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# The Irish Herald

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California

April 2020/Aibreán 2020



**Important note: This event took place before the statewide shelter in place order was given and all restrictions known at the time were fully complied with.**

## St Patrick's Day Honored In San Francisco

by Tony Bucher

ON SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2020 a small, spirited group of Irish American San Franciscans took matters into their own hands and faced down the challenge of the coronavirus epidemic.

Earlier that week, alarmed

by the rapid spread of the virus in our densely inhabited City, Mayor London Breed had taken the wise and decisive step to prohibit all public gatherings of more than 25 people, effectively shutting down the 2020 St Patrick's

Parade. Parades of longstanding tradition in cities across the nation, from New York to Chicago to Savannah to New Orleans, were put on hold as large public gatherings were ordered to close.

**Continued on page 14**

## Be Safe & Stay At Home To Save Lives

by Seán Canniffe, Editor

AS I WRITE THIS WE ARE HEADED into our third week of a statewide 'Shelter In Place' order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom as a measure to slow down the Coronavirus.

Most of us know why we have to stay indoors. It's not hard to understand. The virus is highly contagious. It is spread (mostly) when people are in close proximity with someone who is infected. Without isolation, each infected person could lead to as many as 2,400 more people getting sick. At the mortality rate we have in the US at press time that would likely mean between 24 and 48 people would die.

The guidelines are designed to slow down the spread of the disease, to prevent our healthcare system from being completely overwhelmed. We have seen in Italy, Spain, France and other countries that if the hospitals can't cope, even more will die.

The reality is both simple and stark. If everyone follows the rules far less will contract the virus and its spread will be contained. The opposite is equally true, if you break the 'shelter in place' guidelines you run a higher risk of getting the virus yourself and also giving it to others. There is no other way of saying it: breaking the rules could result in many deaths.

On the frontlines of the fight against this disease are our first responders and healthcare professionals. The more people that are infected, the more peril they are in. 23 percent of the people infected in Ireland are healthcare workers. The figures are similar in every location where there has been an outbreak. Spare a thought for them all. If you are a contractor and you have spare N95 masks, please consider dropping them off to a healthcare facility nearby.

The strength of our Irish American community will help us to get through this emergency. Reach out to those you know who are vulnerable. A phone call to someone living alone could mean much more now than ever before.

Already we are seeing many instances of members of our community stepping up to the plate to do their part.

*The Irish Herald* will continue to print throughout the crisis. Our distribution network has had to change. Many of you used to get the paper at your local Irish bar or restaurant. Most of those venues are no longer available to us until they re-open. Instead, we have expanded our distribution list in other places. A full list is available on our Facebook page and web site, [www.irish-herald.com](http://www.irish-herald.com). Stay safe.

## Ireland On Strict Lockdown Until At Least Easter Sunday

IN A BID TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF Covid-19 in the Republic of Ireland, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced further lockdown restrictions from midnight on Friday, March 27, for a two-week period until Easter Sunday, 12 April.

Everybody in Ireland has been told to stay at home for two weeks, except essential workers traveling to work and other exceptions.

The only exemptions include: shopping for food or household goods or collecting a meal; vital family healthcare reasons; and taking physical exercise. People who do leave their homes for exercise will be required to stay within a 1.5 mile radius.

Shielding or cocooning will also be introduced for all of those over 70 years of age and specific categories

of people who are extremely vulnerable to Covid-19.

All visits to hospitals, residential healthcare settings, or residential settings and prisons have ceased with specific exceptions, on compassionate grounds.

All public transport and passenger travel will be restricted only to essential workers, and people providing essential services.

Varadkar said health officials were concerned that more than 50 percent of the confirmed cases in Ireland involved community transmission and that clusters were developing in places such as nursing homes and residential care settings.

"We believe that now is the time for these further actions," he said.

"These are radical ac-

tions aimed at saving as many people's lives as possible in the days and weeks ahead," Varadkar said.

"We're not prisoners of fate. We can influence what's going to happen to us next.

"So I'm asking people to give meaning to our freedom and liberty by agreeing to these restrictions, restricting how we live our lives, so that others may live."

Varadkar said there was not much else the government could do to restrict movement but that gardaí do have powers to police the restrictions, however, he expressed hope they would be achieved with the "consent and co-operation" of the public.

Chief Medical Officer Tony Holohan said health officials have seen encouraging signs so far in the battle

to stop the spread of Covid-19 but warned "we need to go further" due to the day-on-day increase in ICU admittance.

"First of all, we've seen over the course of recent weeks, a drop in the number of contacts associated with each case that we identify and then we follow up in contact tracing. This gives us encouragement that the public is working with us.

"We've also seen that the day on day increase in the total number of cases, has slowed down, relative to what we might have expected a number of weeks ago.

"We think we're still at an early point in the course of this disease. We think now is the time for us to move to strengthen the measures further to try to spend two weeks to really suppress the

transmission of this virus as much as possible in the community."

At press time, Friday March 27, the number of confirmed cases of the virus in Ireland stood at 1,819 and 19 people had died. There were 410 confirmed cases in the north of Ireland, where 21 have died.

Dr Holohan said he remains concerned that Intensive Care Unit admissions for Covid-19 cases have continued to rise.

"While we think we're still at an early point in the course of this disease we think now is the time for us to move, to strengthen the measures further, to try to spend two weeks to really suppress the transmission of this virus as much as is possible," he explained.

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A CHAIRDE, FRIENDS,  
Given the pace of recent developments, it seems like a lifetime ago since many of us were busy making preparations for celebrations throughout March to mark Irish American Heritage month and St Patrick's Day.

Our world has changed hugely in the intervening period, and continues to do so. We hope that you and your families are all staying safe and are healthy at this difficult time.

The message at home in Ireland and here in California is the same, social distancing slows the spread of COVID-19 and saves lives.

The Consulate General in San Francisco has closed its public office but we are available to provide emergency services—consular assistance, emergency travel documents and advice. If you require assistance please do not hesitate to contact us on (415) 823-7150. We are also responding to all queries in our mailbox. If you need a passport renewed we strongly recommend that you first consider the online option at [www.dfa.ie/passports](http://www.dfa.ie/passports).

As we all play our part in stopping the spread of this virus, we as a community share an immense sense of pride at the heroic work being carried out by those at the coalface of containing the virus and providing medical support to those most in need—nurses, doctors and other medical professionals. Also those in other essential services who continue to make life continue as normal as possible. As the Taoiseach said in his address on St Patrick's Day: "Never will so many ask so much of so few."

We are also acutely aware that the current situation is particularly challenging for the most vulnerable in our community, and the Consulate is in regular contact with our Emigrant Support Programme partner, the Irish Immigration and Pastoral Center, to identify what supports are required in the current unusual and trying circumstances and in the future.

The history of our community in California from the earliest days is a story of service and resilience. Many in our community today are answering the call of service, and I am confident that our resolve, our sense of shared purpose and our togetherness will get us through this. We must take responsibility to look after ourselves, to look after each other, and to each play our part.

The team at the Consulate and I will continue to play our part and we look forward to meeting with you all again on the other side of this.

Stay safe,  
Go gcasfar ar a chéile arís muid,

**Robert O'Driscoll**  
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# Event Canceled

The Annual Easter Commemoration  
at the grave of Fenian Thomas Desmond  
at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma  
has been canceled due to the statewide  
Shelter in Place regulations.

We send our best wishes to all Irish Herald  
Readers at this difficult time.





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• IRISH NEWS •

## Pandemic Will Put Ireland In Recession, Warns ESRI

THE IRISH ECONOMY IS expected to shrink by 7.1 percent and fall into a recession due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has warned.

The not-for-profit research institute said that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is "the greatest threat that the Irish economy has faced since the financial crisis."

Acknowledging that it was difficult to apply a traditional economic forecast, it instead provided a "scenario analysis" to assess the impact of the pandemic:

At this juncture, we assume that these measures stay in place for a 12-week period and the economy recovers afterwards. Under this scenario, the Irish economy would shrink by 7.1 percent in 2020.

"Consumption, investment and net trade would all fall sharply; households would cut spending, firms would cancel or postpone investment and external demand for Irish goods and services will fall."

The ESRI also said that the labor market, "which had been in a position of strength before

the spread of the pandemic, is set to face the largest one-quarter shock in living memory."

"Under the scenario the unemployment rate increases to 18 percent in Q2 up from 4.8 percent in the previous quarter, as over 350,000 people lose their jobs."

The ESRI said that the general government balance, which had been expected to be in surplus at the start of the year, would now register a 4.3 percent deficit.

This is as a result of the significant fall in revenues the exchequer will face.

It also reflects the significant increase in spending the government will implement in order to support workers who have lost their jobs, assist businesses facing declines in revenue and provide additional health expenditure needed to combat the virus.

As this analysis is based on the restrictions being in place for 3 months and a recovery to begin after that, the ESRI said that this may prove "too benign," and will revisit its scenario "more frequently" than it would in a normal environment.

## If You Smoke, Now Is A Really Good Time To Quit

SMOKERS COULD LOWER THEIR risk of severe illness from Covid-19 by quitting their habit.

"Active smoking increases your risk of respiratory tract infection," says Professor Tom Wilkinson, NHS consultant physician and researcher at the University of Southampton.

Those with lung disease and certain medical conditions are at greater risk of severe sickness from the novel coronavirus.

A study of 1,590 patients with Covid-19 in China found that this is true for patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD).

COPD is a disease that makes it hard to empty air out of your lungs. The airways get smaller, leading to airflow obstruction, according to COPD Support Ireland.

This can result in shortness of breath or tiredness. It affects around half a million people in Ireland, though fewer than half are diagnosed.

"It is associated with patients who are older, 60s and 70s typically," says Professor Tim McDonnell, consultant respiratory physician at St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin.

"Patients can develop it over years and lots don't

realise."

COPD patients in China were more likely to suffer more severe illness from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Patients with COPD who smoke can help themselves by quitting, now.

"Whatever stage you stop smoking, your disease outcome is better, and that is certainly true in the context of infectious disease," says Wilkinson.

His studies show that certain COPD patients, though not all, are more susceptible to both bacterial and viral infections. One reason is that the lung defends itself by using a mucus escalator, which helps clear contaminants, which is damaged in many patients with COPD.

"COPD is a common condition in China due to the frequency of smoking and exposure to environmental pollution," says Wilkinson, though it often goes unrecognized.

In some of the best health systems in the world, only a minority of COPD patients receive a formal diagnosis.

The professor suspects that the true toll of having COPD in this pandemic is underestimated.

Around 12,000 patients with worsening COPD are admitted to hospital each year, says McDonnell.

## Massive Response To Irish Govt's Plea For Health Workers

JUST A WEEK AFTER ITS LAUNCH, the Irish Health Service announced that more than 60,000 healthcare workers had registered for its recruitment drive aimed at helping the health service cope with outbreak of the coronavirus.

For some doctors and nurses who've applied, the first job interviews are already under way and the HSE has asked those who've registered to bear with them as they sort through the applications.

At present, the priority is recruiting healthcare professionals who are not currently providing health care already and who are available to work immediately.

HSE national director of human resources Anne Marie Hoey said: "We want to thank all who have been in contact to assist our health services

in answering the call in such numbers through the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative."

"Our priority is to build capacity to meet a demand that we are working to assess," Hoey said. "We may not know where the jobs are so we cannot give this information yet. We are focusing on getting new staff 'job ready' so they can meet the demand as it arises."

One of the respondents is Ken Egan, a 75-year-old retired family doctor. Dr Egan has a pacemaker, is fitted with a stent in his heart, and his family would prefer to lock him indoors, but he is coming out of retirement to help battle Covid-19.

Dr Egan, from the village of Ballindine in County Mayo, told Irish TV: "It's second nature to me after all the years in practice to want to come back and help people and I would

expect the same of all the GPs who are retired."

He was around in the 1950s when an outbreak of tuberculosis in the country claimed tens of thousands of lives, many of them children.

"I can remember TB in Galway, in Merlin Park in the 1950s, and if you went up to the hospital you had to hand things in the window because you couldn't have contact, and we survived that."

"And TB was an airborne disease," he pointed out.

"Then in 1956 the All Ireland Football Final was postponed because of polio in Cork, and everybody was frightened but we got over that."

"And in the 1980s we had the AIDS epidemic, and we got through that. So everybody has to muck in and we'll get through this too," said Dr Egan.

## Irish Local Newspapers Hit Hard, Announce Layoffs

ONE OF IRELAND'S BIGGEST local newspaper groups is laying off dozens of workers due to the collapse of advertising income during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Journalists, photographers, advertising staff and other

workers are being let go for six weeks from the end of March and some workers are being made redundant.

The Iconic Newspapers Group published a list of titles affected. The group is owned and controlled by the British busi-

nessman Malcolm Denmark.

Among the titles affected are the *Donegal Democrat*, *Kilkenny People*, *Leinster Leader*, *Leinster Express*, *Limerick Leader*, *Longford Leader*, *The Nationalist*, *Tipperary Star*, *Tullamore Tribune* and the *Midland Tribune*.

## Over 1,000 Cards For Boy With Rare Disease Who Had To Cancel His Birthday Party

A BOY WITH A RARE DISEASE, who had to cancel his birthday party due to Covid-19, has had over 1,000 cards posted to him after his mother made an appeal for people to mail him.

Ruth Beattie asked people to send cards to her son Jack, after his party had to be called off.

It would have been his first party in three years—the last two years he was not able to have one as a result of having surgery related to having Os-

teogenesis Imperfecta or brittle bone disease. Ruth said it broke her heart when she had to tell him his party this year could not go ahead and instead she appealed for people to post him birthday cards.

"The response has been unbelievable," she said.

The latest count has over 1,000 cards, including one for Ruth, and some have come from as far away as France and Switzerland as well as Ireland and the UK.

The family live in Raphoe, county Donegal and Ruth said, "We have had cards and parcels from Dublin, Carlow, Mayo, Donegal, Monaghan, Derry and London and that's not even half of them opened."

"I'd like to thank each and everyone that took the time to make/send a card/parcel to Jack. It has been a very emotional and overwhelming few days to watch the delight in Jack's face. This will be a birthday never to forget."

## Irish Team Creates 3D Printed Ventilators To Help In Battle Against Coronavirus

AN IRISH TEAM IS AT THE forefront of the Open Source Ventilator project which has developed a 3D printed, easy to assemble mechanically operated ventilator that could help tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project, launched on March 17, sought to develop a working ventilator that can be built using 3D printers and off-the-shelf components. The group has now developed prototypes that are ready to be validated by the Health Service Executive.

The project was started by Colin Keogh, a 3D printing expert based at University College Dublin's school of engineering. Previously, Keogh featured in

*Forbes Magazine's* "30 under 30."

Keogh told *The Irish Times* he believes the Irish health authorities would not use the product until in the case of a severe emergency but said it could be used and that it may help other countries with fewer resources.

"We're confident it won't be needed here, but if we get terribly unlucky then it would be good to have something ready to go that has parts which are either 3D-printable or use components that are easily available and even already used in other devices," Keogh said.

He added "We want to have something ready rather

than be starting from scratch. It is very much a better-safe-than-sorry scenario."

"Developed countries may be able to cope with Covid-19, but emerging nations may find it that much harder to overcome. So our overarching goal is to develop a functional medical device that will be certified for use in extreme emergencies," Keogh said.

"We put a call out to the world saying give us your expertise and send us your ideas. The response has been amazing."

He added "People have jumped on board because I think they are inherently good. They want to do something and they want to help solve this global crisis."

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IRISH NEWS

# We Will March Again

### The San Francisco St Patrick's Day Parade & Associated Events Will Be Rescheduled When It Is Safe To Do So

by Liam F Frost President United Irish Societies of San Francisco

THE POSTPONEMENT OF THIS year's St Patrick's Season's events is a disappointment for sure, but with the help of the City, the United Irish Societies of San Francisco (UISSF) Board, and the community we plan on suspending the season until later in the year when we will be free from the current Covid-19 crisis. When the time of quarantine is passed us, we as a nation will need to celebrate and I believe that the Irish Community are the ones that can lead in that celebration. There is no better way than to have our St Patrick's Day events. Whether it's the actual Parade or the accompanied visits to the Veteran's Hospital, Laguna Honda, Alma Via and St Anne's on Lake street we intend to go forward when safe.

This year's Grand Marshal Con Lyons is a man who deserves to have his Parade. His commitment to the community is unmatched and he told me that he is willing to march whenever the Parade happens and will be at all our events. The families of the Honorary Grand Marshals Agnes Monaghan, Bill Luque, John Casserly and Josie Rivero also warrant the public recognition of their loved ones.

169 years ago the Irish Community of the San Francisco Bay Area got together to celebrate and share their heritage and traditions. What must have been a formidable undertaking to get started has grown into a tremendous success. Drawing on that same determination and commitment we plan on going forward with the season.

*When the time of quarantine is passed us, we as a nation will need to celebrate and I believe that the Irish Community are the ones that can lead in that celebration. There is no better way than to have our St Patrick's Day events.*

—LIAM FROST, PRESIDENT UISSF

When Sean Elsbernd of the Mayor's Office notified me of the decision to pull our Parade Permit for March 14 I told him that we would need another date this year to have it. His reply was something to the effect of, absolutely! We will work with you to find that day. We have reached out to the convalescent homes and though they understood our cancellations each one of them were eager to have us reschedule as they don't want to miss out.

The UISSF Board is committed to do whatever it takes to have our St Patrick's Day Season this year. We know that life has its setbacks and that this Covid-19 crisis has been devastating to San Francisco and the Nation as a whole, but we also know that the American Citizens and specifically the citizens of the Bay Area as well as the Irish Community are a resilient people. We will rise to the task of going forward. I urge and ask everyone to come out and support the St Patrick's Day Season Parade and Events. Our children are watching and will learn from this. It is our responsibility to not let them down and to lead by example that life does go on and that we will celebrate the Irish Traditions of Faith, Family and Community as we continue "Serving Our Communities."



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IRISH NEWS

# Crisis Delays Formation Of New Gov't

TALKS ABOUT THE FORMATION OF a new government in the Republic of Ireland have taken a back seat to the coronavirus. After the general election in 2016 it took 70 days to get a new government, and the signs are this time round it could take even longer.

The February 8 election saw a massive rise in support for Sinn Féin, who got 24.5 percent of first preference votes. The party, for the first time ever, became the most popular in Ireland. It won 37 seats in the Dáil Éireann. Fianna Fáil also won 37 seats with just under 23 percent of the vote, while Fine Gael got 35 seats with just over 20 percent of the vote.

Fine Gael are still in charge until a new government is formed or a new election is held. With the entire country shut down until the threat from the pandemic has receded no-

one wants another election.

Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have both ruled out any coalition government with Sinn Féin. Therefore, taking into account the Dáil arithmetic, the only feasible government is one in which Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil share power. The two have been talking through March with this goal in mind, but had not reached any sort of agreement at press time.

They will need the support of at least some independent TDs and/or a smaller party. The Labour Party (six seats) and the Social Democrats (also six seats) have both ruled out going into government. The Green Party has said it would not be part of a Fine Gael/Fianna Fáil coalition and has called for a national government, comprised of all parties, to deal with the coronavirus crisis, followed by an election next year.

Sinn Féin has been sidelined in all of this, despite being willing to talk with anyone and everyone about forming a government. In the first few weeks after the election Taoiseach Leo Varadkar insisted his Fine Gael party would be going into opposition and rather disingenuously called on Sinn Féin to form a government. Varadkar knew well that this would be impossible because Sinn Féin didn't have enough seats to do anything of the sort without partnering with either Fine Gael or Fianna Fáil, both of whom flatly rejected such a partnership.

Three national polls, taken since February 8, have shown a significant increase in Sinn Féin's support, averaging upwards of 35 percent now, compared to figures in the high teens or early twenties for Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil.

# Mick Mulvaney Announced As Special Envoy To The North Of Ireland

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP announced March 7 that his acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney is to become the US Special Envoy to the northern of Ireland.

The role has been vacant since Trump took office. Mulvaney is an Irish-American with family roots in Co Mayo.

He has been the acting White House Chief of Staff since December 2018 and will be replaced in the role by Republican Congressman Mark Meadows.

The Irish Embassy in Washington has welcomed Mr Mulvaney's appointment.

"This is a positive development demonstrating the United States' long-standing commitment to the peace process," an Embassy spokesperson said.

"Mick Mulvaney has always had a great personal interest in Northern Ireland and we look forward to continuing to work with him on this and other issues."

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has

also welcomed the appointment, saying on Twitter that Mulvaney had been a good friend to Ireland.

Meanwhile, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald said US Special Envoys had been instrumental in facilitating and protecting the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements over the past 22 years.

In a statement, she added: "I look forward to working with Mr Mulvaney to ensure that all our agreements are protected and implemented as we navigate our way through Brexit and plan for referendums on Irish unity in line with the Good Friday Agreement."

DUP leader Arlene Foster tweeted that there was "lots of work to do".

The influential Democratic Congressman Richard Neal has welcomed Mulvaney's appointment.

Neal is the chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee which will oversee any future trade deal

between the US and the UK.

He said that with the appointment of a new Special Envoy, the United States is demonstrating its ongoing commitment to the region at a critical time, particularly as the implications of Brexit in Ireland, north and south, become known.

Neal said: "I welcome the announcement and believe it could help strengthen relations on both sides of the Atlantic".



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IRISH AMERICA

# Come Together By Staying Apart

by Eamonn Gormley

“IN AMERICA” IS A CHARMING 2002 film telling the tale of an Irish family of four that emigrates to New York with few job prospects and little money. As they live paycheck to paycheck, there is a scene in which the father takes his family to the fairground where he is taken in by a stall vendor offering a chance to win a stuffed toy for his daughter by knocking some cans down with a bean bag. Put down a dollar, topple the cans, and you get your money back plus the

prize. He fails on the first attempt, but can double his stake for another attempt. He fails. Double the stake again, now there are \$4 on the line. Everything is lighthearted since the money at stake is not that high. He misses again, and rather than cut his losses he decides to double his stake to \$8. After a few more misses, the stake has grown to \$64. Then \$128. After a few more misses, the rent money for that month is on the line. What started as harmless entertainment quickly

grows into a much darker and higher stakes game that could see the family made homeless. It is a lesson in the enormous power of exponential growth that would be great material for math teachers everywhere. Even a value that starts off small can grow to dizzy heights in a startlingly short amount of time if it keeps doubling.

This kind of ruthless mathematical certainty is brought to light tragically as the coronavirus has taken hold in Italy, where there were only three confirmed cases on February 15. However the number of cases began doubling roughly every six days. Italy has become the epicenter of this global tragedy, thanks to an unfortunate combination of circumstances. The Lombardy region has many business connections to Wuhan, China, through the textile industry. Italian families live with three or more generations living under the same roof. Healthy diets and lifestyles give people a longer life expectancy than in most other countries, Italy ranking sixth in the world in terms of average longevity, which means a large proportion of the country's population is elderly and vulnerable to the virus.

It is difficult to imagine nature coming up with a more potent self-replicating weapon as COVID-19. It is more contagious than the common flu. It can be carried around by a human host for two weeks without the victim knowing any better since there are no symptoms during that time, oblivious to how many people

are receiving the infection. Most carriers, particularly younger and healthier ones, may develop no symptoms at all, but could easily pass it on to more vulnerable victims.

Given the connectedness of today's world, both through international jet travel as well as local travel, people have far more interactions than they used to. We have come a long way from medieval times when most people lived out their entire lives without straying more than 20 miles from their place of birth. Human civilization has become so advanced that we live in a global community, and the days are gone when the events in one country had no bearing anywhere else.

The current global pandemic is a reminder of the implications of global travel. We live in a world in which this kind of danger is always present. There have been close calls before, such as the Ebola outbreaks in Africa in 1995, 2000 and 2007, the SARS outbreak in 2002 and 2003, and the H1N1 swine flu outbreak of 2009. These were relatively contained and did not become global pandemics on the scale of the current catastrophe thanks to swift action by national governments and bodies like the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control.

While there is currently no cure for COVID-19, we have the means to slow its spread so that health care systems do not run out of capacity as has happened in Italy. Social distancing and personal hygiene are by far

the most effective weapons, and they must be deployed immediately. Waiting for people to start dying is leaving it too late. Policymakers in Ireland, north and south, have had a mixed record on this. At the first sign of a problem, the country should have been placed on a strict lockdown with social distancing strictly enforced. The earlier the intervention, the more effective the results. Local politicians in northern Italy now lament that had they taken the threat seriously sooner, they would be celebrating the end of the outbreak by now rather than mourning loved ones on an unimaginable scale as the death toll surges beyond 10,000 at press time. Scenes of nonchalance in Italy at the beginning of the outbreak are chillingly echoed in other countries where people have still been irresponsibly mingling, oblivious to the death and heartbreak that they could be visiting on unsuspecting victims down the line.

We will emerge from this nightmare in a different world. Governments will need to put structures in place that make a global pandemic impossible, in the same way that the forerunner of the European Union was set up in Europe to prevent a repeat of two world wars. The WHO and other bodies like it should be given full funding by everyone. Governments need to act quickly before outbreaks become a global problem.

In the meantime, we all have to play our part by staying apart while we ride out the storm.

## Rest In Peace

### Ken Fagan, 1965-2020

“WE LIVE IN CHALLENGING times and the best we can do is adapt to the new reality,” said Alan Fagan as he delivered an online eulogy to celebrate the life of his brother Ken Fagan who passed away peacefully at his home on March 21 surrounded by his family, after a 16 month illness.

As Alan said, Ken did not lose the battle to cancer, he didn't lose anything. Ken was a winner and he was dealt a very difficult hand 16 months ago. Ken lived his life to the fullest he could since then. He was the most positive person and his positivity was infectious to all around him.

Ken left an impoverished Ireland in 1987 with nothing but determination to build a good life for himself. He first went to London, then Australia briefly before arriving in the US in 1991. In spite of leaving at such a young age Ken maintained a large network of friends in Dublin. Those friends supported Ken throughout his illness, especially Pelo sharing stories of happier days.

When Ken arrived in San Francisco he knew nobody. He went around the Irish bars tell-



ing them he was looking for a job and that he could play football. He quickly got sorted with both a team and a job. The GAA community played a big part in Ken's life from his introduction to the game at his beloved St Vincent's in Dublin to San Francisco teams and even after he stopped playing, as a youth coach and a fan. Ken loved to travel and he was so happy to go back to Ireland in September last year to see Dublin win their historic fifth All Ireland title in a row.

Through the GAA Ken made some wonderful friends in the Bay Area. These friends

have rallied around Ken and his family bringing great support to them all.

The family would like to acknowledge the staff at Stanford Hospital who provided Ken with the finest medical care. Their professionalism and compassion was outstanding.

Ken never let the excuse of distance separate family. He jumped on a plane for all celebrations. We will continue to celebrate all the birthdays Ken like you would want us to.

Ken didn't regret anything, he had a good life and did the things he wanted to do, his concerns were always for his family not for himself. He always wanted to make the most of the time with his family.

Ken is survived by his wife Dymrna, his partner in life for the past 21 years; the three sons he was so proud of, Oisín, Rory and Conal; his mother Betty; his brothers Alan, Kevin, Tom and Frank and his sister Ger and their extended family members.

There will be a celebration of Ken's life in the future when these times have passed and we can all pay our respects individually. Rest in Peace. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

IRISH AMERICA

# Kindness And Listening Will Help Us All While We Shelter In Place

Some helpful advice on getting through the next several weeks at home

by Sean O'Riordan, PhD, Licensed Psychologist

WE ARE ALL LIVING IN a new reality. The shelter in place order means that, for the time being, we will have no immediate physical contact outside of those we live with. This is particularly hard for those who live alone. All of us, no matter our circumstances, are used to being able to meet with others whenever we want. We are social animals and so the adjustment to staying inside will be hard. Try and be kind. If you have a neighbor living alone, call them and chat. See if they need anything, it will help you as well. If the person is elderly or has Alzheimer's the morning may be the best time to talk with them. Be patient, answer their questions in a slow manner.

For some, the current crisis may have more serious impacts. Anxiety, fear and depression are all made more likely by isolation. We need to look after ourselves and those around us more than ever. Anxiety has been with us from the beginning of time, anxiety of all sorts, of death or of getting the Coronavirus. We are all susceptible to anxiety, regardless of our profession, age, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic level.

Historically, Irish people have had many cultural myths to help them deal with the fear of dying or abandonment, such as knowing the beauty of, and feeling safe with the Faeries, Leprechauns, Banshee, Celtic Wake, Shillelagh, Tir na nÓg. Ghost stories of the dead can be very calming during hours of anxiety and grief. Some say the Irish are obsessed with death, and one can understand why. At different periods in our past Ireland has suffered from massive tragedies. But we never lost the old

Celtic ways of dealing with our troubles, or helping others to deal with theirs.

The Irish have beautiful ways of staying calm and being in tune with their surroundings—for many in decades past that meant the land, the fields where they grew their crops. Yet some people have fears of loneliness or being alone in the house, no matter the size.

If you are feeling depressed, reach out and connect with others. It helps to call a friend and start listening. In these days of the need to talk, begin conversations mindful of your needs with someone you know. Use computers or smart phone applications such as Face Time Apple and Android Google-Duo, allowing face-to-face conversations (these apps allow for several people on one call). Seeing someone's face as you are speaking with them provides for a more natural, stronger connection than just hearing their voice.

#### Tips to control anxiety:

- Help yourself to remain calm by slowing down when you eat, so your food can be digested more easily. Use food in a healing way.
- Say out loud, "I am training myself to be calmer."
- Do some indoor exercises (moving the blood improves calmness).
- Morning is best to do slow breathing with kindness. If you are finding it hard to relax, first calm your breathing and follow that by tensing your legs for a few seconds and then relaxing. If you can, ask someone to exercise with you.
- Manage anxiety in a slow, kind way. Say to yourself "I am a good person."
- A pet can also be wonderful for reducing anxiety.

#### Children

All of us need to connect regardless of our age or where we live. If you have children in the house slow down and be kind when talking to them. It is important to keep the message the same. Children rely on us and listen to what we tell them. If the story we tell them today is different from that which we told them yesterday, they may stop believing and trusting in us. Children see everything as being calm and are more inclined to respond to body language. It is their job. They are constantly learning. Children talk and listen at the same time so keep your communications as simple as possible. Let the child lead the conversation and allow time for feelings or laughter. Speak in a kind way, slow talking can help small children to go to bed. Reading to them is also helpful, or having them read to you. If they are unsettled you could try singing them to sleep.

Tell your partner and children that you love them. Build bridge-links of communications that go from you and on to the next person. This can help your communications as a parent, and as a partner. Parents should listen to their children rather than order them around. Children have their own way in responding to their emotions (some younger children may start wetting the bed and need help to have a dry and warm bed with no shame or embarrassment). Parents need to be more of a leader to their children and listen to their stories. Help them with their schoolwork as a parent rather than a demanding teacher. Speak with a calm voice when you address their fears about the virus, and remember that fear is a perfectly normal reaction.

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## IRISH AMERICA

## News From The San Francisco Irish Community

by Liam Reidy

## Possible September Date for re-scheduled 169th St. Patrick's Day Parade

With the postponement of the 169th St Patrick's Day parade last month, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, United Irish Societies (UIS) President Liam Frost is adamant to still have a parade this year, with a date hopefully in September. Frost says "there is no doubt that the entire Irish-American community was devastated to see this year's parade canceled. However, the history books do tell us that there is a precedent to having a re-scheduled date for a St Patrick's Day parade." Frost explained "that in 2001, the Dublin, Ireland parade was postponed from its usual March 17 date to May 18, owing to the outbreak of Food and Mouth disease in Britain at the time." Frost continued: "Of course, we have to work with the city in obtaining permission and a permit for the parade, and more importantly find a date that is conducive to everyone. This year the Half Way to St Patrick's Day falls on Thursday, September 17, 2020, so that could work in our favor." Stay tuned for more information!

## 2020 St Patrick's Day T-Shirt Fundraiser

The fallout from the canceled parade last month negatively affected a multitude of small local businesses throughout the community. Bars, restaurants and cafés which would have been filled with parade revelers were mostly empty on March 14. To compound matters and make it even more difficult on these enterprises was the stay at home orders declared by Bay Area wide public health

authorities in mid-March, which are currently still in effect.

One economic casualty of the parade was a large inventory of T-Shirts printed by Nerd Kung Fu, a small business in Oakland. Some 550 T-Shirts were produced for the parade and so now the family based business is on the hook for the un-sold shirts.

However, this story has a silver lining because the owners of company have teamed up with the parade organizers, the United Irish Societies, to offer the T-shirts for sale in an effort to raise money for the UIS. Board member Patrick Linehan, says "I think it's a fantastic idea and the proceeds will be carefully spent by the UIS on future parades." A link to buy a T-shirt is available at [www.IrishCenterSF.org](http://www.IrishCenterSF.org)

## The Irish Center is 45 Years on 45th Avenue

This year the United Irish Cultural Center celebrates 45 Years on 45th Avenue. Prior to the Coronavirus outbreak plans were well underway for a day long celebration at the Center scheduled for Saturday April 25. Now those plans are delayed. President Anne Carew says: "We had several preparatory meetings on what to do for the celebration, and board members had invested countless hours of human energy into developing a plan for an extravaganza for all our members to enjoy and celebrate the milestone."

While the event was predominantly a celebration, it was also to act as a fundraiser for the Center (now operating solely as a non-profit organization). Carew continued "that the loss of revenue from the St Patrick's

Day festivities was nothing short of a body blow to the Irish Center, as it takes a significant effort to operate the facility on a monthly basis."

"We have had setbacks in the past, and we will come back from this, but not being able to open for business presently to rent out rooms to help pay the bills, is tough, but we also face challenges as to how do we raise money to support our cultural programming events down the road ... My hope is that we are allowed open in May in time for the spring time graduation season, and that our members will come and support us," added Carew.

## Con Lyons &amp; Family

With so much going on in the world right now, do spare a thought for the 2020 Parade Grand Marshal Con Lyons and his family. There is no doubt that the month of March was a roller coaster ride for them (including Con's mom Margaret who flew out from Ireland for what should have been a grand occasion). Although the family got to experience the Flag Raising at City Hall on Friday March 6, with Mayor London Breed and Consul General Robert O'Driscoll, nothing could have prepared them for what the SF Department of Public Health was to declare later that afternoon by canceling the 2020 Parade. Speaking to *The Irish Herald*, Con said he "was very grateful to everyone who called and texted him, once they found out that the parade was mothballed." He added: "these things sometimes happen, and we will get over it, and we will certainly walk in the parade later on this year if it comes together."

## Some pictures from the UICC archives, more next month!



Patrick Dowling among his UICC Library collections.



Brendan Grace (RIP) packed the Irish Center in August, 2009 with a night of pure comedy magic. Pictured here with Paddy and Josephine Brogan.



Former Lt. Governor Leo T. McCarthy, Brendan Moran (Consul General of Ireland), Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken of San Francisco, Mayor Joe Alioto and Liam Spiers perform the Grand Opening of the UICC on March 8, 1975.

## You Never Miss The Water Till The Well Runs Dry

By Anne Cassidy Carew, President of the United Irish Cultural Center

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE last few weeks have been one of the most unpredictable and surreal times of our lives. Nobody could have predicted the broad scale impact that the coronavirus could yield on our daily lives since it became clear during the second week of March that this was no ordinary 'passing' epidemiological issue. Our whole lives and our family's lives have been changed forever—schools, work places, churches, our favorite restaurants, and the Irish Center itself has closed until at least April 7 to comply with stay-at-home orders issued by public health authorities to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

The Irish saying "You never miss the water till the well runs dry" is what springs to mind now as we are closed off from many of the things we have taken for granted in today's society. We can only long for the day when we can return to our "normal" unrestricted lives, where everything will once again be open for business, without restrictions of contact and interaction.

There is no doubt that this past March, the most Irish of all the months of the year, will not be forgotten anytime soon as we deal with the new normal in our lives under house arrest and social isolation from others.

Here is how it played out behind the scenes at the Irish Center. On the afternoon of March 6, news filtered through

from the United Irish Societies (UIS) that the 169th St Patrick's Day parade planned for Saturday March 14 was postponed. The SF Department of Public Health was concerned that large gatherings of people were accelerating the spread of the coronavirus elsewhere in the world. I thought to myself how could this be? I was at the flag raising earlier in the day and there seemed to be no indication that the parade was in jeopardy. But as we have found out since then—things do change and very quickly at times; sometimes on an hourly basis as more information is made available.

Upon receiving the news that the parade was nixed for March 14, I arranged for an emergency meeting of the UICC Board for Sunday March 8, to discuss our approach to keeping the flag flying over the following weekend. We had detailed plans to execute for the St Patrick's weekend festivities which had been developed by Co-Chairpersons Mark Burke and Josephine Brogan during the previous two months. Over the weekend, as I prepared for the meeting, the Warriors basketball organization were very public and steadfast in their stance to continue to hold games at their new 20,000 seat arena; so I felt confident we could continue with our own plans, in what is a much smaller facility.

Revenue from our St Patrick's weekend is always

critical from an operations stand point, and the annual "lift" in revenue would help us through the next several months.

At the end of the Sunday Board meeting, the board unanimously agreed we should move ahead with our plans. Liam Frost, President of the UIS, joined us at the conclusion of our meeting and applauded our efforts to keep going with the Irish Center plans to save the weekend for the Irish-American community.

However, within 48 hours it became very clear there was a very different sentiment in the community and the country about what was unfolding in places like Washington State, and elsewhere in the US, as well as the impact of the virus in northern Italy. Communication between the Center and City Hall indicated that all gatherings of more than a certain number of people would be stopped. We weren't told at that time exactly what the number was but it seemed certain that our planned events would almost certainly exceed the maximum.

It was with a heavy heart that the Board decided that the Center would pull the plug on all of its planned events from Friday, March 13 through Tuesday, March 17. Within hours the inevitable order came from City Hall. We were done.

We then immediately had to go into shut down mode and cancel all our orders for

pre-ordered catered food (both Guerra's To-Go and Ron Dumont were gracious in understanding our situation—and to both we are eternally grateful for all they did behind the scenes). Our support staff for the weekend, volunteers, janitors, musicians were all given the same disappointing news. Our biggest attraction for the weekend was world famous accordion player Sharon Shannon. Sharon had spent the week leading up to St Patrick's weekend playing across Canada, and was told that we were shut down as she made her way towards Vancouver.

Events following the St Patrick's weekend came tumbling down; our first Irish dance Feis in twenty years (March 21-22), was postponed. So too was "The Curse of Buton Accordian" play by Sharon Mannion, originally scheduled for April 11. The Aoife Scott music performance on April 12 was also canceled. It has been a devastating month for our cultural programming which has been very strong after a very successful 2019.

Now that the center is temporarily closed, the Board has made the hard but financially responsible decision to eliminate some staff positions and reduce staff hours overall. With only a skeletal crew working, we have also reduced other utility costs like garbage and recycling collection, cable and internet services.

While it's impossible to

provide a timeline for the reopening of the Center, the 45th year anniversary celebration has been postponed. We do not have a new date at this time. One thing is for sure, is that when we re-open, we hope to have a Grand Re-Opening! Some positive news with regard to events that still remain on the calendar (as of today) are the Leo Walsh Scholarship disbursement evening of Thursday, May 7, and the week long summer camp from June 8-12.

On a good side note, many of our members purchased a bottle of olive oil, donated by the McDonough family as part of the Library Fundraiser back in December and we are delighted to share that Kathleen and Kevin McDonough & Family were recently awarded a Gold Medal Ribbon for their 2019 batch of Extra Virgin Olive Oil at the 12th Annual California Olive Oil Council (COOC) Awards recently.

Finally, as a result of this world crisis, the challenges we face as a non-profit agency are greater than ever. Please consider donating and/or renewing your membership, as we need your support! We are deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, and community partners—you make our work possible. Thank you for your partnership and support.

If you have to go out, please stay safe with shelter in place and healthy with social distancing.

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• IRISH AMERICA •

# Unofficial Parade Keeps Tradition Alive, Complying With All Covid 19 Restrictions In Place At The Time

Continued from front page

Yet in San Francisco a small group of local stalwarts raised the flags and banners and cued the pipers and proudly marched down Market Street to City Hall to represent our community in these troubled times. We can now say that the tradition of the San Francisco St Patrick's Parade was maintained in its 169th year, that the record of observance remains continuous and unbroken.

The parade marchers, numbering in total no more than 22, were led by a small group of San Francisco Police Department serving members and retirees—former Police Officers Association head Martin Halloran, Joe McFadden, Steve Murphy, Stephen Val Kirwan, and Ronan Shouidice. They got the idea to do an impromptu parade and march collectively when Mayor Breed announced that large public events would be postponed or canceled and realized that this would have a direct impact on the St Patrick's Day parade.

Halloran says that they "certainly understand why the Mayor wanted to do this, long before the California State stay-at-home order was declared ... We also understood the history of the Irish being recognized for their contribution over past decades, centuries even, and their continuing contributions to the life of the City."

They determined that "we're not going to let 2020 go, with not going down Market Street, with not going to City Hall." They were "compelled and determined that this would not be a year when the Irish would not be recognized."

The group gathered forces through a series of private text messages and phone calls amongst themselves, and decided to go forward, scrupulously avoiding any involvement with the official parade bodies to keep their numbers down and to completely comply the City directives against large gather-



Marty Halloran at the beginning of the parade at 3rd and Market holding the SF Chronicle from March 14, marking the moment.

ings.

Since the early years to the present, the annual Parade marks more than six full generations of Irish American life on the West Coast, 169 years of celebration at the crossroads of our vital and diverse City. For these many years the Irish American community has welcomed the whole City to

the Parade with open arms, to join us in celebration of our culture as Irish Americans and San Franciscans. Recent decades have seen a revitalization of the parade and festival with great numbers of attendees lining the streets. This was the tradition that halloran and his friends wanted to maintain.

They assembled at Lotta's

Fountain on the morning of Saturday, March 14, with two pipers and marched west along Market Street, bare of all uniforms and insignias, representing only themselves and the community. Since traffic was light, they needed to jump out of the street for bus and streetcar passage only twice. A smattering of tourists joined in behind—an Irish American couple from Dallas and some Asian folks from Canada. Twice along the route there were San Francisco Police Officers to greet them, and a San Francisco Fire Department unit briefly escorted them with lights turned on.

The marchers turned at the UN plaza and processed through Civic Center Plaza to the steps of City Hall, where they gathered for group pictures. After photographs the group repaired to Harrington's Bar at Turk and Larkin for a few pints of Guinness to savor the experience.

The following day Halloran declared in a Facebook post: "Yesterday a small group of native San Franciscans, Irish-Americans, and Irish immigrants took to Market St to see that the Irish flag was marched to City Hall. Despite the postponement of the official St Patrick's Day Parade we believed it was important to keep this tradition alive. There-

fore for the 169th consecutive year the Irish flag WAS marched up Market St to City Hall and the Irish people WERE recognized for their past and their continued contributions to San Francisco and its people. Up the Republic! Erin Go Bragh! Happy St Patrick's Day! Slainte!"

San Francisco's first St Patrick's Day celebration started in 1851, with a small party in Hayes Valley and the Shamrock Ball at the Eagle Saloon on Pacific. The Sons of the Emerald Isle sponsored the first actual parade on March 17, 1852: "the procession was a long one, and was composed of fine, robust, healthy looking men, the bone and sinew of a country." The parade was followed by a target shooting competition in the sand dunes at Fulton and Divisadero, and a grand ball at Armory Hall at Montgomery and Sacramento.

Our 2020 parade now enters the record of continuity from these small celebrations of the Gold Rush era. We can be sure that in 2021 and in years to come the tradition will continue stronger than ever. Halloran says that they "felt gratified, like we made sure that the tradition continues in this City and we hope that next year a grand parade will be held." This small group are this year's heroes of the community.

## New York Irish Keep Their Tradition Going Too

A SMALL CONTINGENT OF THE NYC St Patrick's Day Parade, though officially postponed in light of coronavirus, marched up Fifth Avenue in the early hours of March 17.

There were 234 marching units set to take their place on Fifth Avenue in the 2020 St Patrick's Day parade, but coronavirus chopped that number down to two—the Fighting 69th Regiment, who proudly

start the march every year, and members of the parade committee who were determined to keep the 258-year cherished tradition alive in some form even though the parade had been officially postponed.

And so they did on a rainy St Patrick's morning, when the 259th annual New York City mini-parade got underway at roughly 6:48 a.m., complete with social distancing.






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• IRISH AMERICA •

# Please Support Your Local Irish Bars & Restaurants

THE COVID 19 CRISIS IS touching us all. We are hoping and praying that everyone near and dear to us gets through the next few months unscathed. We are also, hopefully, taking all the precautions prescribed in the 'Shelter In Place' order to keep ourselves and others safe. The importance of following the rules cannot be understated, breaking them may well cost others their lives.

Beyond the health crisis, another potential disaster is looming across America and the rest of the world, an economic disaster. There is real pain, anguish and fear for the millions made unemployed in recent weeks, and for many small business owners, some of whom are petrified that this might be the end of the road.

In our Irish community those businesses are vital. They are literally the glue which holds our community together. I have been running and editing this newspaper for twenty years, and I can tell you with certainty that in times of need Irish businesses always step up to the plate, whether for Irish people or anyone else. I remember all the benefits held in Irish bars after 9/11, after devastating wildfires and other

natural disasters, and after a thousand worthy causes, local, statewide and national. If someone is sick or injured, or can't provide for themselves and their families for whatever reason, the Irish small business community in our City and the Bay Area always comes to their aid. Irish businesses are a 'go to' for anyone organizing any charitable endeavor. So many of our children play sports of every description with the names of local Irish businesses emblazoned across the backs of their jerseys. Every month *The Irish Herald* is 'brought to you by' our advertisers, all members of the same business community outlined above. I could go on, but I am sure you get the picture.

Now, many of those small businesses need our help, to get through this period and come out the other side intact. For their sakes, the sakes of their workers, and for the sake of our community, please do whatever you can to support them.

Irish bars and restaurants have been particularly hard hit. Rent and other bills have to be paid, and yet little or no revenue is coming in. All are trying to do the best by their employees, many of whom

have been with them for years.

The San Francisco Bay Area Irish community is as strong and vibrant as any in this country. It is no exaggeration to say that whether it remains that way or not is largely dependent on the survival of our business community. Sometimes we take things for granted. In these times we don't have that luxury.

Please, if your circumstances allow, reach out to your favorite Irish pub or restaurant. Get your take-out there if they are offering it. Buy a tee shirt or some other merchandise online if they have that option on their web site. Some have set up GoFundMe pages where you can donate directly. A great way to help is to buy gift certificates for future use. Many have Facebook pages and other social media portals. Go on them and offer your support. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of a kind word at this time.

When all of this is in our rear view mirrors, we want to be able to look back and say that we got through it with the minimum of damage. We all want to preserve the strength of our community. That will only happen if we are proactive now.

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## Here Are Some Great Irish Shows To Watch While You're Stuck At Home

by James Bartlett in Los Angeles

AS WE ALL KNOW, THESE ARE strange times indeed. A pandemic is spreading across the globe, and in California at least we are being told to stay at home as much as possible. We don't know how long it's going to last, and so the sensible thing to do right now is to try and make the best of it.

After all, there's a pile of books that you've always been planning to read but haven't had the time, or a creative project you've been forever putting off, but if you don't have a good supply of DVDs (or even VHS tapes) in the closet, there's always the pleasures of streaming some of the best Irish movies and television shows.

You may not be able to visit the Emerald Isle any time soon, but you can take a trip there via your laptop, television or smartphone, and so, until this crisis is over, we decided to curate a list of some of the best things to watch while you're hunkering down.

Before you boot up that laptop, remember that despite what you might think not everything is available online—far from it. You'll have to do some searching yourself to find the odd golden nugget,

and be aware that subscribing to all these services can quickly add up.

Never the less, grab a treat or two, make yourself a cup of something hot (or pour an adult beverage) and let the worries of the world drift away for a while.

This month's suggestions come from Netflix, who are pretty much the biggest kid in the playground. Subscriptions come in three levels—Basic, Standard and Premium—and the cost ranges from \$9-\$16 per month.

### Derry Girls

We really need a laugh these days, so check out "Derry Girls" (two seasons). Shot almost entirely in the north of Ireland and written by Lisa McGee, these six-part comedy/drama series take a look into the life of 16-year-old Erin Quinn (Saoirse-Monica Jackson).

Erin lives with her difficult mother (Tara Lynne O'Neill) and long-suffering father (Tommy Tiernan), and seeks solace for all her teen troubles with cousin Orla (Louisa Harland) and her Catholic school friends Clare (Nicola Coughlan), Michelle (Jamie-Lee O'Donnell), and Michelle's English cousin



Cillian Murphy

James (Dylan Llewellyn).

Set during "The Troubles" in the early 1990s, Derry Girls has been an unexpectedly huge hit and even inspiring a walking tour in Derry! A third season is due this year.

### Can't Cope, Won't Cope

There are also the two seasons of "Can't Cope, Won't Cope," a comedy-drama created by Stefanie Preissner and starring Seána Kerslake as finance manager Aisling and

Nika McGuigan as art student Danielle respectively, two 20-somethings from Cork who share a house in Dublin.

There's plenty of hijinks here, but also a more thoughtful even darker side as the pair, reluctantly growing up, find that they might be growing apart as best friends too.

### The Young Offenders

Set in Cork itself is the original movie version of The Young Offenders, also a coming-of-age comedy/drama that stars Alex Murphy and Chris Walley as Conor MacSweeney and Jock O'Keefe respectively.

They're two mischievous criminals often on the lookout for the cops, but they're also teenagers dealing with things like a first kiss, trouble at school, and plenty of family issues too.

### Peaky Blinders

Staying with that Cork connection, for some real binge-watching Netflix has five seasons of the extremely historical gangster drama "Peaky Blinders."

Set in Birmingham, England, the epic story starts in 1919 and centers on the eponymous (and very well-dressed) "Peaky Blinders" gang led by Tommy Shelby (Cork-born Cillian Murphy) and his nemesis Chester Campbell (Armagh-born Sam Neill), a DCI in the Royal Irish Constabulary who has been sent to put a halt to their many scams and crimes.

Over the ensuing years (and series) we see the Peaky Blinders expand their operations—including gun smuggling—but not all goes to plan, of course. As for what a "peaky blinder" is? You'll have to watch to find out!

### The Siege of Jadotville

Moving forward into the 1960s, you can seek out an interesting little gem of a movie, The Siege of Jadotville, which stars County Down native Jamie Dornan and came out just after he was starting to become a worldwide sex symbol thanks to his antics in the Fifty Shades of Grey movies.

Directed by Richie Smyth and written by Kevin Brodbin, the movie is based on true events that happened to an Irish Army unit on a UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo in Africa in 1961.

When civil war breaks out, Commander Pat Quinlan (Dornan) and his small company of men are told to hold

off continual waves of attacks at the UN Compound and, despite being hopelessly outnumbered, they managed to hold their ground and suffer no deaths among their own, while managing to kill 300 and injure over 1,000 rebels.

It's tense, action-filled stuff and reveals a chapter from Ireland's military foreign past that I never knew about. In part the men had been swept out of history because, out of ammunition, they had surrendered and been kept prisoner for a month before being sent home.

### Bobby Sands—66 Days

Going forward again to the early 1980s, there's the documentary Bobby Sands—66 Days.

Directed by Brendan J Byrne, it uses eye witness testimony, unseen archive footage, reconstructions, animation and diary readings to portray the Irish Republican's 66-day hunger strike. At 17, Bobby Sands was interested in girls, soccer and music, but just a decade later he led a prison protest against the conditions in the north of Ireland's infamous H-Blocks.

His death on May 5, 1981—when he was by then an elected Member of the British Parliament—bought cities to a standstill, and is still one of defining moments of the conflict.

### Puffin Rock

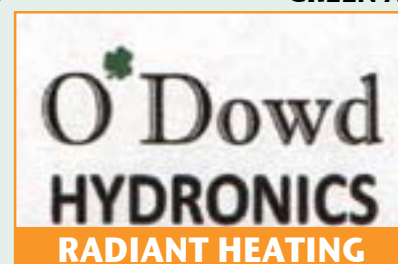
Many readers will have their kids at home too, so check out the highly enjoyable two seasons of "Puffin Rock," an animated preschool series narrated by Chris O'Dowd and produced in Derry.

As you might imagine, the series is about a family of lovable puffins (Oona, her younger brother Baba, and their parents) who live on a wild Irish island. It's a very special island too, as it's also home to a pygmy shrew, a fox, an owl, and lots of other cute creatures that the little ones will love. A feature-length movie is in development.

That's plenty for you to get on with during April (try not to eat too many Easter eggs while you're watching!), and in May we will look at Amazon Prime, which has a much larger range of Irish fare—including some really unexpected treats. Keep safe and keep washing your hands!

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• FEATURE •



## Borris: A Morning Stroll in the 50s—Biddy Brien's Lane, Sloes, Blackberries & Rabbits

by Colman Ryan, MD, Seton Medical Center

BEFORE ANY INTEREST IN sports, girls or a career I was imbued with a real appreciation of nature. Mornings when I had no school, I was given to strolling the village and its surroundings.

Few people were up before 8 a.m. except those gone to work at Borris House or on their bicycles to Sheehan's in Bagenalstown. The farmers, of course, would have milked their cows by then. The eggs would have been picked and the chickens fed with grain and leftover food. The dogs would be free and too inquisitive to bother a boy not bothering them.

Jim and Sam Geoghan, our neighbors, would be splitting logs for the fire and Nan Brophy would already be lighting her second log and "borrowing" wood from the neighbors for her fire. The walks would be very different if I went east or west. To the east was Biddy Brien's lane and to the west the vast Demesne with its imposing and forbidding walls—the "Keep In" and "Keep Out" structure meant for penetration by any eight-year-old 'genius' like me. Walls, like promises, were meant to be broken circumvented or scaled.

### Biddy Brien's Lane

Nobody knew the family history of Biddy Brien. She was just there! She lived in a small cottage about fifty yards from our house. She rarely ventured out and most of her shopping was done by the village kids like me for the "Truppee" we received each time. Her chimney was only partially functional and was in dire need of cleaning. Most of the smut was around the house and on Biddy herself. Grooming and dress code were of little consequence to Biddy. Her eight cats didn't seem to mind. One could tell by her shopping list that the cats came first in her house.

She had no electricity and functioned entirely on kerosene lamps and a wood fire. She did, somehow, have running water so no need for trips with a bucket to the pump on the main street. There was no need to determine if Biddy was home by the smoke from her chimney. Biddy was always home talking incessantly to her cats.

My Mom and Dad provided a large dinner for her every Sunday about one o'clock. We would get the plates back on Wednesday and wonder what she would eat until the next Sunday. If one ignored the smoke on her face you could tell she was quite healthy. I don't think she possessed a hairbrush or comb. If she did there was no evidence that they were ever used.

### Hawthorns, Ivy, Sloes and Drunken Birds

On either side of the lane down to the river, bushes of berries were abundant. Ivy was ample protection for rats' nests and an occasional weasel that kept them in check. We had one family of shy hedgehogs in the back of our lawn. They instinctively knew they didn't have to hurry to escape our



The millrace powering the mill off Biddy Brien's Lane. Photograph by Fintan Ryan.

clutches. The spines were very painful when engaged in their own protection.

Sloes were plentiful but bitter in taste. The birds ate them, and Mom made sloe jam which required a bushel of sugar and other berries. Perhaps the Hawthorne was most remembered by us. Although edible, it was mostly the birds who feasted on them. As the berries matured the bushes became like a bird sanctuary. Fermentation led to alcohol and robins, blackbirds, tomtits and sparrows often sprawled on the grass or wandered aimlessly in their flight in drunken circles. Even their songs became different. We children knew the complete song of the robin or the lark, which became abbreviated after the feast.

For we humans, Thank God He didn't Give Us Wings!

### Blackberries

Blackberry bushes were plentiful in "Biddy's Lane." They were of course, protected by nettles and numerous thistles. Add to the indigenous thorns it was a task to pick enough for jam or to sell to Cosgraves. Blackberry jam was delicious and frequently apples from our orchard were added for pectin to "stiffen it up." My mother made it in what she thought were cartloads but never enough for 10 hungry mouths.

Left over buckets were delivered to Cosgraves. Gerry had several barrels out back but the scales were in front. The buckets were weighed. We were trusted to empty the

berries into the barrels. Various heavy objects could then be removed and discarded—rocks mostly and buckets returned for reweighs. Then we were paid. I liked Gerry so much I never hid anything in the berries unless I needed money to go to "the pictures."

### Rabbits

Rabbits were very plentiful in Borris. They were a cute, total nuisance. They could wreck a field of corn, eat your roses and leave little marbles all over the place. They "peed" on our lawns and destroyed the grass.

Biddy's lane was a pathway to the "fields of plenty." It led to many large fields replete with the animals. We would plant our snares in the afternoon and collect our prey early next morning before they were pilfered by the neighbors or the neighbor's dog or cat! A stake was driven into the ground outside the burrows with the snare attached and a carrot at the other side. It was somewhat crude but made for good money when sold and good food when stewed in bacon and vegetables by my mother. Some farmers' families made a living out of them. I remember well the farmers coming into the village with the rabbits hanging over the handlebars and bar from the saddle—often thirty or forty at a time. Their pelts were used as cheap fur and meat was canned for later consumption.

Later we used a ferret you could buy by mail to go down the burrow and chase the rabbits into nets. We had two kinds of nets—one like a pouch over

would collapse on them when they ran into it. The problem with the ferrets, if they were too good, is they caught the rabbits inside the burrows, ate them and fell asleep. We would frequently lose both animals. When I was about twelve the horror of myxomatosis was introduced in parts of Ireland. We lost all our rabbits except for a few in Borris. The infested rabbits sat motionless in the fields with huge swelling of their eyes and audible wheezes we mercifully clubbed them to death. It took about 10 years before they came back. Cute as always unlike the rabbits sold in restaurants here which resemble kangaroos!

The Stone Age balance of nature prevailed—food and clothing trumped "cuteness" any day. In the Bay Area they are protected by law. Your garden could be turned into a giant bathroom for them. You have to have "ways and means!"

the burrow and the other a long three feet high vertical one that

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## Event Canceled

The 95th Annual Mass honoring Father Peter York, scheduled for Palm Sunday, April 5th, at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, has been canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

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## Hope During Lockdown Breaking The Cycle

by Fr Brendan McBride, Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

ONE OF THE FONDEST MEMORIES of my childhood was when my mother or father put me to bed. I remember clearly my mother saying "I'll leave the door open and the light in the hallway on." The shaft of light that came through the narrow open space was enough to ensure that the darkness was never total. I remember doors as things that kept the heat in and the cold out; they allowed friends in and kept strangers out and they let the light in and kept the darkness out.

These days we are all looking for a glimmer of light from any corner or source.

On September 11, 2001, out of a clear blue sky, two hijacked airplanes carrying many hundreds or people were crashed deliberately into the World Trade Center. I am sure you can remember exactly where you were when you heard the news.

The fire department of New York responded immediately, sending out many hundreds of men and women to save people trapped in the wreckage. They knew the risks; they had seen many of their own friends killed in other fires. This was the biggest challenge they had ever encountered. As many thousands of people ran away from the fire, they ran towards it.

Fr Mychal Judge, their chaplain, was killed when the South Tower collapsed. He was the first certified fatality of 9/11. He died as he lived, doing service to the people and to God. Today, the health-care workers are our heroes. They are running to the fire.

In these days of coronavirus, let's not forget about God. He doesn't have it in for us. He doesn't say to himself, "I'll let them stew in their own fire!" No, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life."

## Lockdown

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.  
But,  
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise  
You can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
The sky is no longer thick with fumes  
But blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi  
People are singing to each other across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.  
Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call on.  
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.  
The birds are singing again,  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

If you are one of those people who have been attending Mass all your life, this is a difficult time. Remember—we are part of the mystical Body of Christ. Christ is the center and source of our life. The union between the head and members is preserved by prayer and the sacraments. So get out the prayer books and rosaries and keep connected. There are also many opportunities to follow Mass on social media.

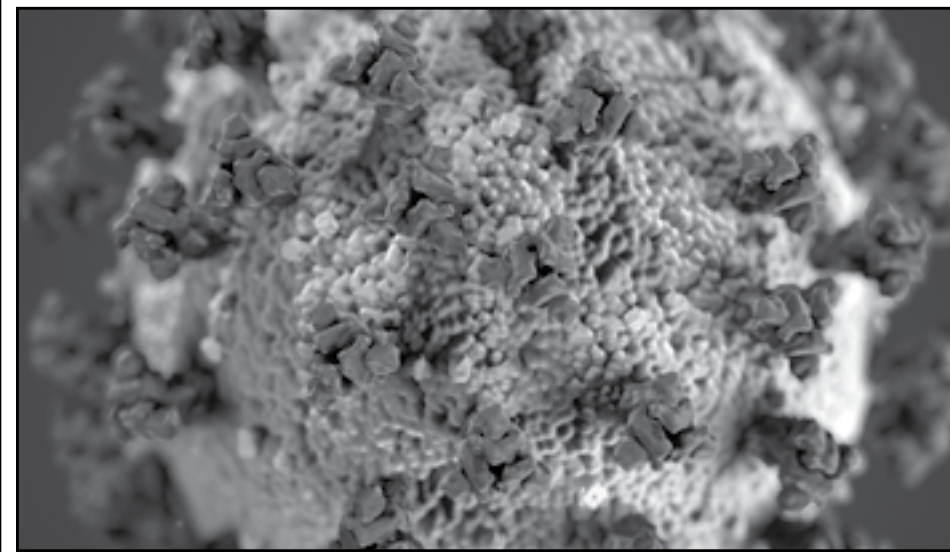
It is only now, as an adult, that I appreciate the family environment that I was brought up in. When I say family I refer first to my immediate family, my parents, brother, sister. As an extended part of that 'blood' family were my aunts, uncles and cousins, all of whom were in contact at various times to a greater or lesser extent.

But there was a further family again, not in any bloodline, and that was the local tight-knit community in which I grew up as a young boy and teenager. Even now I can recall with fondness all the names of those who lived around us.

The sense of family and community that I remember from those times has changed but in the past week, I see community spirit re-emerge again. People offering their time and skills to help others through these challenging times. The great response to the personal protective equipment appeals that hospitals have shared. The great sense of caring that is emerging. This makes me feel really good. We live with hope.

So while we take our own personal responsibility and at the request of our City and State leadership, Mayor Breed and Governor Newsom, stay home to prevent any further spread of this virus, here are some beautiful and hopeful words from Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Friar from Ireland:

by Redmond Lyons



HELLO EVERYBODY, MY NAME IS Redmond Lyons. I've been in the Irish community in San Francisco for the last thirty odd years, so some of you might know me. I'm currently on the board of the Irish Immigration Pastoral Center and just before the COVID-19 breakout happened several of us were in the process of setting up a Men's Shed group here. My thoughts today are just to remind everybody about our responsibilities to each other: our families, our friends, and all our neighbors here in the City.

I will start with reiterating all the good advice about social distancing. Keep six feet apart! Wash your hands frequently! My hands have never seen so much water, at this stage I have resorted to using my wife Mary's hand cream. Shelter in place! Any of us who grew up on a farm remember that the only time we ever sheltered in place was when we got caught out in a field and a big shower of rain came by. We had to shelter under a tree or hedge and wait for it to all blow over. How we wish a good shower of rain would wash away the problems we have at the moment, but instead we have to wait it out. Wait for the curve to flatten, wait for testing to be done, vaccines to be created, etc. But we need to remember that in this waiting, we are not passive but are actively doing our part. As for the social isolation, I completely understand the difficult urge for kids, teenagers, college students and others to want to get together but we have to get through to them—they too have to stay apart to do their part.

The big word now is tracing: i.e. establishing the links between cases. A good exercise is for everyone to take the time to trace how many people they have met today (which should be fairly few as we are sheltering in place) and keep going back over the last fourteen days. Some of us cannot remember last week never mind fourteen days, so the continued separation is important.

We all know very good friends here and in Ireland who are on the front line of this fight: nurses, doctors, police, and our essential service personnel. Our part in this fight is very small compared to what they face every day, but we are the only ones that can stop the virus from spreading and ease their jobs. They are the ones who have to treat it, so let's do our part with social distancing. All the research says that this is the only way to break that cycle.

So what do we do with our time? At home, we can argue lovingly with our better halves, be useful in the kitchen, do an electronics degree to understand our washing machines and dishwashers (whatever happened to the start/stop button), take the vacuum for a walk around the house, and figure out if it takes a bag or not. We can annoy our children with the same advice everyday, remind them that growing up we didn't have TV never mind Netflix

and generally piss them off—a lost art since technology took over. We begin to sound a bit like the famous Irish seanchaí "story teller" Eamon Kelly, who started every monologue with the line "In my father's time..." But after all that we need to be encouraging and positive for them.

We as an Irish community are always good at helping each other in times of need. We do what we can for the vulnerable in our community while maintaining safe practices, which is a greater challenge now than ever before. The Pastoral Center, that is Fr Brendan, Celine, Joan and Addison, are still working remotely to meet the needs of our community. You can still contact the center on (415) 752-6006.

Our ancestors survived the famine and the potato ridges remain a visible reminder to that on the farm of land that I grew up on. So I know we can survive this.

We were meant to enjoy a celebration of the 45th anniversary of the United Irish Cultural Center in April. Maybe now we can truly appreciate what those people did in building a physical gathering place where our culture and heritage could be celebrated in a time when there were no cellphones, no computers, and social distancing was yet to be invented.

While we cannot gather in the same way anymore, this is a time when social distancing does not mean being alone. We are lucky to live when we have cell phones and computers to connect us. This is the time to reach out to those around us and stay connected despite our distancing. My wife and I have spent hours every day on the phone catching up with people we haven't spoken to in months, our children are sending texts, facetimeing and watching Netflix parties with their friends across the globe. This week we had a virtual 92nd birthday party in Louisburgh, three generations from across the globe joined in using Zoom. I had never heard of Zoom before that, another new word in my vocabulary. What this virus has taught us is that our community is not solely built in the physical celebrations and gatherings, but rather the care we have for one another.

Our daughter has just two days left of her self-quarantine after returning from college in England. When she was a teenager we struggled to get her out of her room, now we require her to stay in it. I heard my wife tell her friend on the phone that the hardest part in all this was not being able to give Anna a hug since she landed, a stark reminder as to the separation from loved ones many are experiencing on a much larger scale.

Just remember the message from all this rambling: social distancing and separation are the keys to breaking this cycle.

Keep safe.



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Easter 2020 is going to be unlike anything we have ever experienced. The churches will continue to be empty; we will miss receiving palms; miss Good Friday veneration of the cross and the celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. We can still follow the Easter story with our reading of scripture and live-streamed ceremonies from many churches in San Francisco. I will be livestreaming Mass on Easter Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. You can join me to celebrate the Resurrection by visiting the IIPC website at [www.sfiipc.org](http://www.sfiipc.org).

We hear the same story every year but our hearts can be in different place each time. And this year, I believe we all find ourselves in a different place. As we come to the end

## 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](http://my2020census.gov), or call us at 415.752.6006 if you have questions.

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

5340 Geary Boulevard, #206, San Francisco, CA 94121

Tel: 415.752.6006 Fax: 415.752.6910

Email: [info@sfiipc.org](mailto:info@sfiipc.org) [www.sfiipc.org](http://www.sfiipc.org)

[www.facebook.com/Irish.Immigration.Pastoral.Center](http://www.facebook.com/Irish.Immigration.Pastoral.Center)

## ACTIVE RETIREMENT CLUB OUTREACH PROGRAM

### How are you doing?

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, and our efforts to maintain social distancing, all of our Active Retirement Club events will be postponed indefinitely until we can ensure the safety and health of our members.

The IIPC wants to make sure that every individual is taking the best care possible during this uncharted time to maintain social distancing and respect quarantine efforts imposed by the city and state

If you are feeling unwell, please call your Primary Care Physician to discuss your symptoms.

We understand that you might be feeling anxious and overwhelmed but know that we will continue to help one another and work as a community to protect and sustain your health, welfare and safety through these challenging times.

Our goal is to make sure that no one in our ARC family feels isolated or alone during this time of 'social distancing'. If you need help - someone to run an errand, pick up a prescription - if you have a question, need advice or just chat, please call Joan at 415-432-2551 and leave a message. She will get back to you just as soon as possible.

A Community Outreach Service of the Irish Immigration Pastoral Center of San Francisco supported, in part, by the Emigrant Support Programme of the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade



## FR. BRENDAN'S EASTER MESSAGE

of Lent, our traditional time of abstinence and self-reflection, we realize that we have done more of both than we might have intended on Ash Wednesday. We have sheltered in place, isolated, quarantined, been separated from our family, friends, our lives.

We look to our preparations for Easter weekend. From Good Friday to Easter Sunday there is bad news and good news. On Good Friday, the death of Jesus leaves everybody devastated. On Holy Saturday, we continue to mourn his loss, amidst a feeling of desolation and abandonment. But on Easter Sunday, we awaken to the shock of the empty tomb and the joy of the Resurrection.

If you have read the book The Shack, by William Young, you might remember a scene where the main character, Mack, is led on to the water by Jesus and they walk together on the lake. Mack is full of fear, mostly about what might happen in the future. Jesus is clear to Mack

that he lives in the present and that we waste time trying to play God and control what might happen in the future.

The message of Jesus for Mack in the story and for all of us is "Why did you doubt me?" It is in the present that Jesus lives, not in our fears about the future.

This Easter, we recognize how we must live in the present. One day at a time. As we support each other through these challenging times, we know that through supporting and caring for each other, we will rise, just as Jesus did on Easter Sunday.

This Easter, our message is one of hope. Christ has risen. Coronavirus will pass. Life will resume.

In the meantime, have a happy and blessed Easter.

Beannachtá na Cásca oraibh.



## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH!!

Did you know that April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month?? Our volunteers are the backbone of our community at the IIPC. We are so grateful to everyone who gives so freely of their time and resources to help us reach almost 3,000 people every year.



That being said the IIPC is seeking individuals to join our volunteer team to help support those in the community who are either effected in any way due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any additional time and are interested in making a difference, please reach out by calling 415.752.6006 and leaving a message. You may also contact [joan@sfiipc.org](mailto:joan@sfiipc.org). The IIPC is grateful for any help you may provide.



Thank  
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• IRISH AMERICA •

# The Secret To A Great Irish Coffee Isn't What You'd Expect

by Elizabeth Karmel

LAST SUMMER, I TRAVELED TO Ireland to learn about Irish whiskey, a spirit I knew relatively little about. The Irish drink I knew better was Guinness, which I enjoyed occasionally and use to make my favorite Chocolate Cake.

Turns out, I am not alone in my unfamiliarity with Irish whiskey. Today's Irish whiskey industry is relatively young. It all but died out after Ireland gained independence from Britain in 1922. In 1980, there were only two distilleries, Bushmills and Midleton, makers of Jameson and other well-known brands. Today there are 31. Irish whiskey, like other whiskeys today, is booming.

Distilleries now are making balanced and nuanced whiskeys that are best sipped slowly like a good scotch, bourbon or rye.

Before I got to Ireland, I wondered if Irish Coffee there is like German Chocolate Cake in Germany—an American creation. But almost everywhere we went, we were served an Irish Coffee. And they were delicious. Way better than anything I had experienced in the States.

These Irish Coffees were served in glass Irish Coffee mugs, some plain, some fancy and one even cut crystal. The transparent glass and the mug's telltale shape signaled that it was time for a pick-me-up.

Some versions of Irish Coffee in Ireland were simple and plain, strong with whiskey. Others had been accessorized with a sprinkle of cocoa or cinnamon and sweetened with vanilla-bean syrup, chocolate or caramel like a fancy coffee drink. They were all good, but for me, one stood out.

After lunch one day, we went to the Stag's Head pub in Dublin. It sits at the end of a pedestrian street and has been a beloved part of the Dublin landscape for 250 years this year. It is a warm, convivial space, the perfect place to experience a neat Irish whiskey with 1/2-pint of Guinness on the side—my favorite order during my trip.

After consuming my first round, I ordered an Irish Coffee “in the name of research.” I was not disappointed. The coffee was flavorful but light, not bitter at all. It complemented and softened the sharp Irish whiskey; when you sipped it through the rich pillows of a fresh, thickened cream, the bite of the whiskey was tamed, and it was heavenly.

The Irish Coffee was so exceptional that I asked the manager of the pub for the secret. He was hesitant at first to tell me, and then said I wouldn't believe it. I anticipated that he was going to say it was Ireland's exceptional cream. But that wasn't it.

The secret to a great Irish Coffee, it turns out, is instant coffee. That's right, the instant coffee you can get at the grocery store. He told me you can't use coffee that is too strong, too flavorful or, in his words, too “good.” Those coffees will upset the balance of the drink.

So, you need instant coffee, Irish whiskey and the best cream you can find, thickened but not whipped. Layer the coffee, whiskey and cream in that order in a tall mug. In Ireland, they use a heatproof glass mug so you can see all the layers. I succumbed and purchased an Irish Coffee mug so I could recreate the experience at home, but you can serve it in any heatproof mug.

When I came home, I started making the Dublin pub's Irish Coffee with instant espresso powder because that's what I had on hand. A spoonful of the powder mixed with 5 ounces of boiling water made the base. I added 1 ounce of Irish whiskey and a big dollop of thickened, heavy cream. It's important that the water is boiling, because the cream is cold and will cool off the coffee as you drink it.

This Irish Coffee couldn't be easier, feels like a treat, and is both relaxing and invigorating, a welcome change from hot tea and hot chocolate when you come in from the cold.

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• SPORTS •

# Tom Brady Signs With Buccaneers

SIX-TIME SUPER BOWL champion Tom Brady gave the football world the answer it had been waiting for when he signed a two-year contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17. Brady, San Mateo's most famous Irish American, says he is embarking on a "new football journey."

The 42-year-old quarterback who spent the first 20 years of his career with the New England Patriots announced his decision in an Instagram post and thanked the Bucs for the opportunity.

The deal is worth \$30 million per season.

"Excited, humble and hungry ... If there is one thing I have learned about football, it's that nobody cares what you did last year or the year before that," Brady wrote.

The signing comes three days after Brady announced on social media that he would not return to New England, ending his historic run with the Patriots.

He joins an offense that led the NFL in passing yards last season, featuring a pair of 1,000-yard receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, tight ends OJ Howard and Cameron Brate, and a young, developing running back in Ronald Jones.

What the Bucs didn't have in 2019, when they went 7-9



and missed the playoffs for the 12th straight season was a quarterback who protected the football.

Brady, who turns 43 in August, will be counted on to change that.

Educated at Serra High School, Brady is proud of his Irish roots. He is a direct descendant of famine immigrants from Ireland who landed in Boston during the height of the Great Hunger and scraped out a new life for themselves in the Massachusetts capital.

His great-great-grandfather John Brady left Ireland in the mid-19th century and found work as a laborer in Boston. He soon married Bridget Bailey, also a refugee of Ireland's Great Famine, and the two set about

creating a family. The young Bradys came west before the Civil War, with Bridget's sister, Ann, and her husband, Lawrence Meegan, also Irish refugees.

"Census records show the Bradys and Meegans settled next door to each other in San Francisco's Mission District," said Jim McNiff, an amateur genealogist who published an extensive piece on Brady's family history in *The Boston Globe*.

McNiff also discovered that Brady's great-grandfather, Philip F Brady, was a San Francisco firefighter for 27 years and responded to the devastating 1906 earthquake. His son was a former police sergeant, who was working as a newspaper reporter when he was shot and killed in Oakland in 1922. Another relative, Brady's great-uncle, Col Michael Buckley Jr, was a West Point graduate who was reportedly the first American taken prisoner by the Nazis in World War II.

In 2009, Brady referred to his Irish heritage when the Patriots played in London that year.

"My father is 100 percent Irish. We took a trip over there together and visited some of the places where my family came from," Brady told reporters. "That was a great experience for me and obviously, I am very proud of my Irish roots."

• HOROSCOPE •

ARIES March 21-April 20

Your head and heart will try to process everything that goes on. With signs of Spring in the air you enter a very romantic phase. 8th of April, the Full Moon inspires you to make the necessary changes. The 19th sees you turning your back on the past, and moving forward. Now you have become the leader you were always meant to be.

TAURUS April 21-May 21

You are feeling assertive and daring. You are laying the ground work before you take action. You are entering a whole new period when you are filled with fresh ideas and inspiration. Singles find love, and married ones enjoy marital bliss. Stay safe, don't go out, stay home, spend quality time with family and friends.

GEMINI May 22-June 21

You are on a role this April. You will be exploring new opportunities and covering a lot of ground. It's a good time to accomplish a lot. You will be filled with self confidence. Others learn on you for support. The 20th sees singles enjoying romance close to home. Family members are supportive.

CANCER June 22-July 22

You are on display this April and your actions have more impact. Whatever transpires in a love relationship or business partnership will be a game changer. As a result your life takes a turn for the better. Do not delay a frank discussion you were avoiding. April 23rd the New Moon heralds a new cycle. Family matters thrive and money arrives from an unexpected source.

LEO July 23-August 22

April is the time to reach out to others and help them. Whether working at home or in an office, you concentrate on your career. This period marks the biggest for you. Reply on the support of loved ones. They will stand by your side. Take time out to help those in need, you will be rewarded for doing so.

VIRGO August 23-September 22

You are on the brink of something new that heralds a good time for you. You are on a 'roll.' Jupiter the planet of good fortune boosts both your personal and business affairs. During this time you will appreciate your friends, family and people who are loyal to you. Watch your health, and help others to do so as well.

LIBRA September 23-October 22

You are able to keep the right balance between your needs and those of others. Your eyes are seeing a new life style. You shine socially and work-wise are able to tap into your creative talents. The new moon the 23rd sees you making sensible financial decisions that benefit you in the future. Pay off old bills, and save for better times.

SCORPIO October 23-November 21

A time to accomplish a lot and get your affairs in order. Be prepared to listen to others. Meeting them half way will prove to be the only way to avoid time-wasting standoffs. If you dream about a long-term relationship, it looks like the stars will bring you a potential partner. Don't let love lure you away from work. Keep close to those you love.

SAGITTARIUS November 22-December 21

Dare to be different, pursues your visions, you are presented with intriguing options in April. The sun in your sign highlights entrepreneur endeavors. The challenge will be to set limits, especially on the financial front. Spring weather awakens the need for an active lifestyle, so ride a bike go for a walk or run. Take care of your health, avoid crowds and eat healthy.

CAPRICORN December 22-January 20

Put your creative ideas into play. Home and lifestyle changes are in the spotlight. You find new solutions to old problems. Singles find the chance to attract love. You can look forward to a great romance even if in a long-term relationship. You share happy times at home catching up with your e-mails with those that live at a distance.

AQUARIUS January 21-February 19

This is the time to assert yourself. You will think very clearly and get others' attention. You make some good moves this April which will be helpful and supportive in situations that demand patience. In matters of love, you will find interesting hobbies to do at home while watching TV or streaming a movie.

PISCES February 20-March 20

Exploring new ventures and options sets you on the right pathway. Make good financial moves. Resist any attempt for anyone to control you. Refuse to play a passive role. It's time to strengthen the family ties. Watch your health, don't over think, spend quiet time tuning into your soul.

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• SPORTS •

# Irish Sports Decimated

by Liam McEvoy

THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 has changed the way we live our daily lives and shut down the sporting world as large gatherings and travel has been banned.

Some leagues and sporting bodies were slower than others to shut down, but as players and teams tested positive and the virus spread it made less and less sense to keep playing sports.

Ireland was quick off the mark shutting down large gatherings and postponing sports, starting with the Six Nations game against Italy.

The Six Nations quickly moved to announce the postponement of Ireland's game in France and England's clash with Italy.

However, the match between Scotland and Wales was only called off at the last minute at which point the whole competition was postponed until later this year.

Last month the IRFU moved to finish the 2020 domestic season with immediate effect stating there would be no promotion or relegation in any league and there would be no winners declared.

The professional Pro4 league and the European Rugby Cups have all been suspended indefinitely until organizers are able to make plans for the future.

All GAA, Camogie and the Ladies Gaelic Football associations announced the immediate suspension of all activities after the government's decision to close schools.

The decision included stopping training for all ages from under 8s to senior as the associations looked to protect their members and communities.

However, the GAA moved quickly to organize within the community and work to provide support of the elderly and others in need of deliveries and

help as they tried to self-isolate. Ireland's Euro2020 play-off semi-final against Slovakia has been postponed until June 4 as UEFA were forced to reschedule the play-offs.

Slovakia had shut its borders and many of their players are based in Italy which had also shut their borders meaning the logistics of playing the game incredibly difficult.

UEFA has reacted to the ongoing pandemic by rescheduling the entire tournament for the summer of 2021 as a cross continental tournament would be problematic this summer.

European football leagues have been suspended and postponed and the UEFA Champions League and Europa League have been postponed indefinitely.

In Ireland, the League of Ireland has been postponed with the FAI and clubs hoping to have it up and running again by June and to finish the season by playing a shortened schedule.

The Irish women's football team was on track to qualify for Euro 2020 to be hosted in England, but that has also been postponed until 2021 and Ireland will hope to continue on the path to qualification later this year.

Michael Conlan's much publicized St Patrick's Day fight against Belmar Preciado at Madison Square Garden was cancelled.

It was not the only boxing cancelled as an Olympic qualifying tournament scheduled to take place in London was also postponed.

The PGA Tour and the PGA European Tour have both postponed all tournaments for the next few months and the first two majors have been postponed.

These cancellations will have an impact on qualifying for the Ryder Cup, but this

year's captain, Pdraig Harrington was more concerned about those lower in the rankings and their livelihoods.

The Olympics was also put back to 2021, pushing lots of Irish athletes' preparation for the biggest moment of their life out for another twelve months.

Ireland and Bangladesh were also forced to cancel their one-day cricket international and Twenty20 series in May which would have been the first step on the path to qualification for the 2023 World Cup.

Horse racing was eventually shut down on March 24 when Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced that all sporting events must be cancelled until April 19 at the earliest.

Before this, Horse Racing Ireland had been holding races behind closed doors with no spectators, but the new rules banned even those events.

With all sport shut down, people have been forced to look elsewhere for entertainment and TV stations have stepped up by showing classics from the past.

Players such as Seamus Coleman and James McClean have been donating money to help those working in hospitals to help deal with COVID-19.

Things will eventually go back to normal and sports will return. In the meantime, people should follow the advice of doctors and scientists and stay home.

**Michael A. Sulpizio, CPA**

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• SPORTS •

## Local Gaelic Games Competitions Fall Victim to Coronavirus Impact

By Liam Reidy

THE FALLOUT AND IMPACT OF the coronavirus outbreak on the sporting world and its organizations can only be described as incalculable. What we now know is that this years sporting schedule has been decimated and affected some of 2020's biggest events. A range of sports have had to take action to prevent the spread of the virus, with the Euro 2020 soccer tournament, and the Tokyo Olympics both postponed until 2021. It's anyone's guess what will happen to Major League baseball this year or if the NBA basketball season re-starts at all to compete the 2019-2020 schedule. Nervous Liverpool FC soccer fans are no doubt praying the English Premier League will conclude this season, with the Reds all but assured of the title, their first in 30 years.

Most people have either a passing or passionate interest in sporting events—whether it's the professional leagues or local amateur sports like gaelic games in the Bay Area.

Presently in San Francisco all adult and youth gaelic games, events and activities are suspended, with no dates confirmed for a possible return to action.

Chairman of the Western Divisional Board, Bertie Penny, stated at the end of March: "We had a full schedule of games ready to go a couple of weeks ago for the annual St Patricks Day cup but now that's all on hold, as we await word from the San Francisco Public Health Department as to what will happen after the shelter in place order expires on April 7th."

Penny continued: "Based on the most current information available that the order will likely be extended further. If that is the case the St Patricks Day cup may not take place at all this spring."

The summer championships are scheduled to begin on the weekend of June 13-14, but as of right now, nobody knows if that's still feasible. This year's National USA GAA championships are due to be held in Boston, in mid-August. The finals are still on the calendar but that could also change as the year progresses.

One National Finals that have fallen victim to the coronavirus are the Continental Youth Championships (CYC), which were to be held on Treasure Island between July 30 and August 2. What should be highlight of the GAA season for some 2,500 participants from all over the USA and Canada from the Under 6 age group

through to Under 18s will now not take place this year. In mid-March the National CYC Steering Committee, responsible for organizing the annual finals consulted with Croke Park in Dublin to discuss the feasibility of proceeding with CYC 2020 in San Francisco. After careful consideration the decision was made to cancel CYC 2020. Local Youth GAA Chairman James Quinn said: "This was not an easy decision, but I believe it is in the best interests of our GAA families. The pandemic is predicted to last into the summer and will no doubt may continue to disrupt school, employment and travel in the months ahead."

To say I was disappointed to learn that this summer's CYC in our own back yard at Treasure Island was canceled would be an understatement. Last summer my family and I traveled to Malvern, Philadelphia for our very first National Youth GAA Championships. I was absolutely blown away by the entire experience. There were over 600 games stretched across four days, with 2,500 boys and girls, from all across the continent gathered together for an amazing jamboree of gaelic games in the hot and humid environment of western Philadelphia.

While it is sometimes difficult to muster a full squad of players from your own home town to travel cross country to play in the National finals, the beauty about the CYC is that every young player that makes the effort to attend the competition gets to participate and play. I had three of my own kids take part in the weekend, but only one (Shane, my oldest) played with his native San Francisco in the U-14 football category. My oldest daughter Aoibhinn and my youngest son Fintan traveled to PA without their own team but were recruited to play with Delaware County Gaels from southern PA. I didn't know what to expect to be honest. However, upon meeting the Delco Gaels contact Noel Doherty on the ground I felt much more at ease, and released both Fintan and Aoibhinn for the weekend to play with their "new" team. (On a side note "they loved the color of the jerseys!). All of my kids played several games during the weekend and although all three exited the championships at the semi-final stages they had a complete blast. It was truly a wonderful experience for them. The only complaint from the kids was the difficulty coping with the intense heat and humid-

ity while playing. One of the quotes of the weekend from my son Fintan was: "Next year Daddy, can we go somewhere cold for a holiday?" I laughed at his request and said we wouldn't have to worry about heat in 2020 as we would be on home soil. Alas, there will be no CYC finals for the Reidy family this year, or reconnecting with our old friends from the Delco Gaels club but we will certainly plan to make the trip to Chicago next summer!



The Reidy family traveled to Malvern, PA to participate in the 2019 CYC. Pictured from the top: Aoibhinn Reidy with Liam Linehan, Munster Council GAA. Shane and Liam Reidy. Fintan Reidy.

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• SPORTS •

## O'Neills Is Making Protective Gear For Healthcare Workers



THE 'CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS' SLOGAN THAT WAS surely dreamed up by someone in O'Neills marketing team has taken on an added layer of meaning as the Irish sportswear company has begun manufacturing scrubs for healthcare workers.

The County Tyrone based company temporarily laid off hundreds of staff in recent weeks, as the Covid-19 pandemic eliminated its order book. But its Strabane factory was back in action Wednesday, March 25, with 150 staff working to manufacture scrubs and masks for health and social care trusts in the north of Ireland.

The fabric used to make the protective clothing was dyed maroon and coated with anti-viral properties at O'Neills factory in Walkinstown, Dublin.

The first shipment of safety garments is destined for healthcare workers on the frontline of fighting the coronavirus at the Covid-19 center of Derry's Altnagelvin Hospital.

The company said it is unable to comment on the volume of scrubs it is manufacturing at this stage because it is changing daily.

While it is currently just fulfilling orders from trusts in the north of Ireland, the company has also had enquiries from the Republic of Ireland and Britain.

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## LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hello San Francisco GAA Families,

After 2 months of hard work by our CYC 2020 Committee, our SFYGAA Board and the USGAA have no option but to cancel CYC 2020. This is just one more event that must surrender to today's current climate. As I write this news it has come to our attention that Feile 2020 will also be cancelled.

This is disappointing news for all involved but we must all pull together and do what's right for our entire community. We will get back to GAA when the timing is right! In the meantime, there is [GAA Learning.ie](https://www.gaalearning.ie) that has hundreds of drills that can keep idle minds busy.

I know the Irish Pastoral Center will have volunteer opportunities to help the most vulnerable in this time of crisis. Please watch out for their emails. If anybody needs Hurleys, Footballs or Sliotars to keep themselves busy and fit, let me know and I will drop them off.

Here's to a speedy recovery for the Planet. Hope to see ye all very soon.

James Quinn, SFYGAA

[sfygaa.org](https://www.sfygaa.org)