
Irish American Post

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WINNING PHOTOS FROM THE PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND DEPICT THE BROAD RANGE OF CREATIVE TALENTS EXHIBITED BY THE COUNTRY'S PHOTOJOURNALISTS.

ALSO...BRUEN'S MAN COMES OUT OF THE SHADOWS, THAT GETTYSBURG CROSS, MOLLY QUIN RISES AGAIN, A MATTER OF TIME, IRELAND BUTTS OUT, BRIGID WINNERS, AULD SOD TOURISM AND GIVING ST. PAT HIS DUE.

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Cover Photo

This month's cover photo by Bryan Brophy of Allpix/The Star, "A Brother," won first place in the news category in the annual Press Photographers Association of Ireland competition. It pictures the brother of Iain Malone, who was killed in Iraq, grieving at his removal in Ballyfermot.

Publisher's Comments

Daffodils rising from the thick Irish soil this month have declared that it is already spring. While the weather hasn't quite resolved that issue of ice and cold here Stateside, the breathe of new green life has spread across the Auld Sod. It's a time for travel, for parades, for fresh air.

The Irish American Post is again pleased to showcase an array of prize-winning photos taken by the country's top photographers. Representative of the marvelously creative world of magazines and newspapers, these shots bring alive the vibrancy of the Irish landscape. Some frames are poignant, others exciting, others more are simply funny. Regardless of subject, they all show that Ireland is a magnificently modern world.

On another creative front, this issue also presents a wide range of writing talent from poetry to playwriting by the likes of Patrick Taylor, Larry Kirwan and others who have put pen to paper...or fingers to keyboard...to release their creative senses. This, too, is new life.

Have a great spring.

— Martin Hintz, publisher

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Leprechaun Women

There are the legends of leprechaun men,
But nary a one of the women.
The truth be told, the women do scold
The cobblers for hoarding mass gold;
So leprechaun men lock underground dens
To silence groaned tales of wage sins.

The women are draped
In gold threaded capes —
Wear shoes of finest leather;
Yet still they're not pleased,
Or faintly appeased,
By wealth so stingily ceased.

Being forced to damp ground,
Roofs unsound,
Leaks do wet their dresses;
So women remorse
While spinning gold coarse
And ponder on sainted divorce.

Having no leprechaun lawyers,
To share spouse riches upon,
They decorate sod and dance caves shod
Of blinding, sparkling coin . . .

And bare the weight
Of molten corsets —
Coin attached to loin!

One day they'll revolt —
These leprechaun women;
I pity the men when they do,
For no more will they have
Any treasure to spare
Or wives dancing in new cobbled shoes.

— Patricia Spork

Poet/author Patricia Spork can be reached at pspork@patriciaspork.us

Miller Captures Top Irish Press Photographers' Title

Frank Miller of the *Irish Times* was named AIB Press Photographer of the Year at a banquet and awards ceremony Feb. 20 at O'Reilly Hall at University College-Dublin. The program marked the annual honors given in various categories to members of the Press Photographers Association of Ireland. It was the third time Miller won top photog honors.

Miller's work was cited for its "sensitivity and creativity," with judges adding that his portfolio won "because of its excellence in vision, in construction, in use of color and its maturity." They went on to say that Miller "showed great versatility and adaptability -- someone you would happily send on any assignment. The work displays someone who is very confident in their style, who has a real understanding of people and who shows great creativity in making pictures.

"Overall, the work intrigues and leaves you with the anticipation of future work and even greater things to come."

This year, according to organizers, there was a record of almost 1,600 images from both Northern and Southern Ireland entered in the prestigious competition. An international judging panel included Daphne Angles from the *New York Times* (Paris),

Grazia Neri, of Grazia Neri Photography (Milan) and Dr. Pat Donlon, former head of the National Library who acted as chair.

In addition to the press photographer of the year, winners were named in news, features, sports action, sports features, people, individual study, the arts, politics, picture story and humor.

An exhibit of about 130 prints is currently being showcased at the Gallery of Photography in Dublin and viewed on cinemas in various locales in Ireland. The exhibition will eventually tour Ireland and is expected to come to the States as it has with the past two years, including shows in Milwaukee and Chicago.



AIB Press Photographer of the Year 2003 Portfolio Frank Miller, *The Irish Times*



Sentries at Carrickmines



Joy Visit



Point of Protest



Naming Places



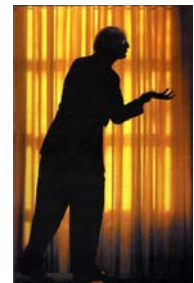
Bin Break



High Point



Mannix State Meant



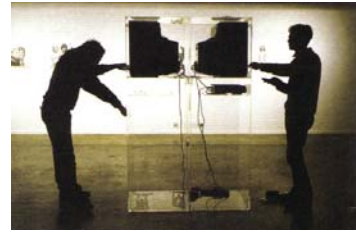
Prof. Michael Porter



Milo



Shopping Knocknagoshel



Art Installation

The First, Second and Third Place winning photographs in the ten categories of **News, Features, Sports Action, Sports Features, Individual Study, People, Politics, The Arts and Picture Essay**

Together with the photo receiving the **Humor Award** can be viewed from the **Irish American Post** web site www.IrishAmericanPost.com

St. Patrick's Message from President McAleese

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig ar chlann mhór domhanda na nGael, sa bhaile agus ar fud na cruinne, ar an lá náisiúnta ceiliúrtha seo.

A Happy St. Patrick's Day to Ireland's sons and daughters, and indeed to our adopted brothers and sisters, throughout the world. This St. Patrick's Day is a particularly special time for Ireland. Today our national day is celebrated during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union, when the European family of nations is about to adopt many new members.

These are times of great hope for the nations of Europe and this great project will surely be a beacon to the other nations of the world. We welcome those new members and look forward to a future of friendship and fellowship with them and their peoples. St. Patrick himself was, of course, a great European whose vision was not bounded by narrow horizons.

Around the world, on this day, we come together to celebrate the music and song, the wit and humor, the friendship and fellowship that is our heritage and our pride. Many friends will join in the festivities here in Ireland and abroad, and will carry

with them the richness of fluent and open friendship that signifies our Irishness.

Our greatest gift as a people is our openness to new experiences and genuine curiosity about other cultures, while we continue to inspire other nations with our legacy of resilience, versatility, and enthusiasm for whatever the future holds. That great capacity to adapt underlies much of our economic and cultural successes over the past decade. These shared gifts have sustained and encouraged us through every challenge we have faced throughout history.

I am delighted to join with all members of the Irish family and our many friends throughout the world in honoring St. Patrick on this special day.

Go mbainimís ar fad sult agus aoibhneas as an lá speisialta seo.

MARY McALEESE
UACHTARÁN NA HÉIREANN

An Irish Invasion

By George Houde

Ireland is invading the United States with a broad-based coalition this winter in an ambitious campaign to bolster a tourist business hit hard in recent years by fears of terrorism, war in Iraq and Afghanistan and U.S. economic woes.

The campaign is from Tourism Ireland, the all-Ireland tourist promotion agency, and will feature a series of 30 travel seminars targeted at retail travel agents in cities across the U.S. with an eye to keeping the Emerald Isle on their list of top destinations. The coalition includes dozens of representatives from hotels, tour operations, car rental concerns and tourist businesses who will help promote the idea of vacationing in the green and peaceful landscape of Ireland.

The kick-off to the campaign was held in Oak Brook, Ill., Jan. 26 with a companion lunch in Chicago for agents, travel writers and those in the business of selling all-things Irish. Attempting to overcome the world-wide travel slump induced by the terrorist attacks on America, Tourism Ireland will invest more in advertising and promotion efforts this year, officials said. In spite of a 10 percent decline in American tourist business in 2002, officials sounded optimistic and confident.

"We believe the U.S. market is coming back strong," said David Boyce, advertising and communications vice president for Tourism Ireland. He spoke at the kickoff luncheon for the campaign held at the Peninsula Hotel on the Magnificent Mile in Chicago, a city that has been a leading exporter of tourists and tourist dollars to Ireland.

Following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the travel industry suffered a worldwide decline and the rising tourist trade in Ireland took a double digit hit. There were worries of bombs, hijackings and biological weapons. War in Afghanistan and then Iraq increased anxieties. A six hour flight across the North Atlantic Ocean made a trip to Ireland seem risky to those who remembered the horrible pictures of jet airliners flying into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. The attacks stopped a booming tourist business that in 2000 had registered 1 million U.S. visitors, a record.

But Boyce said 2004 may prove to be a turning point in the tourism industry's comeback.

"Our tourism promotion efforts yielded great success last year," said Boyce. "We need to build on that success and regain the rapid growth curve in U.S. visitor numbers of the late 1990's."

Still occupying a popular place in the hearts of American travelers, travel agents and business operators echo Boyce's sentiments and say things are booming once again.

"My business is absolutely fabulous," said Brian Moore, chairman of SMI Tours. "The last two weeks have been the best ever."

Observers of the Irish tourist and trade industry also say business appears to be on the upswing. Shay Clarke, owner of Blarney on the Mall stores in Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg, Ill., and in Spring Hill Mall in West Dundee, Ill., said Midwest travelers are still making Ireland a top stop.

"In my store in Woodfield, either people are just leaving for Ireland or just coming back," said Clarke, a native of Ireland.

Given current round trip airfare prices as low as \$300, peace in Northern Ireland and world-famous Irish hospitality, Moore and Clark said they believe Ireland represents a safe bet and good value.

Though Tourism Ireland's increase in its advertising and promotion budget is modest - only \$500,000 out of a total of some \$8 million - Boyce said it represents the belief that U.S. tourist visits will increase.

The board is investing \$3.9 million in advertising to the American market up until June and another \$1.5 million after that. Other marketing costs, such as the current promotion blitz for travel agents and related businesses, make up the remainder of the budget. The current promotion is officially called, "Selling Ireland 2004."

Ireland reaps more than \$700 million in U.S. tourist dollars each year, said Boyce, and tourism is an important part of the nation's economy.

The travel seminars will be presented by a coalition of airlines, tour companies, car rental agencies and hotel operators. The boom in the Irish economy over the past decade has provided not only increased travel amenities in Ireland itself, but has led to the exportation of the nation's cozy friendliness. The Jurys Doyle Hotel Corp., for instance, is continuing a program of expansion overseas, with the U.S. a leading target.

"We have doubled the number of our hotels in the past four to five years," said Andrew Greenslade, sales manager for Jurys Doyle in North America. "We are trying a new concept to create an inn-like atmosphere with our hotels."

The company's latest project is turning the old Boston police headquarters into hospitable lodgings for tourists. Greenslade said the impregnable structure of the headquarters has caused delays in the makeover and the spring opening has been postponed.

Tourism Ireland's promotion in the U.S. is an annual event and has been improved over the years to include a mix of breakfasts, luncheons and evening receptions for travel agents and

(Continued on page 19)

The Celtic Cross

It was just after two o'clock when Gettysburg officials unveiled the Irish monument. It was a Celtic cross listing three circled companies of Patrick Kelly's Irish brigade. A beautiful sun blazed above an Irish harp. An Irish wolfhound lay beneath the cross, mourning his dead master.

John Mulligan had left his two children back in San Francisco, and looked around the field for his father, Michael Mulligan. He could have been waiting for a stranger. As officials described the terrible three-day battle of 1863, noting it was a Confederate Irish soldier who had designed the Irish monument, John Mulligan felt no sense of reconciliation with the man who had fathered him. It was awkward to feel betrayal, still, at the age of 33.

But he did fight on this field that day, John thought. *What a slaughter it must've been.*

If the crowd expected the ghosts of Union and Confederate dead to rise on the Gettysburg field and demand recognition, it didn't occur. It was a pleasant warm day. The reddish cross in a small grove of trees faced a green peaceful meadow. As two veterans from each side joined the mayor on the platform and the band played "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", John Mulligan wondered if he would even recognize his father. How much had age changed him?

Then he saw a gentleman emerge from the crowd and walk toward him. He was tall and straight with thick white hair, his weathered face lined; a darkness gleamed in the eyes that made John Mulligan think of a character out of literature: the vengeful Heathcliff. Though now 68, Michael Mulligan possessed a striking handsomeness; he was well-dressed in the New York style of 1888: dark pants, Norfolk jacket, derby hat. John Mulligan tried to remember that awkward first meeting when he was 20 years old, or the sad farewell at the war's beginning. Perhaps the conflict between the States had become a marker for them both.

The two men shook hands.

"So nice to see you, son."

"So nice to see you."

With eyes averted, Michael Mulligan tipped his hat to some passing ladies, elegantly dressed. John decided to remain silent.

"I trust the twins are fine?"

"John Jr. and Kate are doing well, Father."

"Good."

"Thanks for asking."

"I enjoy your letters."

"You could write more."

"I could." Michael Mulligan examined the monument. "Nice job, it is. I can think of another they should honor. Then again, war is an obscenity. Why celebrate it?"

The two men found a bench and sat down. John Mulligan glanced at his father, searching for words. The latter had removed his hat.

"I assume this is sacred ground?"

The older man looked surprised. "Sacred? *Cursed* is more like it. As for the Irish Brigade?" He didn't finish the sentence.

"Are you ever coming to San Francisco?"

"I could bring a show there."

"A show? The twins would like to meet their grandfather."

John saw a brief moment of pain in his father's eyes.

"Of course," he said. "How's the wife?"

"Making clothes. Watching the children."

Another speaker was holding forth in an oratorical style that seemed dated after Lincoln's eloquent sparseness. For some reason, John remembered a day at the beach. He was a boy chasing his father with a piece of seaweed when the man turned sharply and John ran into the surf. The tide caught him. Strong hands seized his ankles as the tide retreated. John was still spitting sea water when he caught his father observing him.

"You look good, John. Handsome as ever."

"You don't look so bad yourself."

"I feel ancient." He gazed across the peaceful battlefield. "I often wonder why some people survive and others don't."

"I guess you knew a few who died?"

Michael Mulligan nodded. "That I did."

"You don't like to discuss it?"

Again, his father nodded. They watched the milling crowd as the speaker described the glories of war.

"War does make for nice speeches," Michael Mulligan said.

"And empty words."

For the first time, John noticed a scar along his father's temple. When he spoke, it was a man choosing his words carefully.

"In 1852, I met Thomas Meagher in San Francisco. He had escaped exile to Tasmania. I was an exile myself."

"That I don't doubt. Why?"

"I'll get to that." John waited patiently for his father to speak.

"Meagher, now. Silver tongue he had. He liked to talk, ride horses and drink. I had rebuilt the Jenny Lind Theatre after an earthquake, and started producing shows. When the war broke out, he let me know the Union Army needed someone good with horses. I guess it's better I didn't join Meagher's Irish Brigade. They were slaughtered at Antietam and Fredericksburg. Meagher, sword in hand, had his horse shot out from under him. From behind the stonewall, Irish Confederates shot down their Irish Union brothers."

Michael Mulligan stopped and stared at the grass. Then his voice continued. "Irish and eventually Africans—*always* on the front lines." Michael Mulligan met his son's eyes. "I could've died *there*."

"But you were *here*—at Gettysburg?"

After a pause, Michael Mulligan said, "Yes—I was. With a unit that's forgotten."

"Tell me about it."

"Not now."

The speaker had concluded his speech. John felt himself growing hot and edgy. "The war meant a lot to you. You have a silver tongue, yourself. Sure but you left a five-year-old child with friends and ran off to fight, so why *can't* we sit and tell stories of glorious charges uphill into Rebel guns?"

Michael Mulligan didn't answer. A wind blew through the

trees.

"Sorry," John said. "I shouldn't be talking about all this after so long."

"You have a right. I asked you here."

"I was surprised you did."

"Did the Maguire family care for you well?"

"Very well. But I often wondered what had happened to you.

Now and then we got a bulletin from the front. Then when Lee surrendered, I thought—"

"Thought what? That I was rushing home? Can you imagine what those three days were like at Gettysburg?"

"I've read the history books, Father. I can!"

"Ah yes, the history books. A man with a broken leg watches a grass fire started by hot guns burning toward him, and when he dies screaming, the historians capture his pain so well."

John Mulligan closed his eyes, knowing he had to let the drama of this meeting play out. The band began to play. The crowd dispersed. Michael Mulligan stood up and motioned to his son to follow. As the two men walked, John asked a question:

"What happened to General Meagher?"

"They wouldn't let him recruit for a new brigade. Then he became governor of Montana, got drunk one day and fell off a boat into the Missouri River. He drowned," Michael said, with finality. He stopped and listened to the small band.

"Play 'Dixie'," he shouted. The band members finished and Michael Mulligan shouted again. "Play 'Dixie'. Even Lincoln requested it. Let's not forget, men from *both* sides died here!"

The piano player looked at Mulligan. "I don't play that Rebel music."

Michael Mulligan got up on the stage. "Then play 'The Irish Washer Woman'."

Following the piano's lead, they broke into the familiar Irish tune. Michael Mulligan threw off his hat and began dancing, his arms straight down at his sides, his legs moving and kicking like a younger man's. Piano, horns and fiddle carried the lively melody. A few in the crowd gathered and smiled at the amusing spectacle. Some boys clapped. John Mulligan watched his father dancing an Irish jig with a rising maniacal fury and looked away. Color touched his cheeks. Once again, he had lost his father to a distraction. Then he heard a man's slurred English voice.

"Is that respectful? We're here to honor the dead."

"And you're dead drunk," a fat man said.

"So are you."

Michael Mulligan's boots rang on the wooden platform

"The old bugger can dance, though," the fat man continued.

"The bloody Irish are good at two things: drinking and dancing. Can't fight worth a damn."

John Mulligan confronted the two men. "That's my father," he said.

"Is that right? Well, your old man's better than any dancing nigger I ever seen in a minstrel show."

The two men laughed. John Mulligan looked at the fat drunk and before he lifted the flask to his lips, struck out at the florid face. Blood spurted and he felt the second man hitting him in the back. Michael Mulligan jumped down from the stage and separated them; with a backhand blow, he struck the second man to the ground. The fat drunk knelt, a handkerchief to his

bleeding nose. "You hit me," he screamed. "I'm bleeding!"

"I fought here and I have a right to dance here. And you better stay down," Michael Mulligan warned. "Let's go, son."

As they walked away, the piano player began "Dixie." They hurried across the open space, the crowd parting for them. In another part of the battlefield, Michael Mulligan found a flat rock and sat down. John was panting from excitement.

"What was that spectacle back there?"

"You got angry watching your father dancing an Irish jig, and you hit a fat drunk."

"No, I mean why were you dancing like a—"

"Like a what? People show grief and respect in different ways. For God's sake, we're Irish, son. We're both a little crazy. Sit down. I need to tell you something about this place."

"Haven't we already heard a speech about Gettysburg?"

"I mean, this rocky field. To the north, Pickett had done what the Irish did before—led a disastrous charge across open ground into cannons and guns. He lost an entire division. But here, near Slyder's farm, General Judson Kilpatrick ordered Elton Farnsworth to lead his cavalry against some Rebel foot soldiers. They had cover. Look at this ground—rocky, with fences and ditches, terrible for horses. Farnsworth knew it was suicidal. We had won the day. Why lose more men? Kilpatrick, may he

John looked across the rocky field at the distant woods. He could imagine hidden sharpshooters firing into the charging cavalry, and for a moment, heard the screams of dying men and horses.

"I rode behind Elton. I had trained his men and horses."

"Weren't you too old to enlist?"

Ignoring the remark, Michael Mulligan continued.

"Not that day. Farnsworth, saber in hand, fell on the hillside, shot to pieces. My horse went down, blood shooting from his snout. I hit a rock and woke up in a Union hospital, screams of men all around me. An oil lamp cast a ghastly light over the sick and wounded." John stared at his father's drawn tight profile. "I never forgave Kilpatrick for that order. I understood what Pickett felt for Lee. Anger. Disgust. All those men and beautiful horses—slaughtered."

John touched his father's knee. "They'll have a plaque someday."

Michael Mulligan looked into his face, suddenly appearing older. "They were summoned to ride into death. Make sure there's a plaque—to the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division."

"At least that took you out of the war."

"It didn't. They sent a regiment to put down the draft riots in New York. We had to shoot other Irishmen who wouldn't fight to free slaves and hanged every black they could find. God, weren't we once slaves ourselves? Then I fought at Cold Harbor. *Another* slaughter, this time under Grant. When Lee finally surrendered, I was a mad man. I could not go back to San Francisco and produce shows and embrace my ten-year-old son. I just couldn't do it! Maybe if your mother was alive, I might have, but she died giving birth to you."

For just a moment, John expected the old man to cry, but he didn't.

"Do you blame me she died?"

"No, of course not. And I was wrong. I should have come home. You might have healed me."

"Where did you go?"

"That's not important."

"I lost you at five. Then discovered you at twenty. Fifteen years, Father. You don't think I need healing?"

"You did. I'm sorry."

John Mulligan stood up and walked some distance. Somewhere, another band was playing. He saw a group of men taking pictures of each other with a new invention, the portable Brownie camera. He turned and approached his father.

"In 1866, Mark Twain appeared in San Francisco to talk about his trip to the Sandwich Islands. The Maguires took me."

"Twain? Brilliant writer. He talked about Hawaii."

"And wasn't I impressed to see my name on the program? Mark Twain's lecture produced by Michael Mulligan and Company! I guess work is *one* way to assuage grief?"

His father stood up and confronted him. "Yes—it is," he said.

John turned away, not wanting to think his missing parent sat in the wings watching the humorist work while he sat in the audience with the elderly but kindly Maguires. Before he could speak, two policemen appeared.

"Were you the gentleman dancing on the platform, back there?"

Michael Mulligan tipped his hat. "That I was, officer."

"We have two inebriated fellows who claim you assaulted them."

"Two? Against an old fellow like me?"

"I assaulted them," John said.

The two policemen were young but not impolite. The taller of the two looked at John Mulligan. "Did you, now?" He then addressed the older man. "Could you explain, sir?"

Michael Mulligan told the story.

"He's a bit of a dancer, you know," said the shorter policeman. He had an Irish flavor in his speech. "I used to know the jig, myself. What sort of work do you do?"

"Produce shows for Broadway."

"Did you know Edwin Booth?"

"Worked with the man. Great actor. Tragic what his brother did."

"And here at this celebration of the Irish Brigade, your after askin' the band to play 'Dixie'?"

"Let's not forget, a Confederate Irishman designed the monument. I also spilled blood on this field," Michael Mulligan added. "Irish blood."

"Those two drunks were disrespectful," John Mulligan said.

The two policemen considered this. "What do you think, Officer Sullivan?"

"One of them *was* English," Officer Sullivan said.

The other officer shrugged. "I guess we can let her Majesty's drunks sleep it off. Good day."

"I might enjoy a show with dancing girls if I visit New York," Sullivan said.

"You will be my guest," said Michael Mulligan.

As they walked away, John smiled and glanced at his father.

"Well—and isn't my father's a star, himself. Mulligan the Great!"

"And we have more to discuss. Would you like to take a ferry-

boat ride?"

"Sure. And where, might I ask?"

"Up Lake Ontario to the Saint Lawrence River. There's a place you should see: Grosse Isle."

"Where the famine ships landed?"

"Exactly."

John remembered an old photo he had seen of ragged people standing on a barren hill beneath a tall Celtic cross. Michael Mulligan reached down and lifted something from the dust. In his palm lay a minie ball.

*** **

THE paddlewheel was silent and John Mulligan felt as though they were floating across the lake. Only when he walked to the stern of the large boat could he hear the paddlewheel turning in the water. He felt happy traveling with his father who smoked cigars and pointed out the sights. Perhaps they were catching up on all the years lost. He had read about the coffin ships landing at Grosse Isle with Irish emigrants sick or dying or dead. After turning up the Saint Lawrence River in the afternoon, they sat on the deck, watching the riverbank slide by soundlessly.

"So you landed at that terrible place?"

"In 1847. Like Meagher, I was wanted in Ireland."

"For what?"

"Stealing an Anglo Irish landlord's beautiful wife."

John regretted the question.

"You met my mother in San Francisco!"

"Yes. In 1852. This woman's name was Maria Burke."

"Perhaps we better not discuss this."

Michael Mulligan drew on his cigar. "I want you to hear the truth. After all, I did have a life *before* your mother and *before* San Francisco."

"I find it odd you never talked or wrote about my mother."

"Emily O' Rourke was a lovely woman. I will talk about her and answer any questions you have. But first, you need to hear about why I left Ireland, why I came to San Francisco, why I left."

John saw people on the bank waving at them. He didn't wave back.

"I know why you didn't come back. The war."

"True."

"So what happened to this mistress? What was her name—Mary?"

"Maria. She died of ship fever."

"Of course. Ship fever." John Mulligan found himself asking, "In your arms?"

"Yes." Michael Mulligan stood up and gripped the railing.

"Let's discuss this later. Shall I bring you a drop?"

"A strong one," John said.

When they arrived at Quebec City, they disembarked and had dinner at a fashionable restaurant. Elegantly dressed tourists seemed everywhere. The city had a quaint decorum John found missing in American cities. Over dinner and wine, Michael Mulligan continued his story. He described being a stable groom and horse trainer and how he fled Ireland with the wife of a tyrannical Anglo Irishman named Nathaniel Burke.

"Burke loved the famine. It gave him a chance to starve out the Irish peasants. Plenty of grain sailed down the Liffey and the River Shannon, going to England. No Irishman could afford it.

We were betrayed, by England *and* by the Anglo Irish. Maria and I took a boat to Quebec with plans to settle in San Francisco. Maria took sick with Typhus when we arrived at Grosse Isle. Then she died." Michael Mulligan stopped. He took a breath. "I buried her and I stayed on to work. God but I wanted to die. I felt doomed to live. I only left when the island closed down."

John looked up from his meal. "So this Maria Burke was the love of your life?"

"I left my homeland and risked my life for her. And if I go back and find Nathaniel Burke still alive, I'll kill him."

Astonished at this remark, John sipped his wine. "After all this time?"

"We Irish always take revenge for the death of a family member."

"You blame him?"

"Yes."

"You took another man's wife!"

"He was an evil landlord."

"I see." After a pause, John said, "Tell me about Mother."

The old man leaned back in his chair. He looked into the past and spoke in a quiet voice. "Emily was an amateur singer and actress—very pretty—and after a proper mourning, I knew it was time so I courted her."

"Proper mourning?"

"For Maria, yes. In San Francisco, our theatre was doing well so your mother and I had three lovely years together. After she died in childbirth, I raised you alone. Then the Southern States seceded and I left for war." He met John's eyes. "I believed in the Union. The Maguires were good people, trustworthy, and I sent them money. I wanted the best for you. After the war—"

"I think we know what happened *after* the war." John carefully put down his fork and knife. "Tell me, did you *ever* love my mother the way you loved this English rose, this 'Mistress Mine'?"

"Watch your tongue!"

"Did you?"

The answer was immediate: "No. Not in the same way. But I *did* love your mother."

"You loved her but you weren't madly in love with the woman who brought me into the world. This unfaithful English wife was your *true* mate?"

"She wasn't unfaithful to me."

"*How* am I to understand all this?"

"You can continue hating me. *Or* you can accept the fact I was a bad father and let me be a devoted grandfather."

"Isn't all this a bit late?"

"Maybe so."

"Bejusus, I *can* accept you were a bad father. Did you abandon any children in Ireland?"

A man in a frock coat and black pants appeared at the table.

"As proprietor, I must ask you Irish to keep your voices down. Be aware, we have other customers who wish to dine in peace."

"My apologies," Michael Mulligan said.

"If we want to argue, that's our business," John said.

"Allow me to buy the best house wine for any diner feeling discomfort."

The tall maitre d' bowed. "Very good, sir."

They finished the meal. John felt the old bitterness despite the fine food and the strong wine. They left the restaurant and walked around Quebec City until they found an expensive hotel.

"I guess your theatre business *is* doing well."

"Well enough. We've had some disasters. There was a dreadful *Richard III* recently. Someone smuggled a donkey under the stage who brayed when Richard screamed, 'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse.' The audience loved it so we considered leaving it in every night. The actor quit and sued us."

After getting keys to their room, Michael Mulligan looked at his son, studying his face.

"What?"

"You know, I wasn't in San Francisco when Mark Twain appeared."

"Good. That's a comfort."

"I heard it was a great success."

"Mark Twain is a funny man."

"See you in the morning."

John Mulligan walked around the Canadian city and went to bed near dawn. The next morning, exhausted, he met his father for breakfast and then they took another small ferry to Grosse Isle. There was a bitter wind coming off the river. For the first time, neither felt a need to fill the silence with talk.

As they came within sight of the barren island where so many Irish died, John could see his father's composure slip. He seemed to tremble and displayed an uncharacteristic nervousness. They left the group following a tour guide and walked to an old church. A service was in progress and they heard a choir singing hymns. A vast cemetery lay beyond the stone church.

"This way," Michael Mulligan said.

They walked past the singing worshippers into the small churchyard dominated by a huge Celtic cross. One of the many scrawny island dogs slipped away as they entered. In moments, Michael Mulligan found a sunken grave he had dug himself 41 years before. On the weathered granite stone, the name was barely legible: Maria Burke, 1822-1847. Listening to the plaintive music and reading the name of the long dead woman, John Mulligan felt a surprising sorrow. He saw his father's face in profile, the mouth open, the eyes moist. Here was the man who had left his son to return years later like a pirate, free from responsibility.

"You know, we could clean up that headstone," John said. "Pay someone to recarve her name."

"That we could."

Perhaps Michael Mulligan finally recognized the little boy he had abandoned in San Francisco, the elderly James Maguire taking the crying child from his arms. Then he looked at the headstone and saw Maria's face and felt his lips tighten.

"My God," he finally said.

John touched his father's shoulder. "It's all right, Father. You loved her."

Sgt. Maj. Coughlan to be Finally Remembered

By Donal Buckley, Irish Army retired

Sgt. Maj. Cornelius Coughlan VC was born in Eyrecourt, Co. Galway in 1828. He joined the 75th (Sterlingshire) Regiment (later Gordon Highlanders and now The Highland Regiment) and served in it for more than 21 years.

He became famous as a color sergeant in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, being awarded the Victoria Cross for bringing the severely wounded Pvt. Corbett to safety under fire. Later, during the siege of Delhi, when his officers were killed and he found himself in command, he encouraged his wavering men by word and example to return to the attack. This engagement resulted in victory and the Kabul Gate was stormed and taken.

This achievement was so noteworthy that a memorial tablet and monument were erected over the gate and included in the inscription was Coughlan's name. Queen Victoria wrote a personal letter to him complimenting him on his bravery and lamenting the fact that she could not personally award him with his VC.

Following 13 years service in India, he transferred to the Third Battalion, The Connaught Rangers, settling in Co. Mayo. Coughlan then lived for 40 years on Altamont St., Westport, until his death of old age in 1915.

His funeral was held with full military honors. A firing party of the Royal Field Artillery and the Fife and Drum Band and Bugle Band of 10th Hants. Regiment -- commanded by an officer in full regimentals -- arrived by mail train from Athlone and proceeded to the local church to take up their appointed positions. The 12-member firing party with arms reversed, marched in front of the hearse. The band with big drum and four side drums draped, marched immediately behind.

A detachment of the Royal Irish Constabulary followed and next came the hearse and mourning carriages. As the cortege moved slowly forward, the drums rolled and the band played the funeral march, "Indian Warriors Grave." The rolling of the drums and the plaintive fifes added much to the impressiveness of the procession. Everywhere were crowded streets and shuttered businesses.

Arriving at Aughavale, the firing party took up its positions on each side of the grave. As the coffin was lowered into the grave, three volleys were fired into the air and the buglers sounded "The Last Post."

At the time of his funeral, Coughlan had four grandsons in the Army, three going to the front in Europe and one already there fighting at the battle of La Bassee.

And so a year passed and 1916 came -- along with it, a terrible beauty was born. The political wind changed and blew and life was never the same again. The years 1917 passed and 1918 and soldiers who wore the English army uniform were no longer welcome. The War of Independence was fought and the new Free State was established even as Sgt. Maj. Coughlan VC lay in his unmarked grave.

The fact that this man served in an imperial army is not the point. The fact that he was involved in denying Indians their independence is not the point. The point is that soldiers in combat are not thinking of political ambition or lofty ideals, they are thinking of staying alive. Their loyalty is to their comrades.

The point is that he proved his tremendous personal bravery by rescuing a comrade soldier under fire and by displaying initiative and leadership in combat. His bravery was deemed to be worthy of the Victoria Cross. This award is not given lightly and out of the 1,354 VCs awarded to date, 190 have been given to Irishmen. This is a proud record. Irishmen are listed in the awards of many countries but the Victoria Cross is the world's most famous award for bravery in combat.

For 89 years, Sgt. Maj. Coughlan has lain in an unmarked grave in Aughavale cemetery, just a mile outside Westport. He has been forgotten by the people of Westport and the people of Ireland. References to the grave of Coughlan on web sites and associated publications stating "grave unknown, near Westport."

To have an Irish warrior hero forgotten is more than sad. This man's grave should be honored and now the time is coming when it will be.

On Aug 7 this year, a proper headstone will be unveiled with due military ceremony. We at Military Heritage Tours Ltd. have had the grave identified and funds are being raised in order to mark this site. The Minister for Defense has been invited to make the dedication and the British ambassador has been invited to reply.



Much interest has been stirred by this project. It is seen as an extraordinary gesture of reconciliation by many people in Northern Ireland and in Britain. To have an Irish minister honoring the grave of an Irish soldier of the British Army in the West of Ireland is magnanimous indeed.

It will also be a very important statement pertaining to who we in the Republic are, our generosity of spirit and how we are willing and able to acknowledge and celebrate aspects of our shared history and tradition.

The ceremony will also be a declaration of our coming of age as a nation and a statement of political maturity, without the baggage of post-colonial angst that was worn in albatross fashion until recently.

It also is a contribution to the history of this island. Sgt. Maj. Cornelius Coughlan is just one of the hundreds of thousands of Irish servicemen who have been written out of the history of the Republic.

Among them are the more than 100,000 Irish citizens from the then Free State who enlisted in the British Army between 1939 and 1945. This figure does not include the Royal Navy, RAF and other Commonwealth forces. It does however include up to 8,500 soldiers who deserted the Irish Army when they saw that were not going to get to grips with the enemy if they stayed in Ireland.

Coughlan's descendants will be arriving from the UK, Germany, USA and Canada for the August ceremony. A fund has been opened in the Credit Union, Bridge St., Westport for donations. The fund is simply called "Coughlan VC".

Please support this project and please come to the dedication. For further information, check www.militaryheritagetours.com or contact the writer at 094 903 1344 or dbuckley@anu.ie

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Brigid Awards

By George Houde
Irish American Post Chicago Bureau

Inspirational women were honored by an inspirational organization at the Brigid Awards luncheon held in Chicago in February and the honorees ranged from an educator of the disabled to a well-known judge.

The three honorees this year were Sister Kathleen McIntyre, of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary; Sheila M. Murphy, former presiding judge of the Sixth District of Cook County Circuit Court; and Meg Heron-Blake, a learning disabilities specialist and educational psychologist who is director of the Illinois State Board of Learning Disabilities.

The Brigid Awards are bestowed by the Chicago chapter of Concern Worldwide, a global relief agency that carries out humanitarian projects in 29 countries, most of them in the Third World.

The awards are given to women who best exemplify the mission of Concern Worldwide and the memory of St. Brigid, the 5th Century nun who is revered as one of the patron saints of Ireland, along with St. Patrick and St. Columcille. St. Brigid established a center of learning in Kildare which became renowned.

For Sister McIntyre, it was the large hearts and generous nature of her Irish parents that led her to a calling of helping the poor and needy. Her parents migrated to the United States from Co. Mayo.

"We learned concern for children as an Irish family whose parents had an open door, open heart policy," she said. "My parents would take in people and help them as they came from Ireland."

Sister McIntyre told the large crowd at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago that the name Brigid means "fire arrow" in Gaelic and that women today need a burning passion to help the impoverished and ailing people of the world.

"It takes women of faith and courage to inspire love and action," she said. "Concern Worldwide is a call to action, whether we are washing clothes in a stream, going to market to help small businesses, or in a board room, so that each family has a hope of strength and stability for the future."

After growing up with her brother and sister on Chicago's South Side, Sister McIntyre took vows with the Little Company of



Meg Heron-Blake

Mary and graduated from the order's school of nursing. She eventually joined the Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park, Ill., becoming its president and CEO. She currently is the chair of its board of directors.

A native of Colorado, Judge Murphy graduated from Marquette University and taught grade school until graduating from DePaul University Law School. She served as a Cook County public defender and a federal court defender until 1989 when she was appointed an associate circuit court judge for Cook County. One of her key cases was a death sentence appeal in which she ordered DNA testing for four defendants convicted of murder. Two of the defendants were then exonerated of the crime.

Judge Murphy said Concern Worldwide and the Irish people in general fit naturally into humanitarian missions in developing countries.

"The Irish are a great cultural fit for Third World nations," said Murphy. "This is because until Ireland until recently was a Third World nation and an oppressed colony. So, the Irish understand desperation. They've known poverty, they've known famine, so they are soul mates to the Third World."



Sister Kathleen McIntyre

But Murphy said one does not have to travel to the Third World to find hopelessness.

"How many in Chicago are desperate? How many are hungry? How many need our help?" she asked.

Thanking the assembly for its support of Worldwide and its many projects, she said, "May heaven open

its arms to you as you have opened your arms to the poor today."

An advocate for those with learning disabilities, Meg Heron-Blake has been involved in leadership and fundraising for such organizations as the Girl Scouts of America and the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation and has done service projects in Guatemala and Costa Rica. She began her career at Illinois Masonic Hospital and then went to Rush Neurobehavioral Center where she founded an outreach program.

She received the "Friend of LDA" award in 1997 from the Learning Disabilities Association and the LDA's President's Award in 2001. She currently is in private practice in Oak Park with Learning Specialists Associates where she works with individuals who have difficulty in written language or mathematics.

Heron-Blake described her work to the Concern Worldwide audience, thanking the organization for the honor of the Brigid Award. She said working with learning disabled students is a rewarding profession since they often are misunderstood in society.

"Learning disabled students present a puzzling mix of both gifts and shortcomings," she said. "A student who can solve advanced calculus problems but can't construct organized paragraphs or a student who can memorize innumerable facts but doesn't comprehend all of their connections is confusing for everyone, even neuroscientists and especially parents."

She is currently working on her Ph.D. dissertation and holds degrees from DePaul University and Northwestern University and an educational specialist's degree in school psychology from National-Louis University.



Sheila M. Murphy

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Galway Writer Bruen Shows His Grace

By Steve Hintz

I got the call early the previous day.

The disembodied editor's voice at the end of the line announced, "Ken Bruen, in from Ireland, will be doing a reading of his Irish mystery, *The Guards*. We need somebody to cover the story." An Irish mystery, I thought. Someone's missing a pint. Little did I know, Ireland has its share of heinous crimes. And Ken Bruen is the master capturer.

The Guards, originally published in 2001, is now out in paperback, while the prolific Bruen's new *The Killing of the Tinkers* has just hit American bookstores after making a "killing" in Ireland when it was released in 2002. Both novels trace the dark side dealings of ex-Garda officer/often drunk Jack Taylor who left the police in disgrace and becomes a "finder," an Irish nicety for "private eye."

Responding into the phone...the answer was easy. "Sure, I'll do the story."

I met Bruen at the Waldorf Astoria the next afternoon in Midtown Manhattan for a brief chat before his hectic tour of New York kicked off. There was to be a reading at Rocky Sullivan's pub later that evening. So I was lucky to catch up with him so quickly.

A tall, thin man with bone white hair and a pleasant warmth about him greeted me in the lobby. But was this nice man the progenitor of some of the most wickedly alluring murder mysteries to come out of Ireland in recent years...the writer just announced in the running for the prestigious Edgar awards for producing the year's outstanding mystery novel?

Evidently, it was himself, in the flesh...and I figured that finer fellow for the job would be tough to discover. I learned a ton that afternoon over tea and a bagel in the nearest diner, one typical of Bruen's favorite American eating establishments. His affection for diners is apropos. Diners have so much character. They're real.

In our extended chat, I became a student. Bruen taught me about his life of honesty, one that made him look himself in the eye and talk to himself in truths. When a person experiences things in life so traumatic that one will either die or live through the pain -- and he chooses to live -- he exudes honest emotion.

Be bold and to be a warrior with your life, Bruen explained. You, who have seen so much and felt so much pain and persevered, has to be bold enough to lay it out there for the rest of the world to see your real world.

I listened as he regaled stories about his travels to Africa, Southeast Asia and elsewhere while teaching English and tak-

ing the world head on. I was tempted to make the comparison to Frodo the Hobbit, leaving the shire to go on an adventure and emerge the timeless hero...but with Bruen, it was real life.

Bruen hails from Galway. A village, he said, during his childhood, but one that is now a thriving metropolis. It's a city creating more than enough fodder for murderous mayhem, ever since the Celtic Tiger software boom changed Ireland's landscape of poverty into that of a rich country with all the resulting problems and challenges.

As a youngster, Bruen admitted that he was shy and bookish. His introverted nature no doubt contributed to concocting wild stories and fantasies about faraway places, one that would later figure in his life and, later on, his published tales. After Ireland, Bruen lived in England and taught what else but English.

His appetite for adventure, never sated, led him to South America in his late 20s, where he was wrongly accused of being in a bar brawl. The situation changed his life. Being one of a few foreigners in the tavern, Bruen was blamed for the fighting, subsequently arrested and then detained.

Horrific months of being imprisoned followed. The extended physical and emotional trial allowed him to see how low the human condition can plummet. This ordeal and the healing that took place after his release, helped to shape Bruen into becoming an outstanding novelist.

Bruen had looked deeply into the eyes of evil and was forever shaken by this experience. As he continued talked about his life, I could feel an understanding about what life was all about emanating from the man. Over his meal of eggs, Bruen pondered questions of existence.

He regularly remarked how lucky was he to be alive. Even with the brevity, I knew his stories. Now Bruen writes about death, raw humanness, redemption, dealing with reality and hope.

The ease with which he used to understand his own story was inspirational. He talked at length about his family, especially of the strong willed pillar of friendship provided by his wife Phyllis. Bruen's eyes lighted when discussing their daughter, Grace. Her own life is an inspiration to her father, a man who has seen much challenge. Grace is nine years old, born with permanent developmental challenges.

When asked about her illness, Bruen said that his daughter replies it means that she's special. To myself, I thought, "Grace, what a fitting name for a child that has become his life. Just like his novels, his other children."

(Continued on page 19)

Review

Go, Ken Bruen, Go!

Jack Taylor's Misadventures Make for Drop Dead Reading Enjoyment

By Martin Russell
Irish American Post book editor

For a punch in the literary mouth, you can't go wrong with Ken Bruen's *The Guards* and *The Killing of the Tinkers*, two from the Irish author's top-selling Jack Taylor series. Both novels are now making the rounds of Stateside bookstores, after knocking mystery fans dead to rights in the Auld Sod and elsewhere throughout the worldwide Celtic diaspora. Now, Bruen's writings are finally make an impressive run for a wider readership.

Each book -- my first forays into Bruen's quirky, chopped-up world of the new Ireland -- are excellent introductions to an author whose hero is usually more derelict than detective. His Taylor character, an ex-Garda (Irish policeman), is a private detective -- albeit not that the Irish would ever refer to him as such. They still harbor an age-old grudge against informers and secret police, a dark undercurrent left from their colonial days. Subsequently, hero Taylor is a self-described "finder." And the poor wretch finds murder and mayhem everywhere he stumbles. He can't even enjoy a good drunk without someone knocking on his door with a plea for help. Whether good-looking woman distraught over her missing daughter or a tinker clan chief whose people are being murdered...you name 'em and they come looking for a fixer on the far side of the law, one who can swim in shadow.

However, Bruen always makes sure that Taylor also finds himself, even as he flounders amid the chaos of his own life. The former cop, ala television's Lt. Colombo on the ropes, must continually deal with his own interior demons while on the trail of miscreants of all brogues, sexes and Irish social status. Regularly lost in "the drink," Taylor needs to pull his mind and body out of his personal misfortunes in order to save others. And Bruen's backdoor hero does just, with more or less regularity and with plenty of faltering before the final can't-stop-reading pages.

But that's okay. This is also Bruen's reality, honed from his own bizarre adventures around the world...including having his head dumped into a bucket of excrement and being assaulted in a Rio jail. Besides, Bruen's one-two punch writing style is the perfect form for a reader just discovering Taylor.

We may not like our hero all the time, but you can grow to respect him as he faces up to the task that always seems at hand... even if the hand is a fist, holding a knife or brandishing a gun. Bruen's man is as human a main character as any you'll ever read.

If asked for casting suggestions, I can see Mickey Rourke, or a more dissipated, older Sean Penn, play a filmic Taylor role. There's a quite a bit of humor mixed in with the Gaelic grunge, providing plenty of leavening within these tales of tribulation.

Thank heavens for Bruen's latent, yet twinkling, Irish eye. The author was born in Galway in 1951, spending his 20s roaming the world as an English teacher. Five of his books have been published by The Do-Not Press (*A White Arrest*, 1998; *Taming the Alien*, 1999; *The McDead*, 2000; *London Boulevard*, 2001; *Blitz*, 2002; and *Vixen*, 2003) A film of the novel *Her Last Call To Louis MacNeice* is currently in production and his White Trilogy (*A White Arrest*, *Taming The Alien* and *The McDead*) has been purchased for television by Deep Indigo Productions. His Jack Taylor series, which may eventually reach five novels, is published by Brandon, a leading Irish independent publishing house.

Bruen lives in Galway with his wife, Phyllis, and daughter, Grace, in addition to spending some time in Tucson, Ariz.

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Ireland Butts Out

By Dave Abbott

Unthinkable as it seems, it's last call for smokers in Ireland's pubs. The country is preparing to be the first EU member to ban smoking in public places. The pubs of Dublin with fiddles, music, Guinness and cigarette smoke (gasp) will likely never be the same.

The controversial legislation, driven partly by political correctness, common sense, and alarming death rates (+7,000 every year), is dictating the end of "the pint and fag" era, a distinctive feature of Irish pubs. To the politically attuned and traveled sophisticates of Dublin, it's time to get in step with progressive smokeless America.

The move, as you can imagine, has a wide range of opponents. The workingman is apoplectic. Rural farmers are preparing a counter-offensive. The young are too pissed to notice. And no one has told the pensioners — who are dying of heart and lung disease anyway — the news.

Sir. Francis Drake is credited with introducing tobacco to the British Isles, a "weed" that the Irish, with their propensity for excess and addiction, readily adopted. When tobacco companies introduced the cheap "Woodbine" cigarette, made from factory floor leftovers and smelling like dry cow dung, smoking became affordable.

And in a country with a climate where tuberculosis and bronchitis once flourished, smoking increased the likelihood of pulmonary disease and early death.

My introduction to fags was courtesy of Pascal Ayres, a quiet and cheerful young man of 16, who gave me my first cigarette and introduced my lungs to nicotine. It was traumatic. After just a couple of puffs, I puked all over the historic Martello Tower in Sandycove, the one made famous by James Joyce being a resident.

Pascal really should have known better. He was four years older me. I was a mere child easily seduced by an opportunity to flaunt authority. But, even as I was throwing up, Pascal was encouraging me to smoke another. "Try another one – 'twill make yeh better' he pleaded sincerely. And being, literally, a little green around the gills I did as instructed, coughing, spitting, making icky vomiting sounds, 'argh, ugh, wheqette, yuck."

I think it did taste better. The smell had a pleasing Virginian bouquet. And besides, the Imperial Tobacco packet itself was interesting with its picture of John Player, himself dressed in a jaunty sailor hat, on the front of the package. He may have winked at me. I can't be sure. In the vernacular of the time, it was 'gameball!' I figured I was pretty grown up. Goodbye childhood! Hello manhood!

Smoking was cool. Pretty well most family members smoked. Bogie and Bacall did it. And when Marlene Dietrich puffed on

a fag dressed in a slinky gown, a young man's libido rose upwards faster than the smoke from her cigarette.

Smoking at the movies and on buses or trains, until a few years ago, was deemed perfectly acceptable. Irish workers refused to huddle outside office buildings freezing their butts off while smoking their butts. They smoke in their office or canteen. A rainy night ride on a Dublin double-decker bus — a mix of steam, cigarette smoke and condensation — made every passenger potentially ulcerous and tubercular.

It's also true that most pubs in Europe are smoke-filled choking cesspools of nicotine bon-bons. Walking from the fresh air into one makes even the hardest smokers gasp and cough. The walls, lighting fixtures and ceilings are usually stained shades of brown and yellow, like faux Italian terra cotta. By closing time, the pubs are smoldering landfills of ashes and butts turning the air foul with the smell of stale tobacco smoke, Guinness stout and whiskey fumes. Smoking upsets sensitive North American stomachs so the chances are the ban will please the tourists from the pristine smoke-free Excited States of America and Canada, eh!

But, the same cannot be said of the natives who are a rebellious lot. Dubliners do not like being told what to do. The Irish psyche and culture resents State authority. So, a law prohibiting smoking is one thing, making it stick is another? And in rural areas where the pubs are tiny, and the roots between publican and patron run deeper, that will be entirely another matter!

Imagine a village with two pubs, each the size of a small room, maybe with a fireplace.

It's been like that for more than 50 years. Here the farmers gather after parking their tractors outside. It's here they have their first pint of the evening, smoke their pipes and blather away. Is there a landlord brave, or foolhardy, enough to tell them, "Go outside and smoke?"

Two hundred publicans in Co. Kerry have already announced they will ignore the new law. Historians will tell you Kerry men were in the thick of Ireland's fight for Independence. They relish a good battle!

This may be just simple rhetoric at the start of a long fight but it could be the beginning of a Government nightmare. Watching the pub smokers of Ireland kick the nicotine habit will be nearly as painful as abstinence itself. But in the end every publican might as well get a sign that says: "No Smoking. Amen."

Ex-Irelander Dave Abbott is a journalist based in Vancouver. He can be reached at abbott@telus.net.

The Tip Always

By Michael Farrelly

The top pitchmen in New York City were back from the Jersey Shore. They'd pitched "joints," as pitchman referred to the products they sold, all summer from Asbury Park to the Steel Pier at Atlantic City. Mostly the "joints" they worked were of little use to the buyer, when she got them home. Pitchmen were always surprised when a moocher (a customer) would say between demonstrations, "That ironing board cover I picked up from you in Atlantic City, works great." He'd try not to look too amused and say, "I'm glad, come back again, and tell your friends."

The reason that the merchandise deceived people was that the demonstrator "joint," was "gaffed"-- altered to look good on demonstration. They were known as "Larry joints," or "Larry's," in the pitch game, named after a famous Brooklyn pitchman, named Larry. He got a kick out of fixing useless products, "gaffing" them for demonstration...and it was more profitable, as well. There were some more returns, but most people were too busy to be bothered returning the "Larry joint."

Today, to start a week of demonstrations, in a new location, I was pitching a useful product, the furniture polish. I'd always started out on the first day of a demonstration, with a genuine product, to relax the store manager and salesclerks. Later in the week, I'd switch to pitching "Larry Joints. As I began the pitch, a tall elderly lady came off the escalator. She looked elegant, dressed, in black, as she stood at the back of the tip.

I started out, "Ladies and gentlemen, just five drops of this lovely furniture polish, will polish a whole grand piano. Imagine that. But, not only that....," I continued. After a couple of minutes, I noticed a well-dressed gentleman wearing a camel-hair coat, at the back of the tip. He had a \$50 bill in his hand. I immediately interrupted my spiel long enough to say, "Ladies and gentlemen, would you all move in closer, please."

Turning to face the gentleman holding the money, I said, "Yes sir, I do have change of \$50," to let the tip know, that important-looking people were waiting to buy the polish. When I came near to the "close" of the demonstration, as I was starting to "turn the tip " I saw that the lady in black had a \$10 bill, in her gloved hand.

As I paused, she said, in a commanding voice, " Young man, I never purchase anything at demonstration" -- she spoke with Saxon seriousness --"I attend only for the entertainment, but today, because I can trust an Irishman, I'll have two bottles of your fine furniture polish, please."

I responded gratefully and said, "Madam, 'tis very good of you to speak so kindly, about my countrymen. And I'm honored that you will use our fine furniture polish in your lovely Manhattan home." And so as to prepare her for the days when I'd be pitching Larry's, as I gave her back her change, I leaned towards her and said seriously, just loud enough for the lady in black to hear, "But remember, madam, you cannot always trust an Irishman."

(Continued from page 16)

The interview lasted longer than we had planned for...nearly two hours...and we could have talked all day.

As I walked him back to his hotel, we made plans to see each other later on that evening and continue our discussions. Bruen had some music that he wanted me to hear, I think it was his favorite: Bruce Springsteen. And I had a drink I owed him for the breakfast that he kindly paid for.

Later in the evening, Bruen read an excerpt from *The Guards* to a full house at Sullivan's, a small Irish bar on the Manhattan's East Side. In his soft voice, he captured the audience with some of the same tales of his youth that he had told me. I understand he even mentioned our interview earlier in the day, moments before I entered the bar. I was a little late after missing the uptown "A" train. As his reading wound down, the room erupted in applause. Most of the audience had been fans since early in his career.

A toast for Bruen went up in the back of the room from a group of young people. It was a fitting tribute to the author's ability to bridge ages with his grimy tales, ones that capture the imaginations of the Playstation generation.

The crowd of hangers-on and mixed bag of other authors who turned out to show their support kept up the flow of intimate conversation after the reading. By the end of the night, either by the strength of the Guinness or the passion of the subjects discussed, everyone was rightly fulfilled.

They say that a butterfly that flaps its wings in the States causes a tornado in China. After conversing with Ken Bruen, a graceful warrior butterfly, there must be a mighty blow somewhere.

An Irish Invasion

(Continued from page 8)

other industry representatives. The programs have been helpful in keeping tourism to Ireland high on the list of travel priorities for Americans, said Boyce.

"We have utmost confidence in the exceptional quality of Ireland's vacation product for American travelers," said Boyce. "These travel trade presentations being held throughout America are a vital part of the marketing mix we have planned in our promotional strategy for the year."

Mac Sweeney Named Chair of ACC Mid West Region

Kieran Mac Sweeney, managing director of Avocent, has been appointed Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce Mid West Region. Speaking at the launch of the Group's Business Agenda for 2004 on Feb. 16, MacSweeney said, "The Mid West Region and Shannon Free Zone in particular, was the jewel in the crown of Irish industrial development from the 1950s to the 1980s. The foresight for groundbreaking initiatives such as the creation of the tax free zone, the first duty free shop at Shannon airport and the promotion of Shannon as the 'European Gateway' gave the Mid West and Ireland a huge advantage in attracting foreign direct investment.

"As the competition for FDI becomes ever more intensive, we cannot rest on our laurels. Agencies must work to retain the existing level of investment by US Companies in the Mid West as well as ensuring the attractiveness of the Mid West to win future investment. This is vital to the long term success of the Mid West Region."

The American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland launched the business agenda for its Mid West Group as part of its ongoing strategy in supporting US Industry around the country. Collectively, US companies are the largest employers in the Mid West providing employment to over 11,000 people.

The Mid West group, serving Limerick, Shannon and Clare, encompasses over 75 US companies. Top executives from US industry in the region, including Avocent, Analog, Banta Global Turnkey, Cook Ireland, Dell, G.E. Financial Services, TFX Medical, Wyeth Nutritionals, Microsemi and Maidenform are among the US Companies identifying and driving the agenda for US Investment in the Mid West.

Mac Sweeney welcomed the development of a business strategy for Shannon Airport, saying; "One of the main attractions to many of the major investors located not only in the Mid West, but the entire Western Seaboard, is access to an international airport. There has been a serious decline in the level of service being offered from Shannon, and currently, the airport is not supporting the business needs. Reduced service by carriers and ill timed flight schedules means that companies based in the Mid West cannot easily connect to the major business cities in Europe, cannot attract potential customers to their companies and cannot air freight goods in a timely manner.

"The development of a Business Strategy for Shannon Airport must be a priority and we warmly welcome the recent initiatives from the Minister of Transport in establishing a newly appointed board of directors to Shannon Airport. We recognise there are legalities and challenges to be finalised but would encourage the Government to ensure that the new board have autonomy and support to implement its business strategies at the earliest possible time. A sense of urgency is needed as the current ambivalent situation cannot continue."

Mac Sweeney said that the decline of service being offered to the business traveller from Shannon Airport reinforced the view among companies in the Mid West that the region was being overlooked.

The Mid West has not developed as a strong clustering region for attracting flows of investment in specific sectors. The South, for example, has attracted a heavy concentration of investment from the pharmaceutical industry while the West has developed as a location for healthcare and biotechnology investment. The key strengths of the Mid West is an International Airport and a world class university. In particular, the strength and resources available in UL are an invaluable resource in driving the Region forward, particularly in the advanced technology sectors, as evidenced by the Mid West being an anchor for the Atlantic Technology Corridor.

Joanne Richardson, chief executive of the American Chamber of Commerce Ireland said, "The issues which are highlighted by our Mid West group reflect the concerns of American Chamber members in other regions. Although much progress has been made under the National Development Plan, a significant transport infrastructure deficit remains. Here in the Mid West major infrastructure is needed to improve the road network between Shannon, Limerick, Dublin and Galway. The NDP needs closer planning, costing and coordination and the Government must continue to pursue strategies for improvement. Infrastructure improvement in the regions need to be accelerated if we are to continue to attract investment and achieve balanced industrial development throughout Ireland."

On the subject of costs and competitiveness she added, "as long as we retain the ability to perform higher value add activity and deliver higher productivity, a higher cost base can be justified. However, the key will be to ensure that we remain mid table in terms of costs. High Technology and Innovation driven industries still have to compete on costs with other locations and we cannot afford huge increases in our cost base. Recent increases in the costs of telecommunications; utilities, insurance and transport are what make Ireland an expensive place to do business.

"The year 2004 will be one of challenge and opportunity for US companies in Ireland. However US Industry continues to make a major contribution to regional development and to the overall success of the Irish economy. The American Chamber of Commerce is committed to supporting US industry throughout the country and has now established five regions in Ireland encompassing over 250 US Companies. Collectively these companies support over 45,000 jobs and are the largest group of employers around the country".

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It's Just a Matter of Time

By Patrick Taylor

There is a difference between broken and bent. If you don't believe me, I'll explain. As with anything vaguely related to Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly, you may find the explanation convoluted.

When I worked for Dr. O'Reilly, Ireland had returned to daylight savings time. But during the second great numbered unpleasantness we had had a peculiar system of "double summer time" when the clocks were advanced not one but two hours. This, it was widely believed, had been introduced to foil the Luftwaffe's night bombing raids.

How, the denizens of Ballybucklebo reasoned, could the German airforce indulge themselves in a touch of nocturnal bombing when there was no longer such a thing as night and the sun, literally, shone at midnight? (It was this kind of reasoning that allowed the Irish to plan a manned mission to the Sun. They'd avoid the heat by going after dark.)

The Germans short-circuited the defensive ploy by resorting to, what was, according to the new clock settings, very early morning bombing raids. This upset that sense of fairness so dear to the hearts of the average Ulsterman. The Germans were regarded as no longer playing by the rules.

Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly would never have failed to play by the rules. Never. He was, or at least as far as Her Majesty's Royal Navy had been concerned, he had been an officer and a gentleman. I can categorically assure you I never saw him break a single rule during all the time I spent with him.

Bending was another matter. It is said the first pretzel was designed by O'Reilly when he mistook a straight biscuit for a statute for which he disapproved.

You may be wondering what the vagaries of springing forward, falling back and O'Reilly's disdain for the laws of mere mortals have in common. To help you see the connection let me add the catalyst—alcohol. Still confused? Bear with me.

You do know that O'Reilly enjoyed a shot, both in the "of whiskey" sense and at the occasional unsuspecting duck. It might help if I explained that the months for molesting migratory mallard ran from September to February. You also are aware, because I have been at some pains to tell you, that when the omens were propitious on any given autumn or winter Saturday Dr. O' would stick me with being on call, summon Arthur Guinness, his black Labrador, and vanish in the pre-dawn blackness to bang and blaze barrel after barrel at the bewildered birds.

On the third Saturday of October in the year of our Lord, I don't remember exactly, O'Reilly and the faithful hound had been somewhere on the foreshore of Stangford Lough since well before dawn. I had been ministering to the medical emergencies; one cut finger, one marble up a nostril and one hang-over—Donal Donnelly's—that could have been mistaken for the symptoms of a brain tumour in anyone who actually pos-

sessed such an organ. I'd eaten a splendid supper—slices of one of Mrs. Kincaid's roast hams—and for once feeling like a bit of company had wandered over to "The Mucky Duck."

By this stage of my apprenticeship with Dr. O', I was well known to the locals and they to me. The snug was full of the usual suspects—Arthur Osbaldiston behind the bar, Fergal McGillicutty, Donal Donnelly, as the English call it, "having a hair of the dog" or as the Irish say, "taking the cure"—in front. The local constable leant against the bar, straight glass of stout clutched in one hand.

"Evening, 'Doc. Sherry?" Arthur asked.

"Thanks."

He poured, handed it to me and glanced over to where a large clock hung high up on the opposite wall. It was six minutes to ten. "Himself's late the night."

"The ducks," I remarked, sipping from my glass.

"Oh, aye," said Arthur, polishing a glass with a grubby dishcloth, "Dr. O'Reilly's a terrible man for the ducks." He glanced back at the clock and his head made an almost indiscernible twitch towards the rotund arm of the law. "The doctor'd better get himself in soon if he wants a wee hot whiskey to keep away the dew. I've to close in five minutes." He smiled obsequiously at the constable, "Isn't that right officer?"

"It is, Mr. Osbaldiston. The licensing laws are very strict. Very strict." He held out his now empty glass. "I've just the time for the one more."

"Time, gentlemen," called Arthur as he started to build the policeman's pint.

At precisely nine fifty-five the door flew open and O'Reilly pursued by Arthur Guinness entered. His cheeks were a slate gray, his nose a screaming red. He blew on his hands, rubbed the palms vigorously together and blew on them again. "Jasus, it's cold as a witch's tit out there," he remarked to the bar in general, and, "Hot Irish. Double." to Arthur Osbaldiston in particular.

The constable turned and glared first at O'Reilly then at Arthur Guinness. I suspected the episode when Arthur had mistaken the man for a burglar and had bitten him still rankled. "Last shout's been called. It's ten o'clock, doctor."

O'Reilly looked at the clock then back to the officer. I may have been the only one in the place to notice the change in the colour of O'Reilly's nose tip, but he hid his anger well.

"True, officer true," he said, "and I know you are just doing your job."

The constable hurried to finish his pint within the five min-

(Continued on page 24)

The Resurrection of Molly Quinn's

by Alice M. Vollmar

After a brief and untimely demise, Molly Quinn's Pub reopened its doors on March 6, 2004, to a standing-room only grand opening crowd at 3300 E. Lake St., 10 blocks away from its original Twin Cities location. In February and March, volunteers with the irrepressible spirit of Irish community wielded paint brushes, plumber's and mason's tools, and resurrected Molly Quinn's Pub in 27 days. Today, pints are again raised and the fiddles, guitars and mandolins are playing at this neighborhood gathering spot.

The pub's trio of owners – Bill Watkins, Matthew Lamphear and Cathy Cook – created such a lovely little bit of Ireland in their southeastern Minneapolis pub that, when rental and regulation hassles closed the doors, regulars mourned. There were farewell parties – and Watkins handed back to his Celtic patrons their coat-of-arms shields that he'd made for them and hung on the walls. But as the saying goes, close one door and another opens.

A property became available; the partners negotiated and bought it; and customers pitched in to bring Molly Quinn's back to life, painting walls shamrock green with soft gray contrasts. The new space measures three times larger than the old, including a spacious dining room that will seat 90, a stage, a fireplace, and of course, a substantial bar.

"It's the love of the people that did this," said Lamphear. "All those customers who came in after their days work..."

Bustling about behind the bar, Cook commented, "The neighborhood shopkeepers and the community around us are ecstatic that we're here. Myself, I'll be happy when everything is running smoothly." Cook said that ten of the original staff have returned; the larger space, new kitchen, and new people will bring a few challenges.

"But the music will go on as before," smiled Watkins, a gregarious fellow with a wild bush of a gray beard who's well-known as a musician and the author of two books, *A Celtic Childhood* and *Scotland Is Not for the Squeamish*. There will be an anything-goes, drop-in session (bring your instrument and play) on

Tuesday nights, traditional Irish music Fridays and Mondays, jazz on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and a pub quiz on Sunday nights. (All events start around 8 p.m. or so.)

A quiz? Indeed. Watkins comes up with trivia questions to ask customers. A past one was: What is written on the tablet held by the Statue of Liberty? Only one person answered correctly: July 4, 1776, said Watkins. He chuckled recalling another guess: Made in Japan.

All of this makes for fun and lively interaction, the whole point of an Irish pub in Watkin's estimation. "Americans are just beginning to realize that pubs aren't places to go and get drunk, but that conversation is the reason to be here."

In the old Molly Quinn's, Watkins felt pleased that elderly widows sometimes came in for a pint and a rare night out. Meeting at the pub led to marriage for at least three customers, and women felt safe coming there alone. The owners intend to foster that neighborhood feeling in the new Molly Quinn's. Loyal patrons have brought back their clan shields; the shields now decorate the walls along with pictures of Ireland and all manner of memorabilia, including a large ancestral heritage map of Ireland.

At the evening's end, there is a definite pull to linger, to not rush away. If Watkins sees you heading toward the door, you'll get a wave.

"Don't be a stranger now," he'll tell you.

And you know you won't.

The Details:

Molly Quinn's opens its doors daily (10 a.m. on weekends, 11 a.m. weekdays) serving late breakfast, lunch and dinner (a full Irish breakfast and the pub's fish 'n chips are memorable) at 3300 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, Minn., 612-722-1272. www.wildbillwatkins.com.

It has been said that advertising is only successful if it reaches its target audience.

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Film Deal for 'Star of the Sea'

Movie rights deal for *Star of the Sea* have just concluded with British film company, Working Title Films, whose hits include *Notting Hill*, *Love Actually*, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, *Billy Elliot*, *About a Boy* and *Fargo*.

O'Connor's film/TV agent at Blake Friedmann reports, "Working Title have taken up the book with great enthusiasm and are in discussions with a director.

Star of the Sea (Harvest, March 2004), by Joseph O'Connor, is a sweeping historical novel that has been called, "brave and artful," by the *New York Times Book Review*. *People Magazine* writes, "Bottom Line: *Shining Star*." *Star of the Sea* is also a *New York Times* Notable Book 2003 and has just been named one of the "25 Books to Remember, 2003" by the New York Public Library and Harvest is proud to publish this stunning achievement in paperback this March.

Star of the Sea shot onto the UK Bestseller List after the book's appearance on the Richard and Judy Channel 4 book program, for which it was selected as one of the 10 contenders for the Best Read of the Year 'Nibbie' Award. Three weeks at No. 1 in the UK book charts soon followed with paperback sales in excess of 280,000, a fantastic performance for an edition published only in January. Irish recognition came with *Star of the Sea* re-appearing at number one in the Irish mass market list and remaining for five weeks. The novel has also appeared on the long-list for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2004.

Famous Irish Personalities and Their Birthdays

1. **Gerry Adams**, president of Sinn Fein, born Belfast, Oct. 8, 1948
 2. **Samuel Beckett**, writer, born Dublin, April 13, 1906 (died in Paris, Dec. 22, 1989)
 3. **Brendan Behan**, writer, born Dublin, Feb. 9, 1923 (died in Dublin March 20, 1964)
 4. **Maeve Binchy**, writer, born Dublin, May 28, 1940
 5. **Kenneth Branagh**, Shakespearan actor/director, born Belfast, Dec. 10, 1960
 6. **Pierce Brosnan**, actor, born Navan, born May 16, 1952
 7. **Brian Friel**, playwright, born Omagh, Jan. 9, 1929
 8. **Veronica Guerin**, investigative journalist, born Dublin, July 5, 1959, (died in Dublin, June 26, 1996)
 9. **Seamus Heaney**, winner Nobel Prize for Literature, born Mossbawn, Northern Ireland, April 13, 1939
 10. **John Hume**, Northern Ireland national politician, winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1998, born Derry, Jan. 18, 1937
 11. **Neil Jordan**, film director/actor, born Sligo, Feb. 25, 1950
 12. **Caitlín Maude**, actress/poet, born Na Doiriú, Casla, May 21, 1944
 13. **Siobhán McKenna**, actress, born Belfast, July 24, 1922 (died Nov. 16, 1986)
 14. **Van Morrison**, singer/songwriter, born Belfast, Aug. 31, 1945
 15. **Liam Neeson**, actor, born Balleymena, Northern Ireland, June 7, 1952
 16. **Frank O'Connor**, writer, Cork, Sept. 17, 1903 (died Dublin, March 10, 1966)
 17. **Maureen O'Hara**, actress, born Milltown, Aug. 17, 1921
 18. **Seán Ó Riada**, director of music, Abbey Theater, born Cork, Aug. 1, 1931 (died in London, Oct. 3, 1971)
 19. **Edel Mary Quinn**, lay missionary, born Kanturk, Sept. 14, 1907 (died May 12, 1944)
 20. **Mary Robinson**, first woman president of Ireland, born in Mayo, May 21, 1944
 21. **David Trimble**, Northern Ireland unionist politician, winner Nobel Peace Prize, 1998, born Belfast, Oct. 15 1944
-

The British Ministry of Defence has finally agreed to provide a Northern Ireland coroner investigating 10 contentious killings, including those of seven IRA men, full access to documents and video footage relating to the cases.

This story, and other news items can be found on the

Irish American Post

web site

www.IrishAmericanPost.com

Cowen Raises Immigration Issues in Washington

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Brian Cowen T.D., met March 3 with a number of prominent US politicians in Washington to update them on the Northern Ireland peace process and to discuss the situation and status of Irish immigrants in the United States.

Minister Cowen met with Sen. Chuck Hagel who, together with Sen. Tom Daschle, the Democratic Leader in the Senate, has recently initiated a bill in Congress on the position of undocumented illegals in the US. This followed the announcement by President Bush's initiative "Fair and Secure Immigration Reform."

Speaking at the end of his visit to Washington, Cowen said: "I welcome the Daschle-Hagel initiative. I see it as a constructive effort to deal with the situation of the undocumented in the United States in a pragmatic and compassionate way.

"I have already welcomed President Bush's initiative, in January, when it was announced. The government is working to develop the economy and create jobs so that Irish people need not emigrate out of economic necessity. However, we recognize that there will always be a level of emigration and that there will also be some people who require special help in relation to their status here in the United States.

"Each of these initiatives will, of course, have to follow the legislative paths within Congress, and I and my officials continue to follow their progress closely. However, I am delighted to have this early opportunity to flag our concerns about the position of Irish immigrants in the US."

Minister Cowen met with a range of other Congressional leaders, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Denis Hastert, and House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi. He also held discussions with a number of senior politicians, from both parties, who have taken a direct interest in the peace process in Northern Ireland over many years - these included senators Kennedy and Dodd and Rep. Jim Walsh.

On Northern Ireland, Cowen said: "In the context of the current difficulties, in my meetings I stressed again that there is no half-way house between violence and democracy. At the same time, disengagement will not advance progress on the paramilitarism issue. We must continue with collective dialogue and redouble our efforts to resolve the related core issues of paramilitarism and institutional stability."

It's Just a Matter of Time

(Continued from page 21)

utes drinking-up time permitted by the law. "True, sir."

"But," said O'Reilly, "if I could prove you're wrong about the time could I buy you a pint and have a wee warmer myself?"

Every eye was on the peeler. The silence was such that the dropping of a single pin might have resulted in a bang of sufficient magnitude to rupture eardrums.

"Well..."

"Walking stick, Arthur," said O'Reilly in his best quarterdeck voice.

The stick was produced.

O'Reilly stepped over to the clock, pushed open the glass front with the stick's rubber-tipped ferrule and with great concentration used the thing to turn the minute hand back through sixty-five minutes. It was now, local "Mucky Duck" time, eight fifty-eight.

"But," spluttered the constable, "you can't just do that."

"You're right," said O'Reilly, "I can't, but Her Majesty's Government can." He glared round the room. "Today is the third

Saturday of October, and what happens tonight?

To give him credit, Donal Donnelly saw it first. "Jasus, doctor. The clocks go back."

"They do," said O'Reilly.

The constable began, "But not until two..."

"Drinks have been poured, officer. One for you and, Arthur, a hot double John Jameson for me."

The constable laughed. "All right, doctor. I'll allow you're not breaking the law—only bending it."

"Right," said O'Reilly, lifting his steaming glass, "Cheers."

Patrick Taylor is an Ulsterman living in Canada. He has written about Dr. O'Reilly, his young assistant Dr. Barry Laverty and denizens of Ballybucklebo for six years. These characters are the subjects of Taylor's third novel, *The Apprenticeship of Doctor Laverty*, to be published this fall by Insomniac Press of Toronto, Canada.

Writer Touches on New Ireland in Expat Book

"Oh come ye back to Ireland?" Perhaps not, says native-Irish novelist Áine Greaney.

When wealthy expatriate 50-year-old John McHugh returns from London to a west-of-Ireland village, he hasn't anticipated the new, 21st-century country. Purchasing the ultimate homecoming prize: a derelict British landlord's mansion and estate, he plans to demolish the building for his New Wave bachelor pad.

But McHugh hasn't bargained for the opposition of the village's dot-com, blow-in community and the parish's new-found drive toward historical

preservation. Neither has he bargained for the chance encounter with Susan Brown-Whitaker, the recently divorced granddaughter of the last British agent to occupy the house.

McHugh and his repatriation are the fictional creations of Irish-Newburyport author Greaney whose debut novel, *The Big House*, is being released in the U.S. by Simon & Schuster on March 16. The novel, first published in Ireland and the U.K. this past June, topped the bestsellers list at Kenny's bookshop, Galway.

Four years ago, Greaney got her idea for the story when she was suddenly reading about Ireland's Celtic-Tiger economic boom, the software start-ups and the bull markets and Europe's highest-GNP growth rate.

Thirteen years previously, Greaney had left an economically static and socially conservative Ireland for the U.S. At that time, an estimated

30,000-plus Irish immigrants had arrived in Boston-, with New York, San Francisco and Chicago welcoming their own share of "the new Irish" in America. But by the late 1990s, "the Auld Sod," had become "the Silicon Valley of Europe with multinationals and Irish indigenous companies vying to attract the Irish-abroad back home.

So in that summer of 2000, and for the first time since immigrating, Greaney wondered, "Why don't I pack up the kitchen table, the computer and just go home?" But first, she used that computer to create her McHugh character and the fictional village of Rathloe, with all its rivalries between the newcomers and natives.

"My McHugh character was my pigeon down the mines to pretest the air quality," says Greaney. "Consciously or not, every expatriate goes back with an agenda, a re-entrance exam for the homeland he once left. Can that new country pass the test? I had great fun finding out."

And, Greaney points out -- four years later and now working on her second novel, one set in Massachusetts and County Mayo -- she's still living on the North Shore.

Greaney came from a small village of 14 houses in Co. Mayo and taught elementary school in the Irish Midlands before moving to the U.S. in 1986 where she completed a master's in English and writing and was accepted to the New York State Writers Institute Fiction workshop. A frequent public speaker, she has also participated in radio and newspaper interviews in Ireland and Greater Boston.

Greaney has published short fiction, essays, reviews and travel features for literary, trade and news publications such as *The Literary Review*, *Books Ireland*, *The Larcom Review*, *The Sunday Albany Times Union*, *The Irish Voice*, *The Irish Independent* and *Creative Nonfiction*.

Among her writing awards was the 2000 grand prize winner of the Frank O'Connor Short Fiction Award.

Mac Sweeney

(Continued from page 20)

She added; "Ireland remains one of the stronger and more vibrant economies in Europe. While much has been made recently of the perceived threat to Ireland of the new member states joining the EU, I believe that we will continue to remain an attractive location for higher value investment from US companies. We will however have to market ourselves more aggressively to secure this investment. This is a priority for the American Chamber and together with IDA Ireland we have been working with member companies to identify how we can best attract this investment to Ireland."

The US remains the single largest source of inward investment in Ireland. Today almost 90,000 people are employed in 570 US companies in Ireland, accounting for 65% of all IDA supported employment. Almost a quarter of all new green-field US investment into Europe comes to Ireland. US investment is crucial to Ireland's current and future success, both as an investor and a significant trading partner.



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