him for his dedication and service to Boston.