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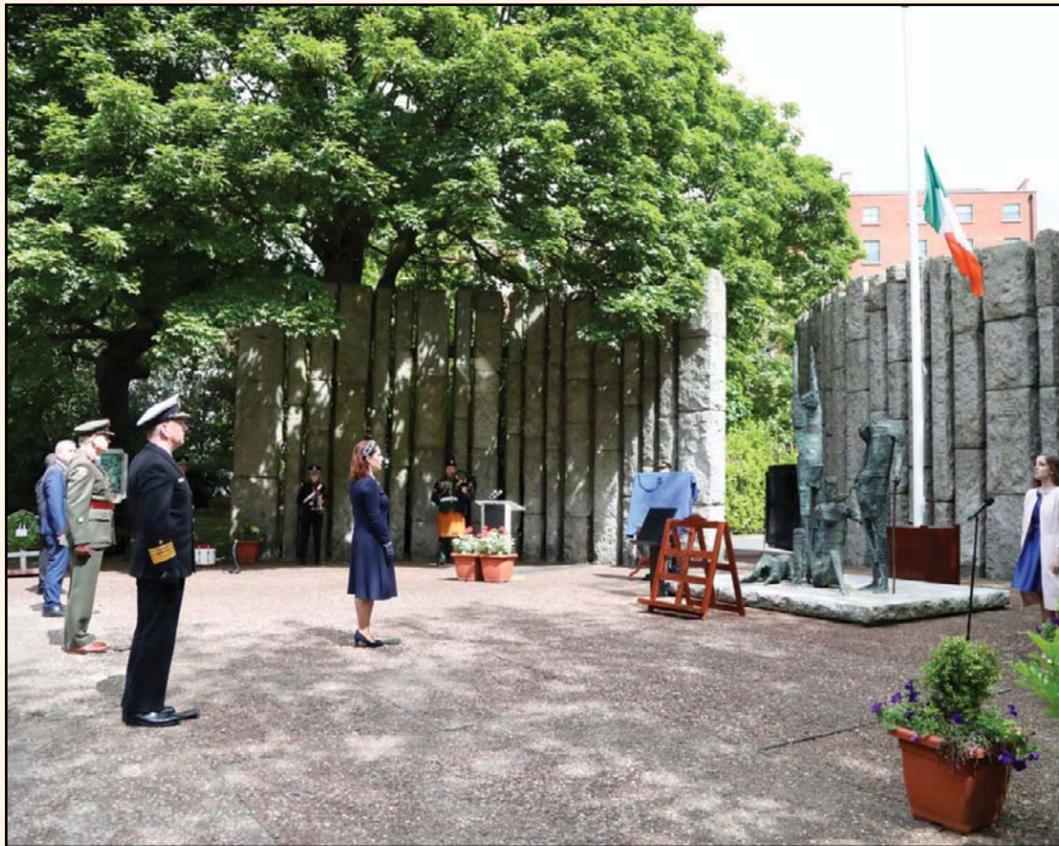
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Victims of An Gorta Mór Remembered At Commemoration in Dublin, May 17

The annual commemoration of An Gorta Mór (The Great Hunger) which claimed the lives of over a million Irish people in the mid-nineteenth century and forced over two million more to emigrate, many to America, was held in St

Stephen's Green, Dublin on Sunday, May 17.

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD officiated at the ceremony.

The commemoration is held each year in different venues around Ireland to

mark the fact that the disaster affected all parts of the country. This year's event was to be held in Bunclara, County Donegal, but was moved to the capital city because of the coronavirus pandemic. Bunclara will now host next year.

Continued on page 7 inside

Covid-19 Numbers Start To Improve Across Ireland

AS OF MAY 30, THE DEATH toll in the Republic of Ireland from coronavirus stood at 1,651. The total number of reported cases was 24,929. Approximately one third of those cases were healthcare workers. In the north of Ireland there were 4,696 confirmed cases and 521 deaths reported.

The rates of increase in the numbers infected and dying from the disease are shrinking across the island. In the last week of May new cases reported on a daily basis were under the 100 mark in the Republic and the basic reproduction rate of the virus was thought to be between 0.4 and 0.6, described by one government minister as "remarkably stable." On May 29 the Health Service Executive in the Republic declared there were 42 people being treated for coronavirus in Intensive Care Unit beds, down from a high point in April of 160.

The group tasked with measuring the spread of the virus in the Republic is the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). It said that there has been no sig-

nificant increase in numbers of cases in the Republic since Phase 1 of the government's reopening roadmap was implemented on May 18. Professor Philip Nolan, chair of the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group with NPHE, said this is because Irish people "have learned how to go about their business and not spread this virus."

Nolan urged people to continue to maintain social distancing, exercise hand and cough hygiene, to wear face masks, and to self-isolate and contact their doctor if showing symptoms, for testing and tracing. If people continue to be conscientious, he said that it would be possible to restart many activities, albeit "in a cautious manner," without setting off another wave of infection.

Nolan said the virus will continue to decline if community infections remain low and the reproduction rate of the virus is kept below one. He said that half of recent cases are contacts of known cases, for example in households.

Continued on page 3 inside

Returning The Favor, Irish Respond To Navajo Nation Coronavirus Appeal

IRISH PEOPLE HAVE BEEN sending money to a GoFundMe appeal for funds to help the Navajo and Hopi Nations, which have been hit hard by the coronavirus.

As of May 11, the Navajo Nation—which stretches across parts of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico—had 3,204 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 102 deaths. As a ratio of it's population, the Navajo have more confirmed cases than any US state.

Navajo and Hopi families set up the GoFundMe campaign to raise money for food, water, essential supplies and personal protective equipment. At press time the appeal had raised \$4.4 million out of it's target of \$5 million.

Many of the Irish donations were inspired by the story of the Choctaw Nation which, in 1847, collected money to send to Irish victims of An Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger. This singular act of

generosity came only a few years after almost 6,000 Choctaw indians died on the Trail of Tears, having been forced to leave their ancestral homelands in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

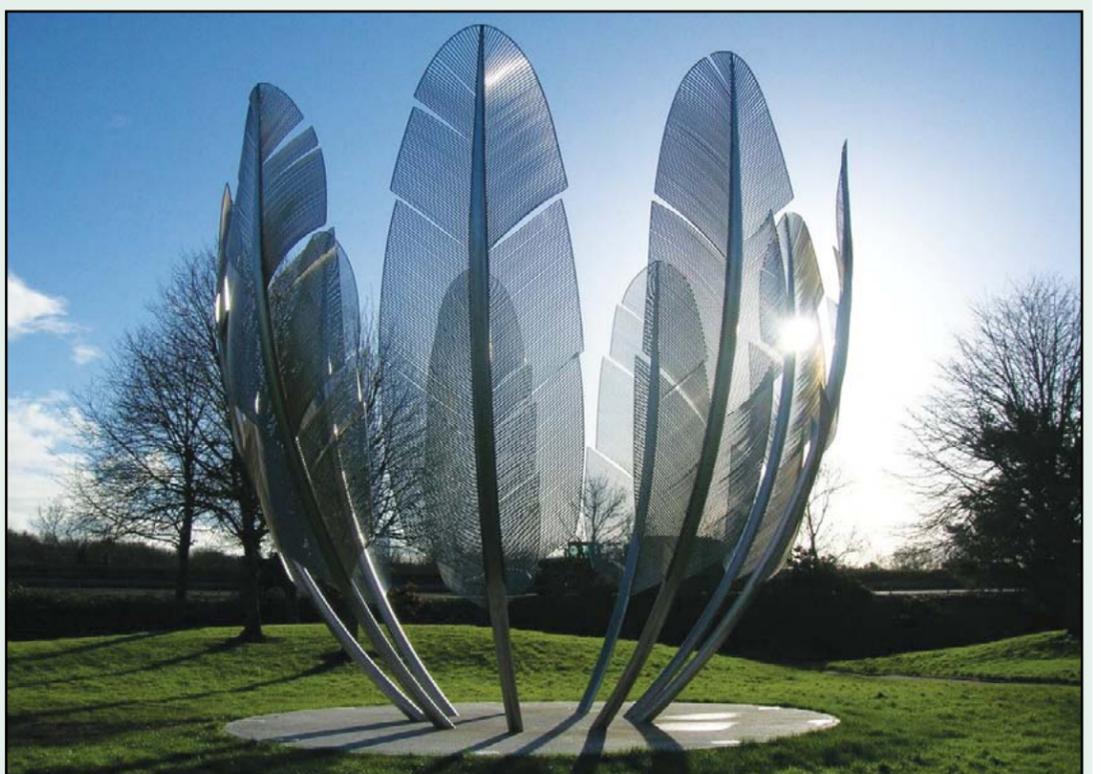
The story is remembered and honored in Ireland.

The Kindred Spirits sculpture (pictured here) by Cork-based artist Alex Pentek was unveiled in the town of Middleton in 2017 by Choctaw leaders.

The GoFundMe page singled out the Irish contributions:

"In early May donations to the Relief Fund's GoFundMe campaign spiked with contributions from Ireland. After reading news coverage of the crisis on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, many Irish felt compelled to reciprocate support from Indigenous Nations that dates back more than 170 years.

Continued on page 7 inside



The Kindred Spirits' sculpture in Baillic Park, Middleton, County Cork, commemorates the generosity of the Choctaw Indian Nation during An Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger in Ireland of 1845 - 1851.

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As we have reported in our recent communications, we have fully complied with "Shelter In Place" orders issued the week of March 15 by shutting down our facility and it has remain closed for the duration of this COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we have had to cancel all events and meetings and we are anxiously awaiting to reopen to the public in mid-June. Please help us weather this storm and keep the momentum we built last year by making a donation to our St. Patrick's Appeal.

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IRISH NEWS • Coronavirus Update From Ireland

Continued from front page

Meanwhile, caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar (Fine Gael) said that he would like to accelerate the Government's roadmap, but it was too early to make that decision.

On Friday, May 29, Varadkar said that bringing forward Phase 2 might be possible, provided that the virus remained under control.

"The reason we can't make a judgement call yet is because it's only two weeks after restrictions are relaxed that you know if the virus is spreading again, that's why we have three week intervals," he said. "So we'll know next week if we're on track."

Varadkar told reporters, also on May 29, that the aim is for schools to open on time at the end of August. Ultimately the plan to reopen schools will be contingent on how well coronavirus is being contained.

"We are also learning from countries that have had to reimpose restrictions. There have been outbreaks in schools in France and several schools in South Korea had to close due to outbreaks," Varadkar said.

"It might mean that not every student is able to return to school but we will try to ensure it is as normal as possible."

"Provided the virus does not make a comeback between now and then, primary and secondary schools will reopen at the end of August."

"It may not be possible for every student to return for the full day, every day, but that is the point we are trying to get to, so it may be necessary to phase in the reopening of schools, but our objective is to open them as fully and as soon as possible provided the virus does not make a comeback," he added.

The Taoiseach made his remarks shortly after the publication of an Irish-focused study

which found 'no evidence' that coronavirus was transmitted in Irish schools before the government closures on March 12.

The study was conducted by the journal Eurosurveillance. The authors suggested that their findings add to a growing body of evidence that children do not appear to be drivers of coronavirus transmission.

"Children are thought to be vectors for transmission of many respiratory diseases including influenza," the study notes.

"It was assumed that this would be true for Covid-19 also. To date however, evidence of widespread paediatric transmission has failed to emerge."

However, the authors acknowledged that their study was limited by its size, that only symptomatic contacts were tested, and that asymptomatic secondary cases were not captured.

"While this study, based on small numbers, provides limited evidence in relation to Covid-19 transmission in the school setting, it includes all known cases with school attendance in the Republic of Ireland," the study said.

At the other end of the age spectrum the figures in Ireland replicate those of other countries in showing that Covid-19 overwhelmingly affects old people the worst.

According to the Central Statistics Office over 90 percent of the deaths so far recorded in the Republic are of people over the age of 65. Deaths in long-term residential care facilities represent over 60 percent of total Covid-19 deaths in the Republic and more than 50 percent of those in the north of Ireland.

There have been slightly more men than women killed by the disease, despite more women being infected.

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COUNTRY CUTTINGS

WORLD'S SHORTEST ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE TO TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER

THE WORLD'S SHORTEST ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE IS NOW SET TO TAKE PLACE in October after it was originally canceled in March due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. Hot Springs, Arkansas, will hold its 98-foot long parade on Bridge Street on October 16 and 17 this year.

The parade has been renamed the First-Ever Second Annual 17th Annual World's Shortest St Patrick's Day Parade, if you can wrap your head around that ridiculous combination of words.

Some people have joked that the parade's name is longer than its route.

Bill Solleder, Marketing Director with Visit Hot Springs, said that Hot Springs residents deserve a celebration later this year due to what they're going through now.

"Why would a St Pat's parade work in October? Well, basically, why not? As far out and do-it-the-way-we-want attitude we've always had about the World's Shortest St Patrick's Day Parade, why not just do it in October?" he told the *Hot Springs Sentinel*.

Solleder admitted that the event's name was "ridiculous" but again questioned "why not?"

He explained that the event will be called the "second annual" St Patrick's Day parade because he held a "very small parade" with fellow parade organizer Alexis Hampe on March 17.

—IrishCentral.com

SOCIALLY-DISTANCED QUEUES AT WEST BELFAST CHURCH AS PRIEST HEARS CONFESSIONS

THERE WERE SOCIALLY-DISTANCED QUEUES AT A WEST BELFAST CHURCH as a Catholic priest heard confessions. Father Paddy McCafferty of Corpus Christi in Ballymurphy was kept busy for an hour today as parishioners waited in line.

He sat in front of the church behind the gates while those making their confessions stood about two meters in front of him.

"I started hearing confessions at 11.40 and I was kept busy for about an hour with a constant stream of people, with everybody observing social distancing," he told the PA news agency.

"As they came to me outside the church, there was a two-meter distance, maybe more.

"There was no one close to them to hear what they were saying and it was easy for me to hear what they were saying.

"Everything was observed, the sanctity and privacy as well as protecting people from the virus.

"I intend to do it again next week and so on until we are able to get people back into the church again."

Fr McCafferty said previously he had been hearing confessions by appointment, meeting parishioners outside the church at a safe distance. "There is nothing to stop you hearing confessions from people provided you observe all the precautions. I am aware of other priests who are doing it too. We are not breaching any of the safety mechanisms and it does help people. A lot of people were very moved to be able to do it, and we have to comfort people and strengthen them in every way possible."

—Journal.ie

HAIRDRESSERS BEING OFFERED 'THREE OR FOUR TIMES' NORMAL PRICES TO CUT HAIR WHILE SALONS ARE CLOSED

HAIRDRESSERS HAVE BEEN OFFERED 'THREE OR FOUR TIMES' the normal price of a salon haircut by clients desperate to have their hair done during the current lockdown, according to industry representatives.

President of the Irish Hairdressers Federation, Danielle Kennedy said people aren't prepared to wait until mid-July to have their hair cut or treated and are willing to pay treble the price they normally pay to have hairdressers come to their homes.

"It has just erupted, and it has erupted even further since the announcement came that we're not currently opening until the 20 July because people aren't prepared to wait that long to get their hair done," she said speaking on RTÉ Radio 1's Sean O'Rourke program.

"(They're offered) roughly €150 to €200 for a haircut ... compared to €40 or €50, which is the normal price—so three or four times the normal price, people are prepared to pay."

Pictures across social media in recent weeks have shown people dying their hair using off-the-shelf products—some of which have turned out horribly—but Kennedy said the majority of requests at present are for people looking for a trim.

Kennedy said hairdressers are looking at measures to protect clients and staff in order to reopen sooner than July.

"We have come up with a set of structured Covid protection guidelines that we would be prepared to go to if needed to get salons opened sooner," she said.

—Journal.ie

IRISH NEWS

Archbishops In Ireland Initiate Talks On Resuming Mass

DISCUSSIONS ARE ONGOING in Ireland between faith leaders and the government over how to open up places of worship over the next several months.

Archbishops Eamon Martin, Diarmuid Martin and Kieran O'Reilly met with caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar May 14, and shared with him the work that is being done by the Catholic Church to develop a national plan to restart Masses and other services. The plan incorporates coronavirus mitigation measures, such as social distancing, to ensure the health and safety of congregations.

Churches have been shuttered since March and there are also fears for the safety of priests, many of whom are over 70, placing them at higher risk from the disease.

Currently, churches are set to reopen no earlier than

mid-July under phase four of the government's roadmap for easing restrictions.

In this country at least one priest has challenged the authorities on their right to close down organized religion.

Father Kevin Robinson, of St Anthony of Padua Church in North Caldwell, New Jersey, is suing Governor Phil Murphy for the right to say Mass again. Fr Robinson's action claims that Executive Order 107, issued in late March, is unconstitutional in that it violates both the First and the Fourteenth amendments.

The order bans social gatherings of any size in the state, including for religious purposes. It also states that people must stay at least six feet apart when in public, except for "immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners."

Robinson is arguing that St Anthony's can achieve the exact same social distancing used in commercial businesses that were allowed to remain open as they were deemed 'essential' by Murphy. The lawsuit alleges that Fr Robinson was threatened with arrest the day before the Governor's order went into effect.

"The officer was verbally aggressive, repeatedly stating that the Mass could not proceed because of the Governor's order, thus making it clear that (Robinson) was subject to arrest while the members of his congregation were covering in the basement in fear," the lawsuit stated. "Only when the officer was informed by the local police chief via cell phone that Order 107 was not effective until the following day was his implicit threat of arrest withdrawn."

Martin McGuinness Remembered

SOME OF IRELAND'S BEST-LOVED musicians lined up during a rousing online event on May 23 to pay tribute to the late Martin McGuinness on what would have been his 70th birthday. The Sinn Féin Vice-President and former Deputy First Minister of the north's power-sharing government passed away on March 21, 2017 following a short battle with a rare heart condition.

Christy Moore, Matt Molloy and Damien Dempsey all featured in the 'Evening of Stories, Song & Music,' sharing the stage with New York singer Mary Courtney, Martin's granddaughter Cara McGuinness, and a host of other talented performers from Martin's home city of Derry and further afield.

The event was organised by the Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation whose spokesperson



Paul Kavanagh said it would be a special and poignant tribute.

He commented: "Obviously the way many of us carry out events of remembrance and celebration have had to change because of the Covid-19 crisis, and we are no different. The Chieftains Walk, (which

raises funds for the North West Cancer Centre and other good causes), which is also organised in memory of Martin, had to be postponed but I know the organising committee are very grateful to everyone who continues to register to take part when the walk is rescheduled."

The event also featured tributes and recollections from leading figures in the world of politics, both at home and internationally, who shared their memories of McGuinness.

"Martin McGuinness remains a much loved and much missed figure for countless people around the world. We hope this event gives them the opportunity to come together to remember him and celebrate his life in a unique and poignant way," said Kavanagh.

The event was streamed on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Good On You Daniel! Singing Star Lifts The Spirits Of Donegal's Old Folks

ONE OF DONEGAL'S FAVORITE sons has not been found wanting when it comes to cheering up some of the elderly residents of the county's long term care facilities. Singer Daniel O'Donnell, has been delivering impromptu concerts at some of the homes, serenading the old folks from outside through open windows.

A video of one of the mini-concerts, taken at the Falcarragh Community Hospital, has gone viral. It shows the residents lined up at the hospital's windows to watch O'Donnell perform from the hospital grounds.

In the clip O'Donnell is singing 40 Shades of Green, Johnny Cash's famous ballad

about his travels to Ireland. O'Donnell sings from a safe distance and uses a portable sound system.

The star is seen chatting to the residents through their windows, asking: "Are you all well?"

At the end of the video O'Donnell receives a great round of applause from staff members and residents. The over 70s in Ireland have been 'cocooning' for two months, which involves never going outside and avoiding all social contact.

Ani O'Donnell, who filmed the video, thanked O'Donnell on Facebook.

"On behalf of all the

residents and staff in Falcarragh Community Hospital, we would like to say a massive thank you to the one and only Daniel O'Donnell. Words can not express the joy you brought to the residents this afternoon," she wrote.

O'Donnell has also performed for patients in care facilities in Gweedore and Dungloe. Speaking on Irish radio, he explained why he wanted to perform in care homes across Donegal.

"Sure it passes the time for me, takes nothing out of me, and gives a wee bit of a change of atmosphere to those people who are in the hospitals and various places."

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• IRISH NEWS •

Suspension Of Diagnostic And Screening Programs Could Result In More Deaths Than Coronavirus

FEARS ARE GROWING IN IRELAND that the number of people who will die from preventable causes, because coronavirus measures stopped them getting the treatment they needed, will exceed deaths from the virus itself.

Speaking in the Dáil Éireann (Ireland's parliament) last month Labour Party leader Alan Kelly said that the suspension of so much non-coronavirus healthcare is a matter of "life and death." Kelly said that the resumption of normal diagnostic and screening services "cannot wait any longer."

Kelly concluded that preventable non-Covid-related deaths: "will surpass Covid-related deaths if the trajectory goes on the way it is going in

the coming weeks."

Kelly's comments are borne out by the facts. Cancer screening programs have been largely shut down because of the pandemic. There were no mammograms carried out by BreastCheck in April this year, compared to 13,763 in April 2019. CervicalCheck laboratories received 937 samples for analysis in April this year, compared to 21,037 last year. Prostate cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer and colorectal cancer are five of the top ten leading causes of death in the Republic of Ireland.

Experts have warned that the continued suspension of such programs could have devastating long-term consequences.

There are also concerns that patients who need urgent care are not showing up to Emergency Departments, either because they don't want to overburden the healthcare system or because they are worried about contracting Covid-19.

Figures released by the Economic and Social Research Institute showed there were 45 percent less emergency department attendances per day in the week ending March 29 than had been the case in the week ending March 1. The drop in the more serious cases, classified as very urgent, was 27 percent. The ESRI said the public must be encouraged not to ignore symptoms and to attend emergency departments when they need treatment.

Pandemic Could Lead To Mental Health Crisis, Sinn Féin TD Says

SINN FÉIN TD MARK WARD (Dublin Mid-West) has highlighted the worsening mental health crisis brought about by the pandemic. Ward has called for a special session of the Dáil to discuss mental health and the reconvening of the Committee on the Future Provision of Mental Health Supports.

Ward also questioned the Minister for Health on why Pieta House staff have been laid off and queried the appropriateness of the Government's over-reliance on charities for essential services which should be provided by the state. (Pieta House is a charitable organiza-

tion which provides therapy to those engaging in self-harm, who have suicidal ideation, or who have been bereaved by suicide).

Ward said: "In light of the World Health Organisation stating the Coronavirus could cause a global mental health crisis, I have called on the Minister to have a special sitting of the Dáil on mental health. I have also called for the reconvening of the Committee on the Future Provision of Mental Health Supports."

"Covid-19 has seen an upsurge in people looking to avail of mental health supports and the longer this goes on the

bigger the demand will be on services."

He added: "We all saw the big support and generosity of the Irish public towards Pieta House last week with their fundraiser on the RTÉ Late Late show. I, like many people, have supported this charity over the years."

"However, I was concerned to discover that Pieta House had introduced redundancies to clinical workers prior to this fundraiser. At a time of a pandemic and peoples' mental health being adversely affected, the Government needs to help Pieta to retain these clinical workers."

Brendan Bowyer, Irish Showband Legend For 60 Years, Dies Aged 81

ONE OF THE GREATS OF THE Irish showbiz world, singer and entertainer Brendan Bowyer, died peacefully at home in Las Vegas on May 28. He was 81.

A native of Waterford, Bowyer lived and spent most of his career in Las Vegas, but truly never forgot his Irish roots. For more than six decades Brendan enthralled audiences around the world. The title of Ireland's answer to Elvis Presley rested easily on his shoulders.

He burst onto the scene in the late 1950s as a member of The Royal Showband with whom he performed what many consider his signature tune 'The Hucklebuck.' The Dancehall genre of music was at its height and packed out venues the length and breadth of Ireland throughout the 1960s. Other standards included 'Kiss Me Quick,' 'No More,' and 'I Can't Get You Out of My Heart.'

Bowyer's move to Las Vegas in the early 1970s was the stepping stone to international stardom with the Big 8 Showband which he formed with the late Tom Dunphy. He readily sold out venues in his adopted city and rubbed shoulders with the iconic performers of the time.



He made many trips back to Ireland for performances over the following 40 years and was made a freeman of Waterford City.

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD paid tribute:

"I am extremely saddened to hear of the passing of Brendan Bowyer. He could justly claim to be in the very top echelon of performers of the dancehall era. His comparison to Elvis Presley is not an overstated one.

"So many romances, mar-

riages and happy memories were created during many years of joy and entertainment that Brendan brought to this country and his adopted Las Vegas. He set a high bar and inspired so many other performers that followed. He will be so sadly missed."

Bowyer's long career at the top of his profession won him fans on both sides of the pond, including in San Francisco, where he played to a full house at the United Irish Cultural Center on New Year's Eve in 2002.

• IRISH NEWS •

Honoring The Generosity Of The Choctaw During An Gorta Mór, Irish Contribute To Navajo & Hopi Covid-19 Appeal

Continued from front page

"During Ireland's Potato Famine of 1847, the Choctaw Nation raised \$170 dollars (about \$5,000 now) for starving Irish families. Today over 25,500 Irish donors have contributed over \$870,000 to the Relief Fund and the Navajo and Hopi elders, immunocompromised, COVID-positive, and vulnerable families it serves."

Relief Fund founder Ethel Branch stated: "We feel real kinship with the Irish, who have a shared legacy of colonization, and we are truly grateful for ... all donations that have come from our Irish brethren. Go raibh maith agat and a héine! Someday we hope to repay you for these beautiful

and meaningful acts of solidarity made during our time of great need."

Irish donor Pat Hayes said: "From Ireland, 170 years later, the favor is returned! To our Native American brothers and sisters in your moment of hardship."

Another said: "They didn't forget us. We won't forget them."

On May 10, Navajo Nation Attorney General Doreen McPaul, who also serves as the Donation Branch Chief of the Navajo Nation's Health Command Center, filmed a special message of thanks to the Irish.

In the video, McPaul says she is: "especially proud of this

response because of my own Irish heritage." Both of her grandfathers are Irish, and her father, who was raised on the Navajo reservation, is a dual citizen of Ireland and the US.

"Our Irish family roots are in both County Armagh and County Laois," McPaul says, "and the Hobsons in Ireland of Quaker stock were deeply committed to Irish culture through the GAA and the Gaelic League."

McPaul's sister studied in Ireland and married an Irish man, County Clare native Jason Ryan. The couple's four children, Liam, Aidan, Padraig, and Saoirse, are enrolled members of the Navajo Nation.

National Commemoration Of An Gorta Mór In Dublin

Continued from front page

An Gorta Mór—also referred to as the Great Famine—was partially the result of the failure of the potato crop, the only food source for most Irish at the time. There was plenty of other food produced in Ireland but the British government and landlords denied the starving millions access to it. In all, through death and emigration, Ireland lost nearly half its population between 1845 and 1849.

As with the recent Easter and Arbour Hill Commemorations, the ceremony was conducted in line with current health and safety guidelines and was not open to the public, although it was televised nationally.

The ceremony included military honors and the laying of a wreath in remembrance of all those who suffered or perished. Aimee Banks sang Brendan Graham's Crucán na bPáiste (The Children's Burial Ground) and the National Anthem was performed by an Army Piper.

Speaking at the event, Minister Madigan said:

"When we look back on those years, our thoughts cannot but turn to those who suffered. We think of the people who lost their property, their homes, their families, and sadly, in so many cases, their lives. We gather each year to pay respects to their memories.

"However, we also remem-

ber and pay tribute to those who survived and came through those terrible years, either here in Ireland or on foreign shores among the great diasporas formed by those years.

"We also salute their courage and resilience, taking pride in their achievements which echo down the generations.

"In her poem Quarantine, the late Eavan Boland movingly evoked the efforts of a loving husband to support his wife with the last of his strength, when she said: "She was sick with famine fever and could not keep up. He lifted her and put her on his back."

"The heroes of the Famine that we honor today also sought to lift and carry those who fell or could not keep up. That same spirit of caring and self sacrifice that is embedded in the caring professions, is being seen again today as our health workers embrace the challenge of caring for those affected by Covid-19. We honor and respect these modern-day heroes and value their courage. Perhaps we can best show our appreciation for their work, and the efforts of their forebears during the Great Famine, by adhering to those small acts of heroism we are called upon to perform in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and to come through these testing times, just as our ancestors once did."

Dublin's Iconic Bewley's Café To Close Permanently Because Of Coronavirus

BEWLEY'S CAFÉ, ON GRAFTON Street in the center of Dublin, will close permanently with the loss of 110 jobs, it was announced in May.

The closure has been blamed on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced the café to temporarily close in March, and high rent for the iconic building.

In a statement the operator of the café, Bewley's Ltd, confirmed that management "has written to staff to inform them that it is with deep regret and great sadness that it is likely to be necessary to permanently close

the café over the coming weeks."

"The proposed closure would result in the loss of all jobs in the café. The management team will now enter into a period of consultation with the impacted employees," the statement notes.

"We would like to sincerely thank all of the staff who work in the business for their loyalty and dedication which has made Bewley's Café on Grafton Street a landmark, iconic and memorable place to visit.

"We would also like to thank our loyal customers over the decades," it adds.

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IRISH NEWS

New Isolation Measures For Passengers Entering Ireland As Airlines Grind To A Halt

IN EFFORTS TO FURTHER CURTAIL the spread of coronavirus the government in the Republic of Ireland have imposed a 14 day period of mandatory self-isolation for anyone arriving in the country—including returning residents. The measure took effect on May 28 and will last until at least June 18, when it will be reviewed.

Those entering the country also have to complete a 'passenger location' form and are being made aware that they may be subject to spot checks to make sure they are staying where they said they would be. Announcing the new measures, Minister for Health Simon Harris said that no non-essential travel outside Ireland should be undertaken until further notice.

"We continue to advise everyone against non-essential travel," Harris said. "However, if a person does arrive into Ireland, they will legally be obliged to fill out this form, regardless of their nationality."

"The form will be used to facilitate a system of follow up checks to make sure people who travel to the country are staying where they said that they would. The form will also ensure more accurate and quicker contact tracing, should we have a confirmed case on a flight or ferry coming into Ireland."

"Every measure we take is aimed at stopping the spread of Covid-19 and protecting people from this virus. This is no different."

Failure to comply with the new regulations could result in fines of up to €2,500 or up to six months' imprisonment.

Ryanair CEO Eddie Wilson described the rules as "unworkable" and "unimplementable." Wilson said they would "dent confidence on people travelling to Ireland."

"It sounds great but it doesn't work," he said. "You're saying to people Ireland is closed, when Spain is open,



Greece and Portugal as well. We need to restore air links and air travel."

Ryanair, which carries more passengers than any other airline in Europe, released a statement in May projecting first quarter losses of €200 million and a drop in passenger numbers for 2020 of almost 50 percent, from 154 million last year down to 80 million this year.

"(Ryanair) expects to operate less than 1 percent of its scheduled flying program (in the first quarter, which covers April to June) ... Some return to flight services is expected in Quarter Two (July—September) and Ryanair expects to carry no more than 50 percent of its original Quarter Two traffic target of 44.6 million, as bookings will be impacted by public health restrictions (temperature checks and face coverings for passengers and staff) and quarantine requirements," the statement said.

The statement also repeated Ryanair's commitment to refusing government financial assistance during the coronavirus crisis, saying that "the competitive landscape in Europe" will

be "distorted by unprecedented quantum of state aid." The German and French governments, for example, have doled out substantial rescue packages to help Lufthansa and Air France respectively. "(Ryanair), therefore, expect(s) that traffic on reduced flight schedules will be subject to significant price discounting, and below-cost selling, from these flag carriers with huge state aid war chests."

Ryanair is expected to implement pay cuts and up to 3,000 layoffs, mostly of pilots and cabin crew.

In related news Willie Walsh, CEO of British-based IAG, which owns Aer Lingus, told a British government committee that his company was fighting for its life.

Walsh told lawmakers: "It's a very severe and very significant crisis. Quite honestly, the likelihood of any improvement in the short term is zero." He also said the group is currently making zero revenue. Aer Lingus have announced plans to lay off up to 20 percent of its staff when Irish government emergency funding runs out on June 21.

Calls For Tourism Recovery Taskforce

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN Ireland has been hit hard by coronavirus. New rules on self-isolation for people entering the country won't help, but in reality many of those involved in tourism have already largely written off 2020.

Year on year tourism numbers had been on the rise—both the amount of people visiting Ireland and also the amount they spend when they are there. Irish tourism has been an unprecedented success story for the better part of a decade. Last year the industry employed over 200,000 people, almost 10 percent of the entire workforce, and contributed over €6 billion to the economy, around 5 percent.

Now all that has come to a grinding halt, with restrictions on flights, and the forced closure of hotels, restaurants and bars. Unavailable for the time

being also are the museums, art galleries, festivals, golf courses and other attractions that make Ireland such a successful destination.

Government figures show that more than 90 percent of workers in the accommodation and food sectors were either receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment or were on the Temporary Wage Subsidy scheme.

When things get back to normal, and they will get back to normal, it is vital that all aspects of the tourism industry are able to hit the ground running.

The Green Party TD Malcolm Noonan said tourism is taking a huge hit due to Covid-19 from which it might never fully recover. Deputy Noonan said festivals across the country would struggle this year and must be supported to survive into next year.

Brendan Griffin, Minister

IRISH NEWS

Leaders In The North Of Ireland Denounce Treats Against Journalists

POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE north of Ireland have joined forces with the editors of the north's main newspapers and labor leaders to condemn recent threats against journalists in the north.

An open letter signed by the power-sharing government's First Minister Arlene Foster (DUP) and Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill (Sinn Féin) was published in the *Belfast Telegraph*, *Irish News* and *News Letter* newspapers on May 19.

The letter called for the freedom of the press to be respected by all and hit out at the threats.

In April, an *Irish News* journalist was warned by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) about a threat against them.

In early May, journalists employed by the *Sunday World* and *Sunday Life* were threatened by loyalist terrorists. One of them was informed by police of a planned car bomb attack and journalists at both titles received more generic warnings of violence against them.

Foster wrote that previous generations had risked their lives to protect free speech, and that this was something that



Michelle O'Neill (left), Arlene Foster

must be defended.

"The recent paramilitary threats targeting journalists and politicians represent an assault upon our society and upon democracy. This cannot be tolerated," she said.

O'Neill said politicians in the north stand shoulder to shoulder with journalists and should do everything possible to support them in doing their jobs without fear.

"Journalism is a bedrock of democracy and those who are keeping our communities informed and holding the powerful to account must not be intimidated or threatened as they carry out their work," she said.

The letter was also signed by the editors of the three newspapers, as well as the UK's

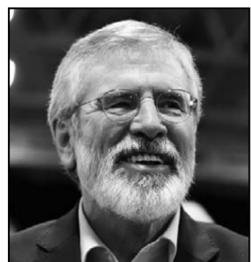
minister for media and data, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' assistant general secretary, and the assistant general secretary of the National Union of Journalists.

Irish News editor Noel Doran said the renewal of threats against journalists was "a deeply alarming development" but he welcomed the support at the political level.

Sunday Life editor Martin Breen said the newspaper would continue to hold everyone to account and "expose criminality and all wrongdoing no matter where it originates."

Sunday World editor Brian Farrell said that his newspaper would "not be silenced nor intimidated" and would not rest until those responsible were brought to justice.

The Internment Of Gerry Adams In The 1970s Ruled Illegal By British Supreme Court



THE UK'S SUPREME COURT has ruled that the internment without trial in the early 1970s of former Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams was unlawful. The Supreme Court also overturned Adams's two convictions for trying to escape from jail.

From 1971 to 1975 almost 2,000 people were interned—arrested and held without trial—in the north, in response to the outbreak of the Troubles. On August 9, the day internment started, 342 people were detained. Some were held for several years and the vast majority had no connection to any crime at all. More than 95 percent of all those interned were Catholics.

The policy backfired heavily on the British government and is now seen as being one of the main reasons that so many joined the provisional IRA. Adams welcomed the court's decision.

In a statement, he said: "Of course internment, later described as detention by the British, was never lawful. In fact it set aside the normal

principles of law and was based on a blunt and brutal piece of coercive legislation.

"I have no regrets about my imprisonment except for the time I was separated from my family."

"However, we were not on our own. It is believed that around two thousand men and women were interned during its four and a half years of operation.

"I consider my time in the Prison Ship Maidstone, in Belfast prison and in Long Kesh to have been in the company of many remarkable, resilient and inspiring people.

"Internment like all coercive measures failed.

"There is an onus on the British government to identify and inform other internees whose Internment may also have been unlawful," he said.

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No Freedom Without A Free Press

by Eamonn Gormley

THE SUNDAY WORLD, A DUBLIN-BASED NEWSPAPER FOUNDED IN 1973, appeared throughout the 1980s at first glance to be a lowbrow tabloid that was driving sales using scantily clad women on the front cover. Yet farther down through the pages lay content that served a much needed role in society and which is endangered today: investigative journalism.

The paper is sold on both sides of the border with its northern edition carrying content tailored to the region. In a market awash with British tabloids branded as the "Irish edition," the *Sunday World* stands out as focusing on home-grown content produced by Irish writers. It has broken stories about child abuse in the catholic church, organized crime in the Republic, and corruption and paramilitary activity in the North. For over thirty years the dissemination of this information has had a profound effect on Irish society.

Unsurprisingly, this has caused the *Sunday World* to gather a good stock of enemies. Lawsuits have been filed in an attempt to muzzle its reporting, most of which have been thrown out in court.

The paper has shown a particular talent for showcasing the underbelly of paramilitary operations, much of it driven by drug dealing, extortion, intimidation, and other unsavory activity that conflicts with the more noble image that such groups would hope to project to their supporters.

Billy Wright, a notorious loyalist from Portadown, was said to be involved in the killing of up to twenty Catholics, most of them innocent civilians, while allegedly working on behalf of the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Branch. Acquiring the nickname "King Rat" in his local pub, the name and his work became common knowledge thanks to the reporting of Martin O'Hagan in the *Sunday World*, much to Wright's annoyance.

After Wright was assassinated in the Maze prison by the Irish National Liberation Army in 1997, loyalist groups attempting to claim control over the movement sought to avenge the killing and to prove their loyalist credentials with a campaign of terror and murder. O'Hagan, allegedly a former member of the Official IRA, had already been targeted for assassination by loyalists before, partly out of irritation at the *Sunday World's* exposure of their drug-dealing and racketeering operations. When they shot O'Hagan dead in his native Lurgan in 2001 he was the first journalist to be murdered in the conflict. The second would be Lyra McKee who was shot dead by dissident republicans in Derry in 2019 while observing street disturbances in the Creggan area.

In the South in 1996, the murder of Veronica Guerin, a reporter with the *Sunday Independent*, led to national outrage. Guerin had incurred the wrath of drug dealers who did not appreciate her coverage of the Dublin criminal underworld. This led to crime legislation that gave sweeping new powers to the police and the courts, and the creation of the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) which had the right to seize property acquired by illegal means. From its founding in 1996 to 2001, the CAB froze €70 million worth of criminal assets, as well as recovering unpaid taxes and fraudulently obtained welfare payments.

Yet the life of investigative reporters has not gotten easier. In the past year there has been a surge in threats made against journalists in the north. The UDA has threatened the lives of all journalists working for the *Sunday World* and *Sunday Life*, a weekend extension of the *Belfast Telegraph*. *Sunday Life* has a similar pedigree in investigative journalism. Dissident republicans have also threatened a reporter with the *Irish News*. Troublingly, politicians speaking up in defense of threatened journalists have also been targeted.

While the killing of journalists in Ireland has been rare, it never ceases to shock, and the threat of violence against reporters should generate the same outrage. A public statement titled "Stand Up for Journalism" has been signed by members of the north's power-sharing Assembly, MPs, members of the House of Lords, senators in the Seanad, trade unions, business and civic organizations, and media organizations. It calls for "the immediate withdrawal of all threats against journalists in Northern Ireland and for the freedom of the press to be respected."

Journalism is already under pressure on the economic front. Newspaper circulation worldwide has been dwindling with the rise of free online news sources. The *Sunday World's* circulation shriveled from 311,000 per issue in 2001 to 123,000 in 2018. Yet the importance of investigative reporting has never diminished. The freedom of an open society depends on the freedom of the press to hold powerful people to account, be they in government, business, or in criminal gangs and paramilitary organizations.

In countries with illiberal regimes where the media is muzzled, people are considerably less informed and consequently less free. Authoritarian rulers with dubious agendas invariably clip the wings of the press because the media is a threat to their sinister goals, as well as being a soft target. It is by no coincidence that paramilitary groups also see ink on a page as a threat.

Yet it is possible for their intimidation to backfire thanks to what is known as the Streisand Effect. Attempting to squash reporting of an issue just draws more attention to it than ever before as people become more motivated to see what is being kept from them. If investigative reporters are digging up so much dirt that they are being threatened, it is a call for everyone to subscribe to newspapers and read all about it. Long may the muckraking continue.

• COMMENT •

What Happens Next In Irish Politics?

by Seán Canniffe

A CASUAL OBSERVER OF POLITICS in the Republic of Ireland might be forgiven for thinking that we have entered some type of twilight zone. After the general election on February 8 this year we are now nearly four months without a new government. This is a record, surpassing the previous 2016 delay of 70 days between the election and formation of a new administration.

What makes this even more interesting, or frustrating depending on your view point, is that despite losing both vote share and seats the two establishment parties of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil look set, at this point, to remain in power, albeit in a different arrangement.

Fianna Fáil, the largest opposition party in the last Dáil, suffered the minor ignominy of losing six of its 44 TDs while seeing its share of first preference votes decrease from 24.3 percent to 22.2 percent. Not a terrible result you might think, until you consider the hype and over-confidence of that party before the election. Fine Gael fared much worse. It headed the minority government until February, supported in a 'confidence and supply' agreement by Fianna Fáil. In a telling indictment of its performance in power Fine Gael lost 15 of its 50 seats and saw its vote share decline from 25.5 percent to 20.9 percent.

Sinn Féin, the bogeymen (and bogeywomen of course) of establishment politics in the Republic was the unquestioned winner on the day, almost doubling its vote share from 13.8 percent to 24.5 percent and its seat tally from 22 to 37. Yet this does not seem to be enough to unseat its incumbent rivals.

Elsewhere the Green Party recovered spectacularly from a 2016 drubbing to raise its number of TDs from 2 to 12; the Social Democrats tripled its representation from two TDs to six; Labour continued its dire run, losing one of its seven TDs; the Solidarity—People Before Profit alliance were down one TD for a total of five; and the remaining seats were taken by assorted independent candidates, some of whom were previously members of the establishment parties.

The results were a shock to virtually everyone. Even Sinn Féin couldn't have hoped for such an enormous change in its fortunes. Just last year it had underperformed expectations in local elections. Had Sinn Féin's leaders been thinking in terms of such a wave in their favor, they would have stood more candidates and would certainly have won even more seats. Nine of the top ten vote getters in the election were Sinn Féin candidates.

As if to underline the scale of Sinn Féin's achievement its leader, Mary Lou McDonald, topped the poll in the Dublin Central constituency with 35 percent of the vote, nearly

For all of Sinn Féin's success the election revealed a country balanced on a knife edge, with voters split almost evenly between candidates and parties reflecting the status quo and those representing change.

three times more than outgoing Finance Minister Paschal Donohue (Fine Gael), who had to wait until the ninth count before retaining his seat. (Ireland has a proportional representational voting system using single transferable votes that usually results in multiple counts before all the winners are decided). In Dublin West Taoiseach Leo Varadkar (Fine Gael) fared little better, getting in on the fifth count after seeing Sinn Féin's Paul Donnelly come first, winning his seat on the first count. Tánaiste Simon Coveney (Fine Gael) had to wait till the eighth count before being returned in Cork South-Central. In the same constituency Micheál Martin, the leader of Fianna Fáil had to wait till the sixth count. Both watched as one of Sinn Féin's biggest successes of the night, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, trounced all-comers and took his seat at the first count.

But for all of Sinn Féin's success the election revealed a country balanced on a knife edge, with voters split almost evenly between candidates and parties reflecting the status quo and those representing change.

To put it mildly, the Dáil arithmetic is tricky. Any coalition will need 80 seats to have a razor thin majority of one. Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil both have 37 seats—the Fianna Fáil speaker was not elected and can't vote—and Fine Gael have 35. That means that any government would have to be a coalition of two of these three big parties and at least the Green Party or a combination of smaller parties and independents.

Almost immediately Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael ruled out negotiating with Sinn Féin, effectively sidelining the most successful party in the election. The erstwhile 'big two' have had talks with the Social Democrats (who said 'no') and the Labor Party, (also 'no').

At press time they are in advanced negotiations with the Green Party and Leo Varadkar is predicting a government by the end of June. It is far from a done deal however. Green Party leader Eamon Ryan has insisted that his price for entering into government is a guaranteed cut in emissions of seven percent annually. Several Fianna Fáilers, including Coveney, have already poured cold water on that idea as being detrimental to the interests of the farmers who make up a lot of their base. Whatever they are, Ryan

needs to get some meaningful concessions. The last time the Greens played the role of junior partner in government they were literally wiped out at the following election, so the rewards must match the risk.

To complicate matters further the Greens have a potential leadership contest on the horizon and Catherine Martin TD, very popular among rank and file Green Party membership, looks as though she will challenge Ryan.

If the three parties can agree on a 'Program for Government' in the coming weeks, the proposals must then be voted on by their memberships.

If the Greens pull out of the deal, or if its members vote against it, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil can probably entice enough independents into the fold to form a government, although it will obviously have far less stability. There is no real appetite for another election in Ireland so expect a deal to be done somehow.

For both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, this might be a case of "Be careful what you wish for."

Since 1923 one or other of these parties has led the government in Ireland. For most of that time their combined support exceeded 80 percent of the vote. This February that combined share fell to just 43 percent, while support for candidates and parties that were previously looked on as outsiders swelled. Most analysts believe the 2020 election was fought on the 'Three H's'—Housing, Homelessness and Health. All three are areas where both Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil are seen as having failed for two decades and more. The problems in all three will require money to fix, and money is the one thing that is going to be very hard to come by in Ireland for the foreseeable future after the economic havoc wreaked by the coronavirus pandemic.

Not to mention the fact that the historical enmity between the two parties is one of the biggest reasons why their respective voters vote the way they do. How can you dislike Fianna Fáil enough to vote Fine Gael if they are effectively two sides of the same coin, and vice versa?

All politicians want power, it's their nature. Is it possible that this desire for power might be the undoing permanently of either Fine Gael or Fianna Fáil or both?

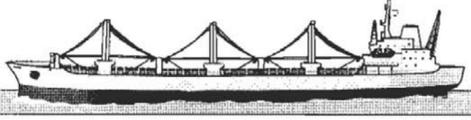
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• IRISH AMERICA •

Little By Little The Castles Are Built

by Anne Cassidy-Carew, President, United Irish Cultural Center

THE OLD IRISH PROVERB “i ndiaidh a chéile a déantar na caisleáin” (little by little the castles are built) is several centuries old and traces its origin to the late 12th century following the Norman invasion of Ireland. The Normans were great castle builders and became as Irish as the Irish themselves such was their assimilation into the local population.

The saying is as true now in the vernacular as it was then—it takes time to build something really strong and long lasting. When I think of the major fiscal transition underway at the Irish Center—going from a members only social club to a fully nonprofit entity—I realize that it’s a slow but steady movement forward as we ponder and decide on what goes into the foundations of the Irish Center now, so that it will become a self-sustaining entity for decades to come.

The central principles of a successful enterprise at the corner of 45th Avenue and Wawona are the sustaining members of the UICC and the Irish Community. They are essentially the “keystone” on which all else depends. With-

out the support of the members and the Irish Community there would be no Irish Center. I personally want to thank the 45 years of board members, volunteers and contributors that laid the groundwork for the Center.

Through the last 45 years, there have been multiple efforts to raise large parcels of money independent of the ordinary day to day operations. The elevator installation back in the late 1980s was the most expensive upgrade the Center has incurred since it opened back in 1975. The downstairs bar was remodeled in the 1980s but that was a cosmetic change within the envelope of the building.

In the not too distant future, our roof needs to be replaced and additional upgrades need to be completed. In addition, we would like to add a solar power generating system on the rooftop, potentially shaving \$1,000 off our current monthly utility cost. These major capital improvements are above and beyond our ability right now to fund such upgrades.

And so as a board, we launched the St Patrick’s Appeal—the first Board driven

fundraiser in three decades—on May 18, with the goal to raise \$75,000 by September 17, ‘Half-way to St Patrick’s Day.’ Past revenue generating operations like the 32/50 club fundraiser and large banquets are no longer options currently available to the Center to pay for the ordinary expenses incurred in operating a 20,000 square foot facility.

The response from our membership and community has been heart warming and overwhelmingly positive. I am very pleased to report that the campaign at the time of writing has surpassed 60 percent of our goal with \$44,300 pledged by 215 individual contributors. Many thanks to all those who have given to date. If you have not contributed yet, please consider doing so. You can donate online at www.irishcentersf.org, or by calling the Center at (415) 661-2700 or, if you’re a member, by filling out the donation page in the center’s newsletter this month and mailing in a check.

We look forward to seeing you at the Irish Center soon. Until then continue to wear your mask, maintain your 6 feet social distance and stay safe!

The building of the UICC was truly a community effort. Here are a couple of pictures from the construction phase in 1974; breaking ground and volunteers taking a well earned break.



• IRISH AMERICA •

Summer Sunshine And Phased Roadmap To Reopening Bring Hope, But There’s Still A Long Way To Go To ‘Normal’

San Francisco native Madison Roche, now living and working in Dublin, with an update from Ireland’s capital on how folks are getting through the pandemic.

GREETINGS FROM DUBLIN AGAIN. Since last month’s article, it seems things are finally starting to change here in Ireland. We aren’t “unlocking” at the rate of my hometown of San Francisco, but slowly and surely things are progressing here.

Since May 18, Ireland has been in “Phase 1” of the government’s five-phase “roadmap” for restarting the country’s social and economic life. While people are still encouraged to stay home, meetings of up to four people outdoors are allowed (as long as you’re keeping at least two meters apart).

Garden centers and hardware shops have reopened, and over 50,000 people have returned to work. Perhaps most excitingly, beaches, tennis facilities and golf courses have opened. These are small freedoms, but people are happy to have the opportunity for some much-appreciated social interaction.

The next phase of the “roadmap” is scheduled to begin on June 8. This is all subject to change, of course, should the number of infections increase once again. Fortunately though, because the public has made such a concerted effort with social distancing, the number of confirmed cases across the country has been decreasing steadily. This past week (May 17-23) saw the first time since March that new cases have dropped below 100 per day. There is an air of cautious optimism as everyone waits to see what each stage of quarantine easing will bring.

There is still a heavy Garda presence on the roads and in parks and beaches where families and friends have gathered to reunite. Travel between counties and regions is still largely not possible, however, and some people have even



Statue of “Molly Malone” in St Andrew’s Street, Dublin, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Molly is wearing a smiley face mask.

been sentenced to jail time for moving large distances without valid reasons. Sadly these restrictions aren’t likely to ease until Phase 5 in August, which means that for some people it means that it will be months since they have been able to visit loved ones.

Still, the glorious summer

weather has done wonders for the general morale. Another positive update is the huge increase in takeaway offers from restaurants and cafes! With these businesses not scheduled to open until Phase 3 on June 28—and even then with patron numbers limited—business owners have become

flexible and innovative.

Even the poor desolate pubs, which will be the last hospitality businesses to open, are now looking to rebrand as restaurants so as to open earlier. The *Journal* recently reported that out of 300 pubs surveyed, 44 percent planned to re-open as restaurants starting in Phase 3.

Some pubs have resorted to delivering drinks, including cocktails and pints, to people’s homes. One may be concerned of the quality of a Guinness poured into a plastic pint glass and settling as it’s delivered, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Though sadly we must wait at least another month for a fresh pint of plain in a pub, until then we are happy indulging in the constantly adapting restaurant offerings. Full roast dinner, bottles of wine, cocktail-making kits, cakes and sausage rolls can be delivered right to your home.

This has also enabled restaurants to reach a wider variety of diners. My partner and I have been able to order deliveries from restaurants where it has been impossible to get a reservation in the past. This has also strengthened the support for local businesses, and people understand that they are helping shops, restaurants and cafes stay alive by ordering out.

Sadly, a number of businesses have announced that they will be closing for good. Many of these are small, local businesses who are particularly vulnerable in circumstances such as these. However, even retail giants such as the department store Debenhams have been forced to close. This shows just how great the economic impact has been. Like the rest of the world, many are anxious about the future of the economy. April saw Ireland’s saw the unemployment

rate jump to 28 percent as companies are forced to make tough decisions. Thankfully, government unemployment schemes are still in place, although the numbers availing of them are falling as people gradually return to work. Certain companies in the banking and medical technology sectors are also actively hiring due to the demand for these services. Still, there is a long road ahead for the Irish economy.

If this news wasn’t stressful enough for parents, many are still struggling with teaching and entertaining their kids at home. Schools and colleges are not set to reopen until as late as September or October and for the first time ever, the Leaving Certificate has been cancelled and will be replaced with predictive grades. Students may opt out of this predictive grading and can instead sit the exam at a later date, but with no date able to be set many students are feeling under pressure. Pair that with students unable to say goodbye to beloved teachers, missing out on their debts and not having any graduation celebrations, and many teenagers are struggling.

Everyone’s doing the best that they can right now. Working from home has almost begun to feel normal and people are taking pleasure in the little things. My partner and I are anxious to return to Galway, where numbers have been remarkably low. Like everyone else, though, we are mindful of the guidelines and their impact on public health overall. It’s important to remember that while we miss the freedoms that we were once accustomed to, seeing the COVID-19 curve steadily flattening is the best news we could be getting right now.

Wishing you all good health.






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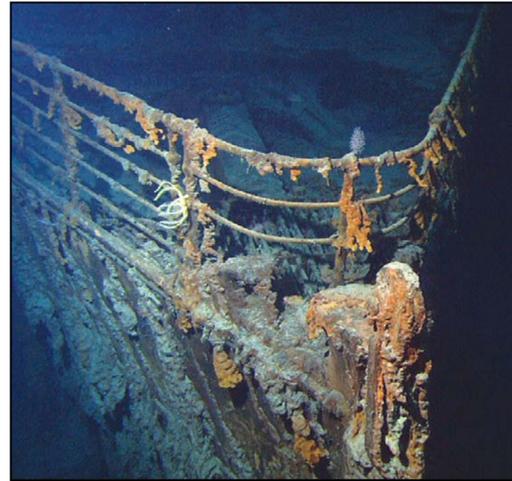
Thank you to all our customers for your support. Tough times don’t last, tough people do. Up the Paddies!

IRISH AMERICA

Judge Rules Telegraph Machine From The Titanic Can Be Salvaged

A JUDGE IN VIRGINIA HAS ruled that the salvage of the wireless telegraph machine that sent distress calls from the Titanic is lawful. The luxury liner sank in 1912 after hitting an iceberg, with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. It now lies on the ocean floor, some 12,500 feet beneath the surface of the north Atlantic.

Judge Rebecca Beach Smith said the machine is important, historically and culturally, and could soon be lost forever given the rapid decay of the wreck site.



The wreck of the Titanic, 2000 fathoms below the surface of the Atlantic.

Smith, a maritime jurist, presides over all matters to do with salvage from the Titanic. She wrote that recovering the telegraph "will contribute to the legacy left by the indelible loss of the Titanic, those who survived, and those who gave their lives in the sinking."

The order has been welcomed by RMS Titanic Inc, which holds the salvage rights to the wreck. It supercedes an order from 2000 that prohibited cutting into the shipwreck or detaching any part of it.

However, several archaeological and preservation experts have objected to the proposed salvage expedition. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which represents the public's interest in the wreck, is adamantly against any attempt to recover the machine.

NOAA argued that the telegraph machine is likely surrounded "by the mortal remains of more than 1,500 people" and should not be interfered with.

RMS Titanic Inc wants to exhibit the telegraph machine together with stories of the crew who tapped out the distress signals "until seawater was literally lapping at their feet."

"The brief transmissions sent among those ships' wireless operators, staccato bursts of information and emotion, tell the story of Titanic's desperate fate that night: the confusion, chaos, panic, futility and fear," the company wrote in documents submitted to the court.

In her judgement Smith explained that the salvage plans meet most requirements set forth in an international agreement between the US and the UK, where the ship was registered.

RMS Titanic Inc want to guide an unmanned submersible through a skylight or cut the heavily corroded roof to retrieve the telegraph machine.

First President of The San Diego St Patrick's Parade Dies, Aged 80

by John Hyatt, in San Diego

VINCENT J LYNCH, who served as the first President of the Irish Congress of Southern California (ICSC) in 1981, passed away peacefully in April at his daughter Kelly's home in Redondo Beach. He was 80 years of age and was surrounded by family including his son Patrick.

Vince, along with Jim Foley and several others, created the idea for a St Patrick's Day Parade in San Diego to celebrate the rich heritage of their Irish roots. Vince's hard work and determination as President helped orchestrate the first St Patrick's Day Parade and develop a blueprint for the future. His leadership helped set the organization on a great trajectory. He worked with the ICSC for many years before moving to Chicago.

In the late 70s and early 80s the San Diego Irish community was strongly connected. Those who emigrated to the US and eventually settled here would gather at the Blarney Stone in Clairmont Mesa, The Irish Shop, and the House of Ireland. The idea of a parade and festival to celebrate Irish heritage was immediately well received. "Vince was the perfect first president. He was well thought of throughout San Diego and gave the event legitimacy that has lasted to this day," said past parade chair and ICSC President (1985, 1986 resp.) Brian McClellan.

Vince's wife, Charlene, who predeceased Vince last year, was the person that came up with the idea for the Smilin' Irishman Contest. The story goes that she was with the parade founders one evening at the Blarney Stone Pub when they were discussing fundraising. She proposed the Smilin' Irishman concept and the rest is history. The Smilin' Irishman Contest is organized and run by the Friendly Sons of St Patrick and is the largest fundraising event to the support the event.

Lynch attended most of the parade events in recent years, and was extremely proud to see how the parade and festival has grown to become what it is today. He sat in amazement every year at the events and was deeply disappointed that the 40th Anniversary Parade had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Vince was a really good guy," McClellan said. "He was a pure gentleman, always had a smile, and got along with everyone. We'll miss him."

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



The San Francisco Youth GAA would like to congratulate our 2020 high school graduates!

CONGRATS GRADUATES

Class of

2020

YOU DID IT!



Fiona O'Donoghue
High School: Burlingame High School
College Attending: Skyline College



Hannah O'Connell
High School: St. Ignatius
College Attending: University of Santa Clara



Kate Rose Keighran
High School: Notre Dame
College Attending: Indiana University

Twitter Says Workers Can Continue To Telecommute After Coronavirus

SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT TWITTER last month said it would likely not reopen its offices until September and that it will continue to allow many of its employees to telecommute even after the coronavirus lockdowns come to an end.

The San Francisco-based company employs more than 200 people in Dublin at its EMEA headquarters (Europe, Middle East and Africa).

The company was one of the first to institute widespread teleworking in March in response to the pandemic.

"We were uniquely positioned to respond quickly and allow folks to work from home given our emphasis on decentralisation and supporting a distributed workforce capable of working from anywhere," a Twitter spokesperson said.

"The past few months have proven we can make that work. So if our employees are in a role and situation that enables them to work from home and they want to continue to do so forever, we will make that happen."

"Opening offices will be our decision, when and if our employees come back, will be theirs," the spokesperson added.

Facebook, which has almost 4,000 employees in Ireland, has also announced that most of its staff will be able to telework through the end of the year, and that it envisions half of its global workforce will be working from home within five years.



Megan McHugh
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral
College Attending: UCLA



Michaela Mulkerrins
High School: St. Ignatius
College Attending: Saint Joseph's University



Molly Gorman
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral
College Attending: CSU Chico

CHECK IT OUT!

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Aidan O'Reilly
High School: St. Ignatius
College Attending: Purdue



Cathal Coakley
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral
College Attending: Saint Mary's College of Moraga



Conor Burke
High School: Westmoor High School
College Attending: City College of SF

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Congratulations to our 8th Grade Graduates!

On behalf of the San Francisco Gaelic Athletic Association (SFYGAA)



Jimmy McKeon
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Con McKeon
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Jimmy Hughes
Elementary: Sinaloa
High School Class of 2024:
San Marin High School



Grace McCusker
Elementary: A.P. Giannini
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Chloe Casement
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Claire Donohue
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
Convent of the Sacred Heart



Ameila Murphy
Elementary: Presidio Middle School
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Noah Hennessy
Elementary: A.P. Giannini
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Andy Powell
Elementary: St. Phillips
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Liam Donohue
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
Stuart Hall High School



Colm Grieb
Elementary: St. Thomas Apostle School
High School Class of 2024:
Archbishop Riordan



Nellie Sell
Elementary: St. Raphael School
High School Class of 2024:
Marin Catholic



Sammie Schulze
Elementary: Charlotte Wood Middle
High School Class of 2024:
San Ramon Valley



Niamh Concannon
Elementary: St. Stephens
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Sarah Penny
Elementary: St. Stephens
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Gavin Larkin
Elementary: BIS
High School Class of 2024:
Burlingame High School



Mikey Nash
Elementary: BIS
High School Class of 2024:
Burlingame High School



Andrew Cudden
Elementary: St. Phillips
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



James Keenan
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Anne Modole
Elementary: A.P. Giannini
High School Class of 2024:
George Washington



Brooke Gavney
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Maggie Clare
Elementary: A.P. Giannini
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Aisling Murphy
Elementary: Charles Armstrong
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Mateo Murphy
Elementary: Crystal Springs Uplands
High School Class of 2024:
Crystal Springs Uplands



James McFadden
Elementary: St. Brendans
High School Class of 2024:
St. Ignatius



Martin Quirke
Elementary: St. Cecilia
High School Class of 2024:
Bonanza High School



Daniel O'Donovan
Elementary: Our Lady of Angel's School
High School Class of 2024:
Serra High School



Niamh Fullerton
Elementary: St. Stephens
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Ava Mac Namara
Elementary: SVDP
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Aine Mullan
Elementary: St. Stephens
High School Class of 2024:
Sacred Heart Cathedral



Madelyn Mergenthaler
Elementary: White Hill MS
High School Class of 2024:
Sir Francis Drake



The San Francisco Youth GAA would like to congratulate our 2020 high school graduates!

CONGRATS GRADUATES **Class of 2020** YOU DID IT!



Timothy Powell High School: St. Ignatius College Attending: Montana State University



Dylan Rogers High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral College Attending: City College of SF



Finn Malchow High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral College Attending: City College of SF



Jack O'Keefe High School: St. Ignatius College Attending: University of Florida



Michael Harrison High School: St. Ignatius College Attending: Chapman



Noel Casey High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral College Attending: CSU San Francisco



Stephen McCarthy High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral College Attending: University of Nevada, Reno



Conor Coyle High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral College Attending: City College of SF



Cormac Lyons High School: St. Ignatius College Attending: Loyola Marymount University



Daniel Gaffney High School: St. Ignatius College Attending: UC Santa Barbara

IRISH AMERICA

My Covid Creatures

by Colman Ryan, MD - Seton Medical Center

Sequestered in my place and Reading in my yard My creatures come to comfort me My threats they disregard. The crickets make a huge noise And keep us all awake, Each night they rub their legs Together, making quite a crake. They peck at breadcrumbs at my feet, I wonder for them at their stealth, And fear I may contaminate And rob them of their health. Mosquitos are a nuisance Their gattle buzz is clear, They're very hard to capture Before they're in my beer. The butterflies - they hover Ever graceful in the sky And, sadly, they are short-lived And in several days they die. The bees they are aplenty And usually benign Unless you tempt them with your hand And then they are not fine. And lastly we have vermin, ants and aphids too They eat our plants, infect the rest, They are our COVID2 But all of this distraction Is God's way to renew My refuge from the COVID that lives In my domain, For I am over seventy and easy to obtain. But I feel safe with all the creatures In my yard, And blessed by God to have it With all it's just reward. The little mouse appears so brief And darts back in the bush, While circling hawks are wondering Where is their future lunch? The spiders spread their endless webs The little flies to catch And stupidly, their little wings On silken threads they latch. The flies, themselves, are numerous And far too hard to catch, They're gone in seconds from my hands To join their other hatch.



SF Rose Of Tralee To Return In 2022

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS 61-year history, The Rose of Tralee International Festival has been canceled amid safety concerns due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Festival had recently overhauled its selection process, introduced in 2019, which changed Rose Centers' annual participation to bi-annually, with exceptions for larger Centers, including San Francisco, who are to participate twice out of every three years. Due to the Festival's new format, San Francisco was not slated to send a representative this year, regardless of the recent cancellation. However, following the news of the 2020 Festival not moving forward, all Rose Centers who were intended to participate this year will instead take part in 2021. This, unfortunately, means that the San Francisco Rose Center will not be eligible to send a Rose representative until the years 2022 and 2023. "We are very saddened that our 2021 Rose Selection night will have to be pushed so far into the future" said Rosie Keehan, a coordinator for the San Francisco Rose Center, "but we support The Festival's decision to keep our communities safe. "We are looking at this period as an opportunity to reflect and reset so that our next event can be better than ever. This pause comes at an opportune moment, since our event partner, the United Irish Cultural Center is also going through a rebuilding phase. We continue to show our support to the UICC to ensure we have



2019 SF Rose Brooklyn Quinn

our cherished cultural spaces to hold our events and look forward to when we can enter its doors again. We hope to host a smaller event in support of our Rose Center in 2021; more details to come in the future. "We are so grateful to our partners, sponsors, and our supporters. Many thanks and congratulations go out to our wonderful 2019 Rose Brooklynn Quinn, who was an exceptional ambassador for our city and our community at the Festival last August." For those young women who were looking to apply for the 2021 San Francisco Rose Selection, there is good news. Anyone who would have been applying to enter in 2021 and will now be over the age limit for Festival 2022, will still be eligible to take part. This will be a one-off exception, and rules will return to normal thereafter. All other eligibility criteria will remain the same. Ideal candidates for the 2022 San Francisco Rose are women of Irish birth or Irish descent living in the Bay Area and Northern California. For more criteria and information, please visit the San Francisco Rose Center's website sfo-roseoftralee.com and the International Festival's website as roseoftralee.ie.

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• FILM & TV •

Alana Kerr Collins—Busy In The Lockdown

by James Bartlett in Los Angeles

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS shuttered movie sets and silenced television studios, but Belfast-born actress Alana Kerr Collins has never been busier.

She can't go to auditions, but thanks to the current surge in popularity for audiobooks she finds herself fully-booked as a voice artist, a specialized job she found just a few months after arriving in Los Angeles, when she booked the role narrating the audio book of *The Bone Season* by Samantha Shannon.

"At the moment my sessions are up around 20 percent," said Alana, who had already been working from home for years and recently invested in a Tardis-like Studiobricks digital home studio.

"It's fantastic. It's a stand-alone booth that can be broken down and moved locations if need be and provides the perfect studio quality sound. It's in the spare room now."

Alana has recorded over 70 audiobooks since she came to America in 2013, and has snagged some awards along the way too. Last year she won an Audiophile magazine Earphones award for her work on Irish famine-era tale *A Slip of a Girl* by Patricia Reilly Giff, and she already has an "Audie," the Oscar of the audio recording world, from 2017.



She was nominated for another Audie a few months ago for *Beasts of the Frozen Sun*, a historical fantasy by Jill Crisswell.

"I went to the ceremony in New York and though I didn't win, we had a great time. I am really lucky that I got to go to such a great city before it closed because of the pandemic."

Her Belfast accent hasn't

changed at all in that time either, and she credits the "sing-song" nature of North of Ireland accents as part of the secret of her narrator success.

"I imitate the sounds and the intonation as I would a piece of music," she explains, and though she has acted in many Irish audio books including James Joyce classics *The Dubliners* and *Ulysses*,

The Girls of Ennismore by Patricia Falvey, *Grounded Hearts* by Jeanne M Dickson, and *The Unkillable Kitty O'Kane* by Colin Falconer, she's also tackled horror and science fiction and performed Northern English, Scottish and Mexican accents.

Acting and performing has been a life-long love for Alana, 36, who began her career aged just 10 when she joined the Youth Lyric, a Saturday drama group. She followed her passion by winning places at the National Youth Theatre and National Youth Music Theatre in London, then took a degree in Drama/English at Trinity College, Dublin.

Her first big break was playing Cinderella at the Waterfront Hall, and then after several years of musicals and theatre—and a spell as a puppeteer and the voices of Goliath, Maisie and Clarabelle on "Sesame Tree"—she moved across the Atlantic.

She had also spent time training in the noted Meisner Technique in London, and in Los Angeles she has continued to attend several local acting studios—all while enjoying the famous sunshine.

Even if she's in a commercial studio she'll often do double duty as her own engineer, and she says that every hour of a book takes around two hours to record. She prepares by making notes, highlighting lines, giving characters different colors and even including sound clips on the scripts, which are on a special iPad app.

"No more worries about rustling sounds as I turn the pages on a script," she laughs, "though if I'm not at home and I need to send something quickly, a closet has to do."

At the moment California is in stay-home-safe mode, and that means that Alana's husband Matt, who works for BMW North America is at home—and that can make things tricky to juggle since they also have one-year old Noah too.

"I'm used to recording during his naps, but even with



Above: Alana Kerr Collins. Left: Alana and son Noah in Griffith Park, LA (before the lockdown).

Matt at home and no access to childcare due to Covid-19, it's even more exhausting than usual! But I'm very lucky to have the opportunity to work at all, and safely, I'm very much aware of that," she adds.

The couple were married in 2016 back in the north of Ireland "in the snow!" she laughs, and Matt gave her her lucky mascot, a small stuffed toy mouse called Mario, who she takes everywhere—and often appears on her Instagram feed. In recent years they have visited New Zealand and Japan, and the travel continued.

"We were lucky enough to go to the Galapagos Islands last year. (My parents babysat)."

The hiking trails and parks have tentatively been reopened, and that means that the family can spend time in the 4,300 acres of Griffith Park, a place that she often says reminds her of the North Antrim coast, where she spent lots of time as a child.

"We also went fruit and vegetable picking at a family farm last weekend and it was so fun! With so much space and wearing masks, it was easy to stay within social distancing guidelines. It was such a literal breath of fresh air to do something different and my son had a ball!"

Alana and her family live in Culver City, a noted location for film studios (most famously MGM) and while she is in high demand behind the microphone at the moment, her first love is still the theatre, and she says she still dreams of "treading the boards" in a big Broadway or West End production.

She still returns home to Finaghy regularly—most recently for Noah's 1st birthday last year—and she jokes that she's lucky to be able to see so much family when she is there because "they virtually all live in the same street."

Her next audio projects include Lindsay Jayne Ashford's WWII mystery *The House at Mermaid's Cove* and Irish coming-of-age drama *The Island Child* by Molly Aitken, but there's a bigger production coming later this year. Her birthday is in October, and one day later their second child is due to be born—and Mario has another fan to try and keep happy.

• FEATURE •

The Sounds of Borris—Melodious & Otherwise

by Colman Ryan, MD, Seton Medical Center



Photo by Cian Ryan of his Dad's hand and an Irish Robin.

JUST LIKE AIRPLANES in Burlington today the sounds in Borris kept our acuity sharp and aware. We took them for granted, but they became part of our lives without us knowing.

The first sounds I remember before dawn were the birds—finches, robins, crows, tomtits and the ever-cooing doves were a pleasant cacophony as the sun rose. I was and am today convinced that this was a symphony with every bird talking to each other with nature—trees, fields, rivers and the sky as conditions—no baton needed, just the harmony of the great outdoors. The larks were the maestros—rising high in the sky and chirping their hearts out to our delight. We had many in Borris over the heather of Mount Leinster.

"The lark in the morning she rises off her nest. She goes home in the evening with the dew all on her breast. And like the jolly ploughboy, she whistles, and she sings, she goes home in the evening with the dew all on her wings."

Next, I remember on my early walks were robins, blackbirds and finches in gossiping conversations—clearly communicating the events of yesterday and the plans for today. I sat on my favorite stone and listened. The cooing of the doves bore evidence of courtship denying their distance and hinting at immediate intimacy.

As the day wore on the corncrakes rattled their song also. Professional ventriloquists, one never knew where they were—even the field they "craked" from was anonymous. One spotted them running from time to time but seldom flying—toying for our attention, sometimes mimicking a broken wing to get us away from their nest.

The Cuckoo
Perhaps the most fascinating bird was the cuckoo.

The larks were the maestros—rising high in the sky and chirping their hearts out to our delight.

Seldom heard before noon—but a universal sign of Spring and Summer. We children knew not to trust them. They were the original evictors of other birds nests—kicking eggs and even hatchlings out of other nests. We regarded them as similar to the British eviction of Irish citizens in prior centuries.

Noxious Sounds
Early morning dogs barking was part of our lives. I never found out why donkeys bray. Maybe they needed attention or feedings. Mostly I felt they needed a mate. We kids were always amazed at their display of masculinity in the fields. Giggling wasn't just for girls when that happened.

The Most Pleasant Sound
Perhaps the most pleasant sound for me was the babbling brook rivers. I could sit for hours on a stone and listen to the high pitched melody of water around rocks. I would look at the waving weeds, deep green, dancing to the noise of the waters, swaying to and

fro with the ripples for their partners and the rocks as the pillar of their dance halls. The fish also danced but slowly, above the yellow sand with the crevices in the rocks for easy protection from preying adolescent hands—furtive and evasive, seldom caught but always a challenge for me. Trout were indeed a challenge.

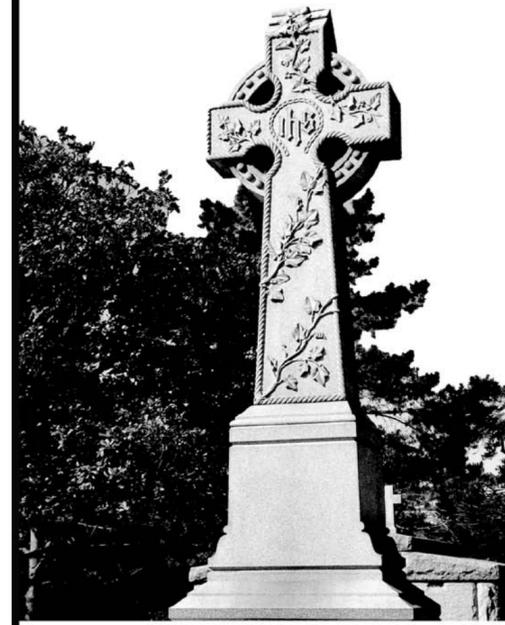
Sounds of Doubtful Pleasure: The Crowing Cock and the Screaming Hawks and Gobbling Turkeys

While still quite dark the cocks in our yard heralded the rising sun. I've no idea why they do it so early except to annoy us and lord it over the household. "Get to work and lay your eggs and make some more chickens," they seemed to say. Mating was such a short frantic affair it hardly seemed worth it.

We had turkeys too who would gobble gobble in the yard and sometimes threaten us with fanned out feathers and running towards us. We used to imitate them to annoy them from a safe distance. There was a pair of Muscovy ducks also nearby. They would hiss at us and chase us as young children, with their big red combs. We never annoyed them.

The most intriguing for us was the screaming of the hawks—a very distinctive warning. The mother rabbits would stand on their hind legs and look to the sky to protect their young from these "dive bombers." They were large and beautiful and always travelled in pairs. They were more deadly when they glided silently and hovered over their prey with deadly talons extended for the kill. The only thing not beautiful about them was their cruel eyes—yellow orange in color and always meaning business. They always succeeded in their mission. I greatly admired their persistence and accuracy. God's way of getting rid of vermin.

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Minimizing Immigration Separation By Maximizing Social Distancing

by Fiona McEntee

ORDINARY TRAVEL AND SOCIAL gatherings are on hold due to the Coronavirus, but true love knows no borders. Recently engaged couples around the world may be reassessing their wedding plans, but for US citizens who hope to marry their foreign national (FN) fiancé(e) in the US, now is a great time to discuss and begin your immigration journey.

The US immigration process for the K-1 fiancé(e) visa requires couples to provide detailed documentation to multiple agencies over many months. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is still accepting applications as usual, so applicants can still file new cases, but this could change as the COVID-19 situation unfolds.

At McEntee Law Group, we are seeing couples use this time to gather evidence and documentation needed for their applications in order to minimize separation. If you're already separated from your fiancé(e) due to travel restrictions and you're spending a lot of time at home, now is a great time to get started.

Here are some things you can do now:

1. Find a qualified US immigration attorney.

The K-1 visa process can look simple on its face, but we would never recommend going it alone. US immigration is

very complex and constantly changing. Small oversights can have big consequences, from delays to denials. Some consequences may not be evident until it is too late. A licensed attorney who regularly files K-1 visa cases can spot the issues, address them proactively, and help you navigate the process more efficiently. Immigration counsel is a worthwhile investment in your future as a couple.

2. Get on the same page.

The US immigration process requires both fiancé(e)s to disclose personal information that you may not normally be comfortable discussing, from prior arrests to financial and health challenges. When you hire an immigration attorney, the same attorney can represent both fiancé(e)s as long as interests are aligned and there are no secrets. If secrets come to light or a conflict develops, your attorney may have to terminate representation.

To successfully navigate this process, you will have to be completely honest with your fiancé(e) and your attorney so they can properly advise and represent you. If you and your fiancé(e) have not discussed personal finances yet, you should have that conversation soon. It's not advisable to wait until you're in front of a USCIS or Consular Officer.

3. Gather your personal documentation.

If the quarantine has you both spending more time at home, now is a great time to organize the documents you'll need for the K-1 application. Dig through your attics and basements to find your original personal documents. Get clear copies of your passport, prior visas, birth certificates, and divorce decrees, if applicable. Keep the originals somewhere safe. You will need them for interviews down the line.

4. Document your personal history.

The K-1 visa and green card process requires detailed personal information from both fiancé(e)s. You will each need a complete employment, education, and address history for the last five years before the date of filing. This means every job, school, and address, even the server job you quit after two weeks and the college you transferred out of after a semester. Double-check your address history online. It goes further back than you think.

Later on, the FN fiancé(e) will need to list their group affiliations. This means listing every "organization, association, fund, foundation, party, club, society, or similar group" you

have ever been a part of inside and outside the US. You will need to provide the name(s) and your dates of involvement. Organizing this proactively will save you and your attorney time in the long run.

5. Gather your financial documentation.

The K-1 visa is intended for US citizens who want to bring their FN fiancé(e) to the US to get married within 90 days of entry. The end goal is to get married and gain permanent resident status by getting a "green card." In late February 2020, USCIS implemented a new rule that substantially increased the work and documentation required to get a green card.

The Public Charge Rule (PCR) requires green card applicants to show that they will not become dependent on state assistance in the US by providing extensive documentation about their household's finances. The FN will not receive work authorization for 4-5 months after applying for the green card, and the PCR is primarily focused on the US citizen's finances. The US citizen fiancé(e) will need IRS tax transcripts for at least the most recent tax year, and ideally for the last 3-5 years. If you were not required to file taxes in a specific year, or you have yet to file, you may want to reach out to an accountant to get written confirmation. The document requirements vary based on your individual situation, especially if it changed due to COVID-19. A qualified immigration attorney is in the best position to help you meet these onerous requirements.

6. Order outstanding documentation.

If you are missing essential documents like tax transcripts, court records, or original birth certificates, order them sooner rather than later. Different agencies are operating on different timelines due to COVID-19, so leave some room for delay.

The K-1 visa process can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. An experienced US immigration attorney can help you through this newly-charted territory in unprecedented times.

Fiona McEntee is the Founding and Managing Attorney of McEntee Law Group, an immigration law firm located in Chicago with a national client base. Fiona has over 12 years of experience practicing immigration law. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, and now a naturalized US citizen, she is in a unique position to provide sensitive, compassionate, and comprehensive advice to all her clients.

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JUNE UPDATES

IMMIGRATION ADVICE CLINIC

Immigration attorney, Jim Byrne is continuing his monthly immigration clinic remotely.

Telephone/FaceTime appointments are available for Saturday, June 6, 2020 between 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Register with Katie at 415.752.6006 or email admin@sfiipc.org

SF ★2020 census COUNTS

Irish America needs to be counted!

IIPC is delighted to be a member of the San Francisco Complete Count Committee with particular focus on making sure that all Irish and Irish American residents of the Bay Area are counted in Census 2020.

Census 2020 is an online application with just 9 questions, including the option to further define your identity as Irish. We are hoping that you will join us to make sure that all of our community is counted!

If you are undocumented, on a visa, a US citizen and are resident in the US, you should complete your Census form. Filling out your Census form helps San Francisco get Federal funds for local transportation, infrastructure, health care, schools, affordable housing, and higher education for our community and is completely confidential

More information at my2020census.gov, or call us at 415.752.6006 if you have questions.

TRAVEL IN COVID

At the time of writing of this article, we remain in an almost global state of inertia when it comes to international travel.

A number of Presidential Proclamations are currently in effect. The initial proclamation limits the entry of aliens recently present in certain foreign jurisdictions including the People's Republic of China (excluding the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau), the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Schengen Area, the United Kingdom (excluding overseas territories outside of Europe), and the Republic of Ireland. On May 24, Brazil was added to this list.

The Presidential Proclamation Suspending

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

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JUNE VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

While our shelter in place restrictions are slowly lifting, it will be a little while longer before we go back to a something more akin to our normal lives, and that is ok. We all need to continue to be patient, to see how the easing of restrictions affects the spread of the virus. Above all, we need to keep each other safe.

For as long as we find ourselves in this position, we will continue to develop our Virtual Programming and we hope that you will join us for some, or all of our events.



GOLDEN GATE MEN'S SHED

Mondays from 6.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.

Join by Zoom at <https://linktr.ee/sfiipc>

Our Golden Gate Men's Shed is back! Join the men of the shed each Monday evening from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. for a very interesting guest speaker series! June speakers include Larry Doyle (Parkside Tavern), Consul General Robert O'Driscoll and Larry McCarthy, incoming President of the GAA. This one is for the men, so step on in!



YOU, ME & A CUP OF TEA

Tuesdays from 10.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Join by Zoom at <https://bit.ly/2Z79nEn> or call Joan at 415.432.2551 for phone in details.

On Tuesday mornings, put the kettle on, make a cup of tea, sit down and relax in the company of friends as we chat, share stories, and generally have a bit of craic to get the week off to a good start. Hosted by Joan, we are excited to share this novel way to stay 'connected' until we all can get together again in person.



VIRTUAL BINGO

Thursdays from 10.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Call Joan at 415.432.2551 to register and receive your BINGO sheets

If you have never played BINGO, now's your chance! Join Janette and her wily players and see if you are quick enough to spot your winning line or box! It's all a bit of fun, but oh, so competitive! Check it out!



PASTORAL PROVISIONS

Saturdays and Tuesdays from 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon

Donation dropoff: 1612 Noriega Street, San Francisco (between 23rd & 24th Avenues)

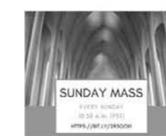
Pantry Box Registration at <https://linktr.ee/sfiipc>

A pantry to support our Irish community through this crisis, we will be collecting food and non-food items for distribution to those who need a helping hand during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Food donations or gift cards can be dropped off at Whelan's School of Irish Dance, 1612 Noriega Street, San Francisco on Saturdays and Tuesdays between 10:00 a.m and 12 noon.

If you or someone you know may need some supplies to get through this period of time, please register at <https://linktr.ee/sfiipc>

This program is discrete and confidential. All are welcome. Call Celine at 415.432.2550 for information



SUNDAY MASS

Sundays at 10.30 a.m.

IIPC YouTube page at <https://bit.ly/2R3qOkI>

Join Fr. Brendan each Sunday morning for celebration of Mass. Take some time out for a little peace, quiet & reflection.

immigration for 60 days for certain categories of immigrants. It applies to immigrants currently outside the United States, who do not already have a valid immigrant visa, and do not otherwise have a valid travel document, such as advanced parole, that permits travel to the United States. There are a number of exemptions to this Proclamation, some of which are listed below.

It does not apply to the following groups:

- Current Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders)
- Spouses and Minor Children (under 21) of U.S. Citizens
- Healthcare Professionals entering on an immigrant visa to work on the COVID-19 pandemic
- EB-5 Immigrant Investors
- Anyone already in the United States applying for a green card (Adjustment of Status applicants)

It is unclear when either of these proclamations will be lifted. If you have any questions please email Celine at celine@sfiipc.org.

Travel to Ireland

Travel to Ireland is still open for all nationalities but is obviously dependent on available flight options. Upon arrival in Ireland, all travelers are expected to self isolate for 14 days in a named address which has to be given to the authorities. This means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people.

As of May 28, everyone traveling into the Republic of Ireland must complete a COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form. The details on this form may be used to contact individuals to confirm information, as well as for contact tracing if necessary.

Irish Passport Applications

Processing of non-emergency Irish passport applications and renewals has been suspended and Passport Service staff have been redeployed to assist public service delivery during this public health emergency. Applications will be processed once service resumes.

Passports for travel in a genuine emergency (death or serious illness of a family member or for emergency medical treatment of the applicant) are being processed. Contact the Consulate General of Ireland, San Francisco on their emergency number: +1 415 823 7150 for assistance.

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IRISH NEWS

UK-EU Brexit Trade Deal Almost Impossible By December 31 Deadline Says Tánaiste

WHEN THE UK LEFT THE European Union on January 31 this year, astute observers noted that it was only the first step. Boris Johnson's government would still have to face the more difficult task of negotiating a trade deal with the EU bloc, and it had only until December 31 to do it. The British can extend the deadline as long as they do so by June, but so far no-one in Westminster has shown any inclination to do that.

In the period between Brexit and the present the coronavirus pandemic seems to have sucked all the political oxygen out of the room, and there are growing concerns that the end-of-the-year deadline will not be met. Neither of the trade talks which have taken place have yielded anything concrete.

Simon Coveney, Ireland's caretaker Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs has said that progress towards a deal has been much slower than the EU wanted and that the UK should now seek and extension.

"Covid-19 has made what is already a very, very difficult timeline to get agreement virtu-

ally impossible," he said. "Given the added complications of Covid-19 it surely makes sense to seek a bit more time to navigate our way through these very difficult waters in the months ahead so that we can get a good outcome for the UK and EU."

"I think anybody looking at this from the outside could only conclude it makes sense to look for more time but the British government has decided that's not what they want and they have made that very clear both publicly and privately. "I wouldn't be raising expectations around the British government agreeing to seeking more time."

"If we're going to have any chance of persuading them to take more time then we need to be careful about how we do that because demanding it from them ... almost as a concession to the EU, is certainly not the way to do it."

Referencing Johnson's characteristically bullish comments over Brexit, Coveney added: "Talking about the UK being fully autonomous, protecting sovereignty ... I get that language, that is what has

driven Brexit in many ways.

"Breaking free from the European Union, not being a rule taker, that's fine from a political narrative perspective."

"But you can't have quota-free, tariff-free trade unless there is a level playing field. "The EU can just never facilitate that and why would they ... This is essentially the crux of the issue and if we can't resolve it, there isn't going to be a deal."

Meanwhile the EU Trade Commissioner, Irishman Phil Hogan, has questioned whether or not the UK actually wants the trade negotiations to end in a deal. Speaking on Irish radio Hogan said: "There is no real sign that our British friends are approaching the negotiations with a plan to succeed."

"I hope I am wrong, but I don't think so."

He suggested that the British government and politicians "have certainly decided that Covid is going to be blamed for all the fallout from Brexit."

"My perception of it is they don't want to drag the negotiations out into 2021 because they can effectively blame Covid for everything."

Irish Court Dismisses Constitutionality Challenge To COVID-19 Laws

A CASE BROUGHT BEFORE THE Irish High Court challenging the constitutionality of laws introduced to constrain the spread of coronavirus has been dismissed.

The case was brought by two of Ireland's most controversial journalists, Gemma O'Doherty and John Waters. The pair were petitioning to have various pieces of the COVID-19 legislation struck down. They were also asking the court to formally declare the challenged legislation to be unconstitutional.

Mr Justice Charles Meen-

an decided on May 13 that O'Doherty and Waters could not bring a full judicial review case.

In his judgement, he said: "In making their case for leave the applicants, who have no medical or scientific qualifications or expertise, relied upon their own unsubstantiated views, gave speeches, engaged in empty rhetoric and sought to draw an historic parallel with Nazi Germany—a parallel which is both absurd and offensive."

"Unsubstantiated opinions, speeches, empty rhetoric and a

bogus historical parallel are not a substitute for facts," the judge said.

The State, and lawyers acting for the Dáil, Seanad and the Ceann Comhairle who were notice parties to the proceedings, had argued during a two-day leaving hearing that permission should not be granted.

In their action O'Doherty and Waters, who represented themselves, challenged legislation including the 2020 Health Preservation and Protection and Other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act, the 2020 Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act Covid-19 Act, and the 1947 Health Act (Affected Areas) Order.

Their proceedings were aimed at striking down temporary restriction regulations brought due to Covid-19 under the 1947 Health Act.

They had claimed that the laws, and the manner in which they were enacted, are repugnant to several articles of the constitution including rights to travel, bodily integrity and the family.

On this, the judge said that he was "satisfied that the applicants have established no arguable case against the Oireachtas. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the case which they seek to make is unstateable."

The two-day hearing, as well as earlier hearings of the application, saw a large number of gardaí around the Four Courts complex to ensure that social distancing regulations, which including limiting the number of persons that can attend court hearings, were maintained.

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IRISH NEWS

Derry Woman Wins Important Immigration Concession From UK Government For US Husband

A WOMAN FROM MAGHERAFELT, County Derry, in the north of Ireland has won a landmark concession from the British government in her bid to be considered as an Irish citizen.

The Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998 recognizes the birthright of people born in the north to be considered as Irish or British citizens or both. In 2017 however, when seeking an EU residence card for her American husband from the British Home Office, DeSouza was told her application was rejected because she stated her nationality as Irish. The Home Office told her she would have to re-apply, either as a British citizen or, alternatively, she would have to renounce her British citizenship if she wanted to continue to apply as an Irish citizen.

At the time, DeSouza said she had "discovered that (her) lifelong Irish identity is evidently considered secondary to an unclaimed British identity."

After a three year legal battle the UK government finally changed the law last month to allow family members of British or dual British-Irish citizens from the north of Ireland to apply for status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

The change means British and Irish citizens born in the north of Ireland will be treated as EU citizens for immigration

"The British government has failed to give domestic legal effect to the birthright provisions of the Good Friday Agreement and continues to automatically confer British citizenship on all the people of Northern Ireland, even if they identify as Irish."

purposes and will have the right to have a non-EU or non-EEA country spouse remain in the UK.

DeSouza has now withdrawn her legal challenge in the Court of Appeal.

"The changes forced through by our case will now allow my husband to remain in the United Kingdom on the basis of my Irish citizenship and require the Home Office to respect my right under the Good Friday Agreement to be accepted as Irish—the terms which set the foundation of our legal complaint and the grounds we were forced to argue in court time and again until the British government finally conceded that we were right all along," she said.

DeSouza acknowledged that withdrawing the challenge will not satisfy everyone.

She commented: "We know that many will be disappointed by this news, as our work to address the inconsistencies in the

implementation of legislation for the Good Friday Agreement has highlighted that there is so much more at stake here than just the changes we achieved in our case.

"The changes to the Immigration rules, whilst enormously welcomed and beneficial to many, do not fully address all the underlying issues plaguing this region.

"The British government has failed to give domestic legal effect to the birthright provisions of the Good Friday Agreement and continues to automatically confer British citizenship on all the people of Northern Ireland, even if they identify as Irish, by promoting a narrative which implies identity and nationality are not synonymous, an absurd assertion when considering the language of the internationally binding treaty would—in their interpretation—grant citizens a right to 'feel' Irish rather than 'be' Irish."

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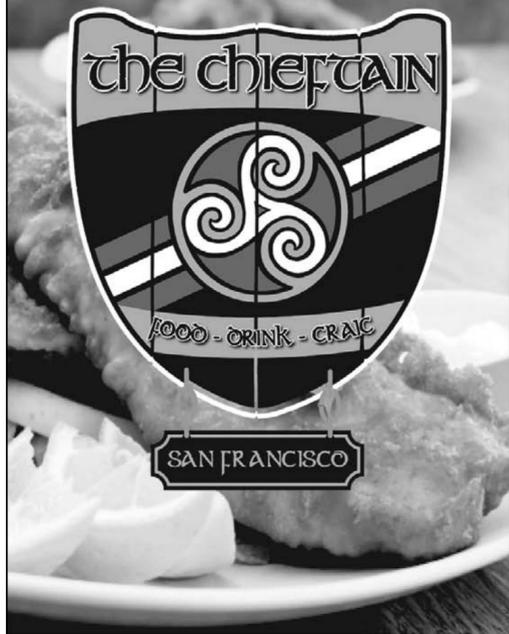
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SPORTS

The GAA Lost Three All-Time Greats In May

DOWN GAA ARE MOURNING legendary All-Ireland winning player and coach John Murphy. Murphy had an illustrious career with the Down football team. He won three All-Ireland Championships with the Mournemen—once as a player in 1968 against Kerry, and twice as a coach, in 1991 and 1994 against Meath and Dublin respectively.

Murphy played wing-forward and scored a goal in the side that defeated Kerry 2-12 to 1-13 to win the Sam Maguire in 1968. He also won two Ulster titles and a National League with Down, in addition to two Railway Cup medals with Ulster.

A tribute on the Down GAA website said Murphy had "a wonderful football brain and was a man of wise counsel."

"John had presence and status and had a great ability to relate to players personally and to get the best out of them in turn as footballers," it continued. "In team management, he was never one to shy from debate whilst fully respecting the final decision."

"As a player and as a selector, John always served and acted in the best interests of Down football. He was loyal too to his friend and colleague Pete McGrath, and when the time came in 2002 for that great era in Down football to end, John was still there with Pete."

Offaly's two-time All-Ireland

winner Paddy Fenning died on May 18 after a long and courageous battle with motor neurone disease. Fenning was 69. Fenning's All-Ireland medals came in 1971 against Galway (Offaly's first ever Senior Championship title) and the following year in 1972, against Kerry. All in all Fenning's playing career with the Offaly senior team lasted for 11 years, ending in 1980.

His goal against Kerry in the 1972 All-Ireland Final replay will forever be remembered in the Faithful County. Irish Times reporter Paddy Downey described it as follows: "The major turning point of the game came exactly eight and a half minutes after the restart and it settled the destination of the Sam Maguire Cup for 1972. A shortish Kerry kick-out was collected by Paddy Fenning from a tangle of players about 50 yards out and something to the left of the Kerry posts. His high kick should have been covered by the Kerry defense all the way," Downey continued, describing how the ball eluded the full backs and bounced into the net.

"It was the lucky break that many people had said would be needed to swing the game the other way. That goal swung the battle decisively in Offaly's direction and it crowned a fine performance by Fenning..." Fenning also won four

Leinster championships, and a Railway Cup in 1974.

After his football career came to a close, Fenning became active in his community. He raised funds for Tullamore Hospital and to pay off a development debt incurred by his club. In 1993 he published a book, 'Offaly—The Faithful County. A Pictorial History of the Football Years.'

In 2011 he was named 'Offaly Person of the Year.' The Rebel County of Cork has also lost All-Ireland winner Tom O'Donoghue.

A proud Sarsfields clubman, Tom was a key member of the Cork team which defeated Kilkenny in the 1966 All-Ireland SHC final at Croke Park. He played a starring role at full back as the Rebels shocked the Cats to end a twelve-year wait for the Liam MacCarthy Cup. Tom went on to win two Railway Cup medals with Munster in 1968 and '69 as well as a National League title in the latter year.

Sarsfields GAA took to Facebook to pay their respects to their club legend. In a moving the club wrote: "A very genuine sadness descended over Sars today as news filtered through of the passing of one of our true hurling legends, Tom O'Donoghue. In an era when the club needed heroes, Tom was the man who provided that inspiration for so many young Sars players in the 60s & 70s."

HOROSCOPE

ARIES March 21-April 20

A push and pull feeling in your world leaves you unable to make up your mind what to do next. You can release these feelings by listening closer to what your inner heart is saying. Be gentle and kind to yourself as an overwhelming sensitivity to anything and everything envelopes you. This too will pass. Examine all the new and exciting possibilities ahead. Change your life accordingly.

TAURUS April 21-May 21

Time to take out and re-think your life. What matters most, not where you are but where you are headed, you will be surprised at what comes up. An opportunity that you thought long gone presents itself again. Take time before you make a decision. June 5th, the Lunar eclipse, sees old attitudes and beliefs resurface. Don't look back but look ahead and see how much you've learnt and grown.

GEMINI May 22-June 21

A feeling of relief as you bask in the feeling you have survived the past and although you face an unknown future you are filled with confidence. You can handle everything. It's a time to be a step head of work responsibilities as Mercury goes retrograde from June 19th to July 11th when everything slows down. Take time to catch up with projects, and plan time to get together with friends.

CANCER June 22-July 22

This June you will re-evaluate what needs to be done to achieve your goals. June 5th, the full moon, you will think about what you need to do to achieve your dreams. June 21st with the solar eclipse in Cancer this positive influence will be felt for the next six months. It will bring new and unexpected things in your life and also have a very calming influence on you as well.

LEO July 23-August 22

A wonderful month to appreciate other people, and also to find a new job or new outlet for your talents. Be bold and ask for what you want in any situation. A golden opportunity presents itself in a brief conversation. Later this individual will catch up with you. Take note it might not feel right at this time but in the future the space for it will open up again provided you don't ignore it.

VIRGO August 23-September 22

How are you holding up? If you have been missing the freedom of your old life and struggling with the new normal you are not alone. It is a time to develop new modes of doing, being and coping that are far better for you than you had before. The lesson you learn from all of this will propel you to a far better future. Take time out to exercise and eat healthy.

LIBRA September 23-October 22

A very uncertain time. It seems the world is at a standstill. It's a time for a major shift in growth so it is a time for you to adapt. This change offers you a great time to succeed. Start planning for a better future. Love-wise relationships seem frustrated. Plan a time to visit a park, or the beach, this will bring fresh insights into your closest relationships.

SCORPIO October 23-November 21

Time to re-evaluate your life and getting rid of old workplace issues. Take time to review how you manage your finances and what you do with your money to reflect a healthy reflection of your self worth. Because of the coronavirus you are hypersensitive but the worst is over. You are in the middle of a huge re-structure of your life, and the best is yet to come.

SAGITTARIUS November 22-December 21

The lunar eclipse on the 5th of June seems to affect you so be sure you have an easy, relaxed schedule. Now is a time to redefine yourself—your image, personality, and self concept. Friendships can be tested so patience is required with those closest to you. You are busy at work, and it is a time to gather contacts and connections for future endeavors.

CAPRICORN December 22-January 20

You will be focusing on love this month. Your relationships get tested and there will be family dramas. A time to do repairs at home. The solar eclipse of the 21st affects you and tests your current relationship as Mercury only goes forward in July. It's a time to talk things out with a loved one. Pay attention to your health and your diet, and rest as much as possible.

AQUARIUS January 21-February 19

Pace of life slows down for you and nothing much happens in your world except to take it easy and enjoy your life. Friendships are tested and disruptions in high-tech equipment take place. Make sure your files are backed up and your anti-virus software is up to date. A creative projects that you forgot about finds its way back for your attention.

PISCES February 20-March 20

Any worries you have this June will go away as the outward steps you took in May will begin to bear fruit. You have more self confidence so it's a time for fun and enjoying the Summer. The lunar eclipse on the 5th may affect you so reduce your schedule and take it easy until June 21st. Shakeups at work or personal dramas in those close to you. June 21st things slow down and life becomes more enjoyable.

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SPORTS

Kerry Teenager Is The First Irishman To Get A Full US College Football Scholarship

A NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD FROM Castleisland in County Kerry has won a full scholarship from Georgia Tech to play in its prestigious football program. David Shanahan is the first Irish person ever to win such a scholarship.

Shanahan committed to play for the Yellow Jackets on May 15 in a tweet that read: "Thank you to Coach Collins, Coach Conner, Coach Popovich, Patrick Suddes and all the Georgia Tech football staff for this amazing opportunity."

"A massive thank you to John Smith and Nathan Chapman of Prokick Australia for all their hard work and dedication to make this all possible. I am so grateful for everything you have done for me."

"Also thanks to Dave Tuinauvai of Conquest Athletic Performance for all his work. "Finally to my family and friends, especially my mom and dad, I cannot thank you enough for always supporting me."

"Can't wait to get to ATL and get to work!"

Shanahan is by all accounts an amazing athlete. Growing up he played Gaelic football, rugby, and basketball, all to a high level. In 2017, he played with the Kerry U17 Gaelic football team which won that year's Munster title.

Speaking with Jackets Online, a Georgia Tech sports blog, Shanahan said he has always wanted to try something new. He decided to order a few

American footballs and started practicing kicking at his local GAA pitch.

"I had literally been kicking my whole life just with a round ball instead of an American football. At the start when I was punting, I really had no idea what I was doing."

Shanahan got better by learning from youtube videos.

Then he learned about Prokick Australia and saw that they were sending athletes to college in the US. The Irish teen decided they were his best shot at attending college in the US on an athletic scholarship so he reached out to them.

One of the coaches, John Smith, was in Manchester at the time and agreed to fly to Ireland to assess Shanahan.

"After a couple of kicks with Johnny, he told me he thought If I moved to Melbourne and trained with him, Nathan Chapman, and the rest of the Prokick boys, I could get a division one scholarship," Shanahan said.

The training, evidently, paid off. Following a Zoom call with four Georgia Tech coaches and two of his Prokick Australia trainers, Shanahan received an official offer for a full scholarship to be a punter on Georgia Tech's football team.

"I was ecstatic when my coach John Smith told me they offered me. It's a feeling I'll never forget."

Shanahan says he believes the plan as of right now is to enroll at Georgia Tech in January 2021.

The July edition of The Irish Herald will be published on June 29.

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SPORTS

GAA Says Allianz League Action Probably Done & No All-Ireland Action Till October At Least

THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION in Ireland have said fans will have to wait till at least October before the start of the 2020 All-Ireland Championships. The announcement was made after a meeting of the GAA's management committee on May 6. Counties and clubs have been asked to stop training for the time being.

The Association is open to playing games with no fans in attendance later in the year but acknowledged that there was no real appetite within its ranks for doing that.

All GAA facilities will remain closed for now and clubs have been asked to refrain from any on-field activity in line with current government social distancing restrictions, which are expected to remain in place until July 20.

The Association said it welcomed the government's roadmap to gradually open up the country, but will seek clarity around "the challenge of social distancing in contact sport."

GAA President John Horan gave a lengthy interview to Des Cahill on RTE's The Sunday Game on May 10 during which he said he can't see Gaelic games being played at any level while social distancing in its current form remains in place.

Horan stressed the the GAA's top priority was the safety of its members and their families. He also said the Association could lose up to €50 million if the All-Ireland Championships and other competitions are delayed further.

Horan said the GAA were surprised by the government's decision, announced May 8, to allow sports facilities to reopen to groups of four, and to allow non-contact collective training from June 9. He said the GAA would not allow group training sessions until at least July 20.

"If social distancing is a priority to deal with this pandemic, I don't know how we can play a contact sport—and that is what Gaelic games is: a contact sport," Horan said.

"I think everyone was taken by surprise on Friday night because no one knew what was coming. It did give everyone a bit of an uplift to feel that we were coming back.

"We had to examine it and look at it closely, and there was a concept in it that people had to gather together in groups of four, but we felt that it couldn't be marshalled by people in our clubs because our clubs are led by a load of good-quality volunteer people and to put the onus on volunteer people to make the decisions to police and organise training within our facilities, we just felt that would be too much on them.

"You would have a group of four here, and there, and all of a sudden you would have a full squad gathering. Then, the next thing, after a period of that training, they'd probably push on and you could have a training behind closed doors.

"I'm not going to pass that responsibility onto the club volunteer who does a great job for us to make the decisions. Professional sport is in a different league because they don't go back into work and can be cocooned in a family situation. We can't do that and won't. I think people's health and safety is the key to it all," he said.

"We took our time, consulted with our county chairmen and management committee before we came out with our press release on Wednesday. I think we have taken the right decision.

"We'll be taking our information from the health authorities to see it is safe, and it's only if and when it's safe that we will actually allow training and our games to recommence.

"Taking that information on board, then, we'll make that decision—and we won't bring it up to the line. We'll be making that decision on a constant; we're on executive calls every day and we'll keep reviewing and updating so we'll be staying on top of things in the next period of weeks.

"Ultimately there is a huge responsibility to get this right and if one club, be it a playing area or whatever, developed

into a cluster for the COVID-19, that would be a very bad day's work on our behalf, and that's one thing we are very conscious of: that none of our facilities develop into a cluster.

"Our concern has to be the players on the pitch, their families and their work colleagues. They are all amateurs and it's a hobby to them all, and I know they take it to a very serious level and they have a very professional approach to it, but we can't risk anything. I would hate to think as an organisation that we would have made a decision that would have cost any family a member of their family."

Horan confirmed that if the GAA does resume this year, the club season is likely to do so before its inter-county equivalent due to the fact that it pertains to far more GAA members. He added that in such an instance, there will likely be no club championships at juvenile age grades up as far as Minor, with leagues and other non-competitive fixtures being prioritised for young players.

"We're quite comfortable to say that we are going to go with the club game first because it impacts on the greater number of people," Horan said.

"98 percent of our games are club games so if we play club games, it's inclusive of everybody because the county players would get the opportunity to play with their clubs and that would have an important impact across the whole of Irish society.

"Then we can actually make the decision to return to the inter-county game. It's a contact sport decision that is going to influence it so whether at county or club level I don't see a major distinction between the two of them but the impact throughout the organisation would be far greater if we actually got the clubs back."

Horan also poured cold water on the idea of Championship games being played behind closed doors.

"I have an issue about the 'closed-doors' concept because if it is safe enough for the players to be in close contact on the pitch, it's going to be safe enough to have a certain number of people in a gathering at the ground itself. We're fortunate as an organisation to have such fantastic stadia.

"Take Croke Park, 83,000 is the normal attendance, I'm sure we could put an attendance into Croke Park that could be done in a safe manner. Crowds gathering in that situation will probably come before we have contact sport."

Horan also said that the 2020 Allianz Leagues are now very unlikely to be completed and that February 2021 would be the last possible month to complete the 2020 All-Ireland Championships, and that after that the GAA would draw a line under them and start the 2021 season.

SPORTS

And They're Off! Horse Racing To Restart In Ireland On June 8



Galway Races at Ballybrit Racecourse

THE RETURN OF HORSE RACING in Ireland has been brought forward by three weeks following talks between the government and Horse Racing Ireland, the sport's governing body. The resumption of racing was originally slated for June 29 under phase three of the reopening roadmap, but races can now take place "behind closed doors" from June 8.

A number of strict coronavirus protocols have been agreed to allow the sport to resume. The only people allowed at tracks will be the essential personnel needed to run the events. Everyone involved will be subject to health screening beforehand and will have their temperature taken on the way into the venue.

Face masks will be mandatory and social distancing will be strictly controlled by a dedicated Covid-19 protocol officer at each race meeting.

"We are grateful to be one of the sectors permitted to go back to work and acknowledge the responsibility on everybody in racing to ensure the events are run in a safe way," said Chief Executive of Horse Racing Ireland, Brian Kavanagh.

"We know from our own experience in March when we safely ran ten meetings behind closed doors—and from what is happening in other countries like France, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and America—that racing can be staged safely within the requirements of social distancing.

"With significant input from the IHRB's chief medical officer Dr Jennifer Pugh, we have strengthened the HRI Covid-19 protocols and so, while race fixtures will return in Ireland on 8 June, they will be very different from what people will have experienced before."

Kavanagh added: "We will publish our full protocols tomorrow and will require any key personnel necessary to run a race fixture to read the document in full. "There must be full compliance with these protocols and to assist the industry in becoming familiar with the changed workplace, a series of webinars on the Covid 19 Protocols will be announced. "We will release a revised fixture list up to the end of

June, including confirmation on when the Classics, traditionally scheduled for this time of year, will be run."

Caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar defended the decision to allow horse racing to reopen saying that the industry was worth almost half a billion euro a year to the Irish economy. Varadkar also pointed out that the horse racing industry in Ireland needed to be aligned with what was happening in the industry abroad.

"Horse racing was never specifically mentioned in the plan that we agreed back in April, so now it is, and horse racing behind closed doors will be allowed to resume from the 8 June, and that's taking into account what's happening in the UK and what's happening in France," Varadkar said.

"This is a big economic sector, a lot of people employed in it, worth nearly €500 million euro to the economy each year and because people won't be able to travel to meetings, the amount of movement will be limited—it's people travelling to and from their workplace, essentially, but won't be open to spectators, not for the foreseeable future."

"We need to be aligned, or more or less aligned, with what's happening in the UK and France in that regard," he added.

In the month of July there will be 47 race meetings in total including the seven-day Galway Racing Festival, slated to begin in the last week of July.

Horse racing has had its share of critics in Ireland in recent months because of the decision of thousands of Irish race fans to travel to this year's Cheltenham Festival which took place between March 10 and March 13. The Irish government began its national shutdown on March 12, while up to 20,000 Irish people were mingling with more than 100,000 British spectators at Cheltenham.

Kavanagh acknowledged that Cheltenham should have been cancelled but claimed that social distancing was not really understood at the time.

"It's very interesting, that was the very week where the whole thing ramped up with coronavirus," Kavanagh said.

"I went there for the first two days and it was remarkable that I came back to a different country on Wednesday night to the one I left on Monday.

"I think on Tuesday, the images from Italy started to come through in great detail and by the end of that week, we were racing behind closed doors in Ireland. I think with hindsight, people would recognise that Cheltenham would have been much better if it went behind closed doors, not a decision that we have any control over, it's entirely a matter for the British authorities and the British government.

"Social distancing as we know it now was not really that well known at that time. The irony is that while Cheltenham was going ahead and people were at the races, the pubs back in Ireland were packed with people watching Cheltenham, but it certainly couldn't have come at a worse week, it was unfortunate because it was the last major sporting event to take place. Should it have taken place? With hindsight, probably not but everyone's wise after the event."

The decision to allow horse racing has led to calls from the world of greyhound racing for the same treatment. In a statement the Irish Greyhound Board has asked for "full clarity" on the decision.

"The IGB notes the Government decision today to permit horse racing with effect from 8th June 2020 and would have been of the understanding that such decision also extended to greyhound racing. This would not appear to be the case," the statement reads.

"Greyhound racing has proven its ability to run 'racing behind closed doors' and successfully complied with all Covid 19 protocols when operating on a closed doors basis during early March 2020," said Chairman of the Irish Greyhound Board, Frank Nyhan.

"The IGB is at a loss to understand why, on a risk basis, greyhound racing is not assessed as being capable of operating behind closed doors from 8th June next as it is clear that all necessary protocols can be fully complied with."



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