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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



IACI Chairman Peter Halas Presents O'Malley Art Award

During the last week of September 2014, Peter Halas chairman of the Irish-American Cultural Institute had the honor to represent the IACI it's board members and members on a trip to Ireland.

In honor of the one thousandth anniversary of the Battle of Clontarf he stayed at the Bram Stoker hotel at the site of the battle toured the battle area.

The purpose of the trip was to present the O'Malley art award. Board member Catherine Marshall and her committee selected Fergus Martin for this year's award. The presentation took place at the Hugh Lane Gallery. The gallery director, Catherine Marshall and other gallery supporters attended a brief presentation, pictures and a productive and supportive lunch on Parnell Square. The plaque and award of €5000 was greatly appreciated by Mr. Martin. He intends to use the award to develop ongoing works of art as a room at the gallery with his works is in progress to be opened soon. He graciously presented a book of his works to be included in the IACI library which is to be donated to the Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University.

On his way to the Irish-American Paediatric Society meeting in Cork, Dr. Halas stopped at the Rock of Castle, spoke with historian John cash at the Bru' Boru exhibit. As an example of the ongoing importance of the work of the IACI in Ireland, Mr. Cash was very enthusiastic when told that we publish Eire- Ireland, to which he refers to often in his research.

In Cobh, the port of departure for so many Irish immigrants, the statute Annie Moore stands at the entry to the coffin ship heritage center. The bronze plaque at the entry to the center honors the Irish-American cultural Institute, John Walsh and other board members who led the project to put the statue there and corresponding statute on Ellis Island.

It was quite rewarding to represent the IACI and perceive the appreciation for the Institute and its previous and ongoing works supporting Irish culture and history.



The Power of Irish Wisdom

By Renee' Gatz, Author of *Wise Words and Witty Expressions*
www.reneegatz.com

Worry can be described as **a wolf in sheep's clothing** for it is disguised as an expression of our love and concern when in reality it is a stealth thief of our joy, peace and truth. When we worry about our loved ones, ourselves or a situation, we do not affect the result. We just allow our imagination to anticipate a negative scenario that usually never comes to pass and robs us of our joy, peace and truth. Yet we have come to believe that if we truly care about a person or a situation, we must worry while never giving consideration to its useless and destructive nature.

This idea is particularly intriguing given that we are never thrilled to be in receipt of the trouble we inherit yet we are willing to **borrow trouble** by worrying. We may be inclined to worry because when troubles arise, we feel a loss of control and the feeling of helplessness associated with that can cause us to anticipate the worst. Sometimes worry is born out of impatience. When things are not moving as quickly as we like or in a manner that allows us to be comfortable, we conclude that things are not going to work out and we begin spending precious time having a defeatist attitude. Maybe we create worry when we allow ourselves to be more consumed with not meeting the presumed expectations of others rather than the merits of our individual journey. These negative thoughts are merely conjecture. The certainty is that **in God's due time** all works out for our benefit. By remaining confident in this belief, we can save ourselves needless anguish and move through our challenges with joy and peace.

When feelings of impatience drive your state of mind, remember what is true--only **time will tell** how circumstances will turn out and that all delays are necessary to bring about the best outcome. All the worrying and hand wringing in the world will not move the universe before it is time. In the meantime, do not allow yourself to be so overwhelmed by your impatience that you miss the beauty in each day. Recognize discomfort as the turning point in a situation. The hardest work is done before the greatest breakthrough. Keep reminding yourself that **anything worth having is worth working hard for** and remain in faith expecting the best because that is what God wants for you. **Don't do yourself the disservice of comparing yourself to anyone else.** The truth is that you do not know what others think or believe and, more importantly, it does not matter. Your journey is between you and God not you and others.

Our innate defense system wants to be as prepared as possible for any and all outcomes, thereby driving the need to worry. The truth is we can never be prepared, and we are not expected to design all the answers. Instead, our journey's challenges are about providing us with opportunities to strengthen our faith that all will be well.

The next time you feel the need to worry pray. Prayer will allow you to unburden yourself by turning your worries over to God. Through regular practice, you will learn to trust that God always delivers the best possible solution, designed exclusively for you and your loved ones. It may look very different than you imagined and it may not arrive on your time table but as your faith grows and worries lessen, you will find happiness, peace and the truth that not only will all be well but that all is well.

Reprinted with permission from Renee Gatz



The Celtic Harp

By Raymond Aumack

It happened just eighteen years ago when my youngest son was eighteen years old. He came home from school with a tattoo on his leg of an Irish harp and the tricolor. I guess he thought the Irish symbols would meet with my approval. He did not ask for a comment so I did not comment one way or the other. He was and still is a terrific young man and a role model for his peers. He proudly wore the first tattoo in the history of both sides of our family.

How and when did the harp become an Irish icon? Before the twelfth century we ancient carved crosses that have a sculptured depiction of a stringed instrument. These were almost certainly lyres. Into the twelfth century we have artistic evidence of the triangular shaped stringed instrument with which we are familiar. The images at major shrines indicate that by the time the art was created, the harp had become an important and recognized instrument.

The best guess is that the harp as we know it was developed by creative musicians from instruments that they built. The harp was a known instrument in early Scotland and Wales. The sounding board for the harp was carved as a single piece from a hollowed out log from a tree such as a poplar tree. (**continued**)

The Celtic Harp (*continued*)

This type of instrument was uniquely Irish because they did not have poplar trees in Scotland. It simply may have been required to have a larger instrument in order to be heard out of doors or within the halls of the great houses.

The design of the harp did not change much over time. Some were smaller to be played off of one's lap. The harps we have come to know average some five feet in height. The harp had a solid (one piece) hollowed out sound box carved from hard wood and were intricately carved and painted. They averaged about thirty-six iron and brass strings. In some instances, the strings were silver and gold.

At my parish, St. Cassian in Upper Montclair, we have a fabulous choir and I was privileged to sing in it for about fifteen years. Whenever we had genuine festival such as Christmas, Easter, and various concerts during the year, we would have a harpist among an ensemble of instrumentalists to accompany the choir. Among our instrumentalists, we had a world class violinist who was formally the lead violinist and music director for the NJ Symphony. The violin he used was built by Mozart's father. Duets were played with the harp and the violin and neither required any amplification to fill the church with magnificent sound.

Visitors to Ireland over the centuries frequently remarked on the harp and its music. The comments were similar emphasizing the sweet bell-like tone of the instrument, the intricate harmonies, the lasting resonance, as well as the skill and speed of the harpist.

In early Irish society, the harpist was considered to be an important figure. The harpist was the instrumentalist of the aristocracy and second in stature only to poets. They were part of the required staff of a chieftain's household and their business was to provide music and poetry as required. Performances could be part of dinner entertainment. The music and lyrics would be about heroic deeds or the householder's pedigree. Funerals and the ritual mourning of the dead were important functions of the harpist as well as the poet. Sometimes the poet would chant to the accompaniment of the harp with a voice that swelled to the rafters and sank to a whisper. Such can still be heard in the unaccompanied singing of Traditional Irish music.

The demographic changes in Ireland made little difference to the culture. The Anglo-Normans soon adopted the Irish Language and culture, including the arts of poetry and music.

This all changed in the 16th century and the ultimate suppression of the Irish Language and culture. The formal poets and reciters began to disappear. Some harpers gained positions with the new landed gentry while others just became itinerant musicians, moving from house to house playing, teaching and composing. However, by this time, the new householders were imbued in the new musical traditions of Europe which was an interest of many of their new patrons.

By the eighteenth century the greater part of the harpers passed on. The remaining were old and before long the greater part of old harp music had disappeared.

The harp and the music continued to linger on in the festivals. There were many great harpists and composers that kept alive the music and tradition of the harp. Some of them composed "airs" as we came to know them. The best known composer of the all was the blind harper, Turlough O'Carolan known quite well for many melodic songs as well as grand marches, anthems, and symphonic pieces. Included among them is the melody of the Star Bangle Banner. It was a folk melody in the head of Francis Scott Key as he composed the lyrics during the naval bombardment of Fort Sumter. Attribution is sometime given to another author but, in truth, it came from the pen and the musical imagination of O'Carolan. He also fashioned harps by hand and is to harp making what Stradivarius was to violin making.

By the end of the nineteenth century the traditional harp was gone and replaced by the lighter gut-stringed harp.

In the United States the harp is enjoying a revival. Though it is not an instrument that one can easily carry to a party, such as a guitar or a banjo, young people are learning to play the harp. There are several harper schools in our area and we can only applaud this revival. Harpers are playing all kinds of music, great symphonies, jazz, rock music, and traditional popular ballads. It wouldn't take much imagination to team up the harp with contemporary rappers. After all the Irish harper and poet formed a team that lasted for centuries.

The harp became an official Irish icon in 1922 after the civil war when it was stamped on the coinage of the new Irish Republic and became part of its coat of arms.

I am indebted to many sources for this short article but I mostly indebted to Grainne Yeats for her article in the Yale University Press, Irish Encyclopedia.

Divorce Celtic Style

By Catherine Duggan

One Celtic custom that survived the conversion of Ireland to Christianity was divorce. Ancient Irish law, written in the seventh century, and known as Brehon Law, set forth several reasons that divorce could be obtained. In the modern era, divorce was not permitted in Ireland until 1996.

A wife could divorce her husband if he failed to support her, if he spread a false story about her, if he circulated a satire about her, or if he tricked her into marriage by sorcery. A man who was sterile, impotent or who practiced homosexuality could also be divorced. If the husband repudiated her for another woman, she could choose to divorce him, or stay in the house, along with the 'secondary wife.'

A wife could divorce her husband if he became too fat to have sex!

The law provided that a husband could strike his wife to correct her, but she was permitted to divorce him if his blow caused a blemish.

Finally, a man had to be careful about sharing with others the intimate details of his sexual relationship with his wife, since she could divorce him if he was indiscreet because, as the law stated, "it is not right for a man who tells of bed to be under blankets."

There were several grounds on which a husband was permitted to divorce his wife. They also included unfaithfulness, persistent thieving, inducing an abortion on herself, bringing shame on his honor, and smothering her child.

The rules for the division of property upon divorce were thoroughly modern. The share of each spouse depended on the kind of marriage, the amount of property brought into it by each partner, and the proportion of the household work borne by each. Each partner received back what he or she brought into the marriage, as well as a portion of the profits earned and acquisitions made during the marriage.

The importance of the woman's role in the rural economy was recognized. For example, since textile production is labor intensive, and the value of the product is the result of the work performed, rather than the original worth of the raw materials, the woman was entitled to a larger portion of all clothing and woven cloth.

The division of property was based on three factors: land, labor, and capital or livestock. The portion assigned to land and capital was distributed regardless of the conduct of the spouses. But if the marriage broke up due to one partner's fault, then the labor portion went to the innocent party. "If one of them is ill-behaved, the labor portion of the ill-behaved falls to the well-behaved."

The law stated, "If they divorce, each divorce shall be without mutual defrauding. If they divorce by mutual consent, let them divide their property in accordance with legal propriety." And this was the seventh century!

In many ways women in Celtic Ireland were dealt with more fairly than in the rest of Europe at the time, or indeed under common law for centuries.

Catherine Duggan is an attorney and the author of [The Lost Laws of Ireland](#).

Erskine Hamilton Childers

By Gerald Hynes

President Erskine Hamilton Childers, fourth President of Ireland died on 17 November 1974, just sixteen months in office and the only President of Ireland to die while in office.

His grandfather, Robert Caesar Childers married Anna Barton of Glendalough in County Wicklow in the 1860s thus providing the family with its Irish connections. They had a son, Robert Erskine Childers who was born in 1870, married Mary Alden Osgood from Boston, and their son Erskine Hamilton Childers, hereafter cited as Childers, was born on the 11 December 1905.

How did Childers, born into an English upper class family, educated in England, a member of the Church of England, whose father was executed by the Irish Free State become President of Ireland? Perhaps it is better to ask why!

The answer is very simply, despite the tragic circumstances of his father's death, he always wanted to make his home in Ireland, to work and maybe one day make his contribution to Irish politics. There are many reasons associated with how Childers got elected to the highest office in the land, but this short article will concentrate on his desire to make Ireland his country, his home. Although naturally deeply hurt by the death of his father when he was only sixteen years old, Childers never laid any blame or displayed any resentment towards Ireland or any Irish person during his long political career. It would have been reasonable, indeed only natural, had Childers decided never to return to Ireland. His returning in 1931 started a remarkable career that led to his inauguration as President of Ireland on 25 June 1973, his father's birthday.

His childhood in London was typical of an upper class family of that period. Walks with his nanny in the Chelsea Embankment gardens and the start to his education at a small but private kindergarten school, but the highlight of his year was the visit to Glendalough House in County Wicklow. Here, from the age of seven years, he had the environment to challenge his imagination. Fishing, hill walking, explorations of the woodlands provided him with a very different view of life to his own in London. His mind conjured up all sorts of fabulous mystical beings; Glendalough was his private Disneyland of that time!

Back in school in England, Childers kept up to date on happenings in Ireland by reading newspaper cuttings sent to him from Ireland. While at boarding school he kept a photograph of Eamon de Valera on his locker and next to his father de Valera was his greatest hero.

Childers was greatly influenced by both his parents but by his father in particular. He was proud of his father's work and success in Ireland and by the age of fifteen years he was expressing an interest in Irish politics. During the early 1920s he frequently wrote to his parents in Ireland expressing his desire for peace and his frustration at his being in England while the fight for a Republic goes on in Ireland, but that he would make up for it.

Childers' father was captured in 1922 and he immediately returned to Ireland. Following his father's execution in November 1922 he returned to his studies in England where he sought answers to the suffocating sorrow he felt. Exhausted with loneliness, he wanted to cry his heart out but he couldn't. He turned to his religious beliefs to find the answers and peace he longed for; he sometimes wanted to thank God for giving him this to bear when so young to help him understand the suffering of the world.

This harrowing period in his life did not undermine his determination to somehow make a contribution to politics in Ireland. The August 1923 general election coincided with his school holidays and he returned to Ireland to campaign for Robert Barton. He gave his first public address to a rally in O'Connell Street, Dublin in August 1923, he was seventeen years old. During this election Childers made reference to his father's death and urged the voters to show England that his father and martyrs of Ireland had not died in vain.

He returned to England to complete his education and passed through the Great Gate of Trinity College, Cambridge in October 1924. While at Cambridge he got married, became a father and took a summer job acting as a courier for Americans touring England. The highly enjoyable courier work led Childers to visit his employer in Paris and he returned with two offers of employment. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1928 and returned to Paris to work in the tourist industry.

Childers enjoyed his work in Paris and it gave him the opportunity to develop his administrative abilities and he shared in his firm's success. But all the time he dreamed of being in Ireland and making election speeches, Ireland was the most tremendous thing in his life. The 1929 economic turmoil did not force him back to Ireland but it did contribute to his decision to return in 1931. He was sad leaving Paris but his real life lay in Ireland and all else was a momentary reaction.

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Erskine Hamilton Childers *(continued)*

The important point is that Childers always wanted to return to Ireland. His resignation was accepted by his employer with deep regret and his reference stated that he was leaving of his own accord to engage in work which he had long wanted to do in Ireland.

The historical evidence supports the thesis that his intention was always to return to Ireland and enter politics. During his university studies he wrote to his mother pondering his future. He expressed the view that he wished to follow in his father's footsteps and some day become a TD (elected member of Dáil Éireann).

His former headmaster in England wrote to him in 1931 stating his delight that he was going back to Ireland and fulfil his call to carry on his father's work.

On a visit to Ireland in October 1931 Childers met with de Valera. There was a job for him on his return to Ireland and de Valera wanted him to become a TD; the Fianna Fáil party (founded by de Valera in 1926) needed young blood. He wrote to his wife who was in America in November 1931 expressing the wonderful feeling at going back to Ireland to begin their real life together.

So, why was Childers elected to the highest office in the land? The simple answer is that he never seriously considered any other future other than a life of public service in Ireland; he wanted to be in Ireland. Shortly before his death Childers expressed his own thoughts for the after-life. He stated that when he died he must be able to meet his father who will ask him what he done for Ireland; he wanted to be able to say that he did his very best.

Of course an equally important question is how did it happen that Childers was elected fourth President of Ireland? His being in Ireland did not automatically mean he would fulfil his own aspirations. The how had many factors in its makeup but that's a question for another day!

John Walsh Jersey Shore Chapter News

The John Walsh chapter of the Irish-American cultural Institute at the Jersey shore is happy to announce the beginning of a monthly Irish cultural night. It will be held on the second Monday of every month at 7 PM at the Sea Girt Lighthouse. An excellent speaker on topics of Irish history and culture or a musician or group skilled in Irish traditional music will educate and/or entertaining all of us interested in our Irish culture.

The first presentation will be on November 10 at 7 PM featuring Kevin Wesley, Irish historian and singer. He was recently selected to compete in the singing competition at the Fleadh, in Sligo. His Saturday afternoon Irish radio show from Hofstra University is acclaimed by the Irish music community. He will present Irish history in song.

Noted historians and musicians will be scheduled for the following Monday presentations. Light refreshments within Irish theme will be available. Admission will be \$15. IACI members will be our guests.

New members and sponsors are welcome. Feel free to contact chairman Dr. Peter Halas through his office at 732-974-0228.

We greatly appreciate the Sea Girt Lighthouse board for extending this extraordinary, historic venue to our members and guests.

Central NY Chapter News

The CNY-IACI was delighted to present our second annual Rising Stars concert on September 27th at May Memorial Church. The concert featured music, dance, singing and poetry and was graced by very talented young musicians, singers and dancers who volunteered their time and talents.



Jimmy Drancsak (fiddle) and Jonathan Conway (bodhran) play a combination of rousing Irish and American tunes that had the audience



Shane (mandolin), Deirdre (concertina) and Cian (guitar) McCarthy play "Banish Misfortune" after which Shane and Cian played and sang Pete Seeger's classic "Turn, Turn, Turn".



Violinist/Fiddler Payton Kehoe plays a charming combination of "Farewell to Ireland" and "Porthole in the Kelp".



Olivia Malvasi entertains with O'Carolan's intricate "Concerto in D."



Drumcliffe School of Irish Arts dancers perform a lively reel



Fiddler Joanna Clare and guitarist David Deacon treat us to a fast-moving set of traditional Irish tunes "Paddy



Rebecca Flanagan dances an exciting acapella hard shoe number. (Special thanks to Rebecca, and to Jimmie Drancsak: when we ran into a technical problem with music for her planned dances, she took it in stride and substituted two others - the acapella number and another with Jimmys fiddler.)



Brittany O'Reilly sings a lovely, soaring "The Last Rose of the Summer".

CNY Chapter News *(continued)*



Left to right: Natasha Kacoroski, Olivia Malvasi, Payton Kehoe, Joanna Clare, Jonathan Conway, Dave Deacon, Shane McCarthy, Jimmy Drancsak, Cian McCarthy, and Deirdre McCarthy collaborate on a put-together-during-intermission pair of reels, danced by Brittany O'Reilly and Rebecca Flanagan.

Not pictured but much enjoyed were Joshua McKinnis and Carl Beach, who played beautiful piano nocturnes by Dublin-born composer John Fields. Natasha Kacoroski played the harp and sang a moving, sweet "Raglan Road". Séamus O'Neill's reflective autumn poem "Duilleoga ar an Life" was read in Irish and English by Grace Getman.

Our hostess for the evening was Deirdre McCarthy, a gifted entertainer, singer, dancer and musician who is originally from Limerick and has been an ambassador for Irish culture in Central New York since moving here with her husband, CNY native Jim McCarthy. Deirdre finished off the evening, sending us home to sleep with the Irish lullaby "Éiníní".

Some information about our performers:

Jimmy Drancsak and Jonathan Conway - **Jimmy** is a junior at Skaneateles high school, looking to go into music education in college. He also performs with the Syracuse Youth Orchestra, Auburn Chamber Orchestra, and New York Allstate orchestra. **Jon** is currently studying music performance at OCC. Jimmy and John have been playing together for just under a year in an Irish Dance Ensemble called "Treble Makers", a student-run group with performances in Borodino and Cortland.

Carl Beach - Carl is 14 years old and a piano student of Patricia DeAngelis.

Payton Kehoe - Payton attends Le Moyne and is President of the Le Moyne Gaelic society. In addition to playing the violin, she's a current member of the IACI's Irish language class.

Brittany O'Reilly - Brittany is a recent graduate of Ithaca College, majoring in Music Education as a vocalist, and has won several music competitions for singing Irish music in both English and Gaelic. Brittany has been dancing since the age of 5 and teaches Irish Dance with Drumcliffe Irish Arts, located in Rochester.

Joshua McKinnis - Joshua is 15 years old and a piano student of Patricia DeAngelis. He is particularly fond of John Field compositions.

Olivia Malvasi - Olivia is a junior at CBA. She's a student of Gail Lyons and has been playing the harp for 9 years now. She also plays both violin and harp in the CBA orchestra and Syracuse Youth Orchestra.

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Joanna Clare and Dave Deacon - Joanna played at the Mid-Atlantic Fleadh last spring and qualified there to represent the Craobh Dugan Comhaltas Branch and the USA at the all-Ireland music competitions this past summer, for the third time. In one of the competitions she presented an original Sligo-style reel. She plays classical music with the West Genesee High School Quartet and has a leadership role in the Hochstein Youth Symphony Orchestra in Rochester.

David hails from Philadelphia and is well known in Irish music circles as a fine fiddler, banjo player and guitarist. He got his start studying with the great fiddler Eugene O'Donnell from Derry. We thank him not only for playing for our concert but for hours of time organizing the Syracuse Irish Fest and the wonderful sessions at Kitty Hoynes. He has been instrumental in fostering Joanna's development as an Irish musician.

Grace Getman - Grace Getman is 11th generation Irish. She is proud of her heritage and has taken Irish language courses along with her mother and grandmother. Grace is a freshman at CBA.

Natasha Kacoroski - Natasha is from Seattle Washington and moved to Syracuse to start the ecological engineering master's program at SUNY-ESF this fall. She's been playing folk harp for a year or so, and this summer she's had a few wonderful opportunities to explore Irish music and her Irish roots by traveling to Ireland with her harp and participating in the Irish Arts in the Catskills Festival in Durham in New York.

Shane, Cian , and Deirdre McCarthy - The McCarthy Family has played music professionally all around Central New York. Cian and Shane play multiple instruments and multiple musical styles. Shane is currently in high school, while Cian majored in music and plays professionally around the US.

Rebecca Flanagan - Rebecca Flanagan is a junior at Cicero North Syracuse High School. She has danced for the Johnston School of Irish Dance since the age of 7. Rebecca has qualified to dance at the Irish Dance World Championships for the last four years, traveling to Dublin, Belfast, Boston and London. This summer she performed in her first professional production, Studio 2 Stage, organized by producers and choreographers from Riverdance and Lord of the Dance.



Dr. Christine Kinealy to Speak November 20th at Le Moyne

Noted Famine historian and author Dr. Christine Kinealy will speak at Le Moyne on Thursday evening November 20th at 7 PM on "Women and the Great Hunger: Invisible Victims and Heroines". We are honored to be able to bring Dr. Kinealy to Syracuse. Her talk is co-sponsored by the CNY Chapter of the IACI and Le Moyne College.