



DÚCAS

Irish American Cultural Institute Newsletter

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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news. Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Sincerely,

Carol Buck
Irish American Cultural Institute



The Power of Irish Wisdom

By Renee' Gatz, Author of Wise Words & Witty Expressions

www.reneegatz.com

Can you imagine what a boring world we would live in if everyone was the same? Life would be filled with an overabundance of scientists or musicians or athletes. Who would create the beautiful frescos, or protect our communities or cook the exotic foods we have come to love? How would we ever learn, grow and experience joy if we all had the same abilities, personalities and experiences? Each day would be so very uninspiring. There would be no awe for the talents of others, no need for mentors to inspire us and personal development would not be necessary to learn what career or life best suits our individual personalities. The satisfaction and reward for triumphantly adapting to one of life's unexpected little surprises would cease to exist. Yet, in spite of the beauty of our individual diversity, it seems, we cannot help ourselves at times from thinking that the grass is greener on the other side.

The funny thing about this idea is that you can never know just by looking what went into making that lawn so green. Maybe the owner has a natural gift. Maybe you missed the years of practice with different fertilizers, cutting lengths, watering systems and fall preparation before the owner stumbled upon the recipe for success or maybe you are admiring artificial turf. The reality is that you cannot compare yourself to another because you were intentionally designed with your own unique gifts, experiences and desires, which cannot be discounted simply because you do not measure up to the accomplishments of another. The desire to make comparisons is always heightened during periods of change, stress and challenge. During these times, it is very easy to glance at the perception of another's life and say, "they have it made" or "they get all the breaks," when in fact you don't know that to be the case. This is frustration speaking and providing you with a signal to take a breath, count your blessings, acknowledge the beauty of your gifts and that now is the time to leverage your experience to see you through a difficult period because this too shall pass and you will be an improved person for having had this experience.

When you are inclined to perceive that someone is smarter, better looking, happier, wealthier, remember that you have talents that those you are envying admire about you. God architected each person to make a contribution to the world as well as with opportunities for personal growth and development. There is no perfect person or perfect life. We all have strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths inspire others and our **weaknesses help us become a better person.**

The Power of Irish Wisdom (continued)

We need our individual diversity to help each other and ourselves. We cannot grow or be an inspiration to others if we diminish our talents by standing in the false shadow of another. The very gifts you possess add to the beauty of your life and the life of those around you. Collectively, we create a world that is exciting, interesting and full of opportunities. There will be times when someone is up and someone is down. It is all part of the yin and yang of life, which has been thoughtfully constructed by our Creator to provide us with opportunities to become successful and avail ourselves to the talents of others for encouragement. Don't waste precious time feeling less than. Celebrate your gifts, your quirks, your shortcomings, your challenges and your victories. You are a critical part of creating a better world because someone is learning from you and you are learning from someone else, which is why we are all here.

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Central NY Chapter News

We are preparing for our part in the annual Syracuse Irish Festival in Clinton Square on September 5th and 6th. In addition to our usual array of Irish cultural offerings - tin whistle lessons, sales items etc. - we will be sponsoring a performance presentation by the talented Deirdre McCarthy on her native city of Limerick.

On Saturday, September 27th we will have our second annual Rising Stars event featuring music, dance, and poetry by gifted Central New York students. The event will be at 7 PM at May Memorial Church.

We look forward to co-sponsoring with Le Moyne College a presentation by noted Famine scholar Christine Kinealy, in November. Details to follow.

Love's Promises

by Ray Aumack

Dear Friends,

With this chapter we come to the end of Love's Promises and the saga of Katie O'Bieme and Shane Ryan as they work their way from a friendship to marriage. Writing fiction is such an intense meditative experience that for me, these characters are real. I was allowed to penetrate their world and tell their story. You were the first to hear it. I worked hard to keep the story positive and upbeat. I hope I left readers with the same experience.

I am very grateful to Ducas, the Irish American Cultural Institute, - USA, and Carol Buck, who made certain these chapters were presented each month for more than three years. Love's Promises is now a published novel. I am also grateful to best selling novelist, Peter Quinn, who suggested serializing the story.

I will continue to submit articles each month on "things Irish." Katie and Shane will appear again, as individuals in short stories and as a couple in an unnamed novel that is progressing very nicely.

Chapter 39 – A Postlude

Katie and Shane awakened slowly at their Rosseville Cottage. They were tired and slightly groggy but felt strangely refreshed. They spent the night proclaiming their love by again and again pouring themselves into each other. They kissed and snuggled and hugged in the morning light but their exhausted bodies just couldn't do anything more.

Liam was going to take them to Knock Airport in Mayo for the first leg of their journey to Naples and an exploration of the Amalfi Coast. From Naples where they will stay for two overnights they would take a hydrofoil to Sorrento. They had planned a bus tour of the entire Amalfi Coast for Monday and from that determine what, if anything, they want to see and identify places they want to visit. They weren't rushed and it was not a high season for tourists. They were far more interested in each other than they were about whole cities hanging from cliffs. They would arrive on Sunday afternoon and fly home from Naples on Friday afternoon.

The flight to Italy was uneventful. They flew over the west coast of England travelling south until they reached Spain. Out over the Mediterranean Sea, the plane flew east until it reached Italy some four hours later. It was Katie's first flight. While she wondered what held the plane up in the sky, she enjoyed the trip. Once she relaxed she was able to sleep part of the way.

After leaving the west Ireland December cold, the warmth of the air was startling as they disembarked from the airplane. They had passports and papers in order, but airport security was little more than a nod and a wink.

Naples, even in this off season holiday, was a beehive of activity. It was once an ancient Greek trading center and the capitol of its own kingdom. When it joined the Italian confederation, its resources were literally ripped off to support the industrial development in the north. People were animatedly talking in the street with extravagant hand gestures. One had no idea if they were arguing or just enthusiastically greeting

each other. It was a city of Vespas with no discernable traffic pattern. The little motorized scooters seemed to be going in all directions at once without any concern for the safety of pedestrians. People crossed streets at their own risk but had to do so in packs for their own safety. You just waited at the curb until enough people gathered so the herd could defy traffic to get to the other side. And, even then, the first to step off the curb were truly the brave ones.

They found that almost everyone spoke English. Both Katie and Shane were fluent Irish speakers but few people outside of Galway and the other Gaeltacht regions of Ireland spoke Irish. Both had a smattering of French but were rapidly losing those language abilities because they were never used. One of the things they learned was that while everyone was Italian, because of unique dialects, one could not necessarily understand another and very few spoke classical Italian, adding to the considerable chaos. Even among English speakers Katie and Shane had a hard time being understood. Though well educated, Katie maintained her Midlands-Ulster brogue and Shane, his Galway-Connemara brogue, all of which made for a little frustration and a lot of fun.

A taxi took them from the airport to their hotel in the center of the city. Naples was founded in the 8th century BC as a Greek city. It was said to be responsible for the introduction of Greek culture in a Roman environment. The current city was designed in the middle ages and the layout of the city had not changed much since then. The city center was quite spacious. The streets were little more than lanes and were crowded with booths on both sides selling both tourist and essential goods. Vespas charged through the limited space between the booths at breakneck speed. It is a very densely populated city with about 8000 people per square mile and about three and one half million altogether; Katie and Shane had both read the travel guides and expected to see all of this, but the reality of it was a totally different experience.

The hotel recommended by the travel guide was contemporary and had room service and its own dining room. All Katie wanted to see were ceilings anyway. She was, however, also intrigued by the different experience of visiting a foreign city.

The travel guide recommended a restaurant about a block away from the hotel to help them ease their way into the culture. Pizza was founded in the city of Naples so they looked forward to comparing it with Irish pizza. After a long nap, they decided to venture outside the hotel to the restaurant. The restaurant was absolutely charming, as chaotic as the streets, with singing waiters and waitresses. They had an incredible meal, very different from the Italian dinners that they experienced in Ireland. Naples is famous for its restaurants and the quality of its food. They heard many of the popular arias from just about every opera you could think of. The evening was unique, thrilling, and gratifying. They walked up some of the side streets and down toward the waterfront taking a round about route back to the hotel. They were looking forward to the bus tour tomorrow.

They woke up the next morning relaxed from their night's sleep. The long nap the day before took the edge off their fatigue. They held each other, kissed, hugged, and made love. They showered together to help the Italians save water, or so they said to each other. Katie was still lying on the bed while Shane was dressing, pointing to the ceiling. "That is the scenery that I want to see all day and all night,"

"Come on Katie. We'll see what we can do about the ceiling of the bus."

They went to the hotel restaurant for breakfast and then out to meet the tour bus in front of the hotel. "When I was a kid, I used to take the bus tours through Connemara just to hear the stories the bus drivers told."

The bus was a modern tour bus similar to the busses that pulled up to the Lantern during the tourist season. "I wonder what the tour drivers say about you when they pull up," said Katie.

"I can only imagine. I heard some pretty tall stories. Each driver had his own variation of the stories that were told."

The bus drove through some of the most beautiful scenery Katie and Shane had ever seen.

The airplane ride was a piece of cake compared with the bus ride. The road seemed to be just about as wide as the bus and travelled along the ridge of the mountains. They could look down on little villages from tremendous heights and see the sparkling Mediterranean about 500 feet below.

They saw villages and towns, estates and villas that looked as if they were hung on the side of the mountain like ornaments on a Christmas tree. Katie sat near the window and asked Shane to switch seats. She couldn't look down and see the road, only the tiny beaches far below. She blessed herself and took deep breaths to keep from hyperventilating. She gained respect for the driver not only for his stories, which were great, but for his ability to navigate these great busses on that terrifying road.

They pulled into Sorrento which seemed like a sleepy village compared with Naples. They stopped at a little restaurant right on the shore for lunch. Meanwhile Shane had been snapping photos of every phase of the trip. Tomorrow, they would stay overnight in Sorrento and take the short ferry trip out to Capri. A guitarist and a mandolin player sang Italian folk songs while they had lunch. Katie asked Shane if he ever thought of singing Irish folk songs for the bus loads of people who came to the Lantern. Shane responded that was the reason they had Seamus and he also works at lunchtime on the days when the busses come in. He told her the story of how Liam said he would speak to visitors in Irish on his days off and tell them stories about Leprechauns. He thought they would go back to America and repeat the stories forever. "He is probably right about that."

Katie laughed, "It is a good thing you enjoy meeting people."
"Aye, I do but I love just being here alone with you."
"We'll have to do this often, even if we only go out to Inishmore or to the Twelve Bens and all those sheep."
"That was such a lovely day. The next time we go we'll probably scandalize the sheep."
"I certainly hope so," laughed Katie.

They had another hour for souvenir shopping. Katie bought little gifts for her mother and Peadar and Shane bought some things for Liam, Chris and Fr. O'Malley. The trip back went through Positano, and Amalfi to Salerno, a part of the trip that was truly beautiful and then back to Naples with a stop at Vesuvius. The stories were great but Vesuvius was a curiosity. "All of those people's lives were extinguished in just a moment of time," said Katie. "I know it is a big part of the lore but it is so tragic even at this point in time."

They arrived back at the hotel in the late afternoon. The rest of Naples was just waking up from the daily siesta and Katie and Shane were looking forward to theirs. The rest of the week was just a blur of activities that they had planned for each day. They took the hydrofoil to Sorrento where they stayed for a couple of days enjoying the Mediterranean beaches. They went out to Capri but were unimpressed until they took the boat to the Blue Grotto which they thought was spectacular. Shane carefully recorded everything with his camera.

They were back in Naples on Friday and boarded the plane back to Ireland. Both thought the week was spectacular with a certain sadness that it was coming to an end. They touched down at Knock Airport and Liam was there to pick them up. Katie thought that it brilliant of Shane to think of the Amalfi Coast. She also had seen far more than her share of ceilings and was feeling quite satisfied as was Shane.

Saturday was a day of unwinding. They reminisced about the past week, reliving all the great moments. Katie drove out to her apartment at the university just to check on things. Her office was filled with shower presents and the rest of the apartment was filled with wedding presents. "That is the task for next week," thought Katie. She locked the door and returned to Rosseville to enjoy a few uncluttered days. Meanwhile, Shane had remembered the letter from Pope John Paul II tucked away in the inside pocket of his tuxedo.

*Dear Dr. O'Bierne and Mr. Ryan,
I have been aware of you through our Papal Nuncio to Ireland who forwarded to me a tape your television appearance, several newspaper articles, and your interviews with the leading publications of Ireland.
I want to thank you for presenting your faith in our Lord and the teachings of our Church so well. Yours is the voice that people hear.
I spoke with Archbishop Manning recently who told me of your pending marriage. You have my Papal Blessing and all the blessings of our Church. May your love and your lives continue to be fruitful.
Faithfully yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,
Pope John Paul II, Bishop of Rome*

When Katie returned to their new home, formerly Shane's cottage, he showed her the letter.

"We better put that in the box for our children with Bono's letter. It will be a relic someday."

Katie told him about the mess in her apartment. "A happy mess," said Shane.

Liam and Chris had everything ready for the Rosseville Open House.

Katie and Shane went up to the church for Sunday Mass. At Fr. O'Malley's insistence the usher escorted them up to the front of the church. Peadar and Angela, Liam, and Chris were already in the pew. Seamus was playing the organ and Richard Mulligan was again the leader of song. Archbishop Manning was the principal celebrant and Fr. McCarthy, free from the University because of the holiday, and Fr. O'Malley were concelebrants.

Archbishop Manning gave a beautiful homily on friendship and the values of human love. He used Katie and Shane's marriage and the church filled with their friends as a prime example.

At the end of the Mass, just before the final prayer, the three priests came down to the edge of the sanctuary and called Katie and Shane to join them.

The Archbishop imposed his blessing on them as he did the previous week at their reception. And then he added, "Because of your great positive influence on the people of Ireland, your staunch proclamation of your faith in God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit, and your articulation of the truths of our faith, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II presents each of you with one of the highest honors given to our laity in recognition of your service to the Church, *The Pro Ecclesiae et Pontifice Medal* accompanied with his sincerest gratitude.

He then draped the ribbon with a huge gold medal like that of an Olympic champion over Katie's head and then Shane's. Everyone in the church stood and clapped and even cheered.

Later on at the open house party at the Lantern, Archbishop Manning again led the party with Grace. Sean gave Katie and Shane a formal booklet with all the articles from the newspapers and magazines of Ireland about their wedding.

There was music, drinking, and dancing; they shared good food and good friends. The party had long passed its intended closing in the late afternoon and continued far into the night.

Yes indeed, the craic was mighty in the Lantern that night and Katie and Shane were the happiest of all.