



The Cairde Connection

"Keeping the Irish Arts Alive!"

Irish Cultural Center at
Elms College

Volume 12 & Issue 3

January 2012

Films take us on a journey through Ireland

Travel with us as we journey through Ireland from County Meath, to County Dublin, to County Cavan to County Galway. And all of this without boarding an airplane or riding a coach. It will happen all through Irish films which remind us of the "ties that bind."

Each of these films shows the Irish in the above listed counties and the characters portrayed all in unique situations. Our free Irish film series will be held on three consecutive Wednesdays and a Thursday beginning on January 25, 2012. The films are:

January 25 "The Secret of Kells" is set in County Meath. (2009) This animated feature tells the story of the illuminated Gospel book in Latin. Magic, fantasy and Celtic mythology come together in a riot of color and detail that dazzle the eyes in this sweeping story about the power of imagination and faith to carry humanity through dark times. It features the

voices of Brendan Gleeson, Mick Lally, Evan McGuire and Christen Mooney. Elms College Professor Jason Murphy will host and introduce the film.

February 1 "Rat" is set in County Dublin (2000) with Pete Postlethwaite, Imelda Staunton, Frank Kelly, David Wilmot, Kerry Condon, and Andrew Lovern. The everyday life of a typical Dublin family, including the relationships with the neighbors and local priest, is portrayed. The only thing different about this family is that the father has turned into a rat. The family takes it quite well, though they do wonder about the financial implications of the father not working. But everyone, even the local barman, recognizes him in his new species.

February 8 "Playboys" was filmed in County Cavan. (1992) with Robin Wright, Albert Finney, Aidan Quinn. A young woman Tara Maguire scan-

dalizes her provincial Irish village in the 1950s by having a baby out of wedlock, and refusing to name the father. She has a rare beauty and every man in town desires her, especially Sergeant Hegarty. The arrival of a dramatic troupe stirs things up even more, especially when she falls in love with one of the "Playboys," Tom Casey.

February 16 "Cré na Cille" (Graveyard Clay) is set in County Galway. (2007) Irish language with English subtitles. With candid wit and black humor, the film tells the intersecting stories of the occupants of a community of corpses in an Irish cemetery. The buried souls bring their gossip, rivalries and vendettas to life in this surreal and sarcastic take on rural Ireland. It is based on Máirtín Ó Cadhain's novel, widely considered one of the greatest Irish novels of the twentieth century. Fulbright teacher Padraic Deiseach will host and introduce the film.

St. Brigid's celebration with cross making scheduled for January 31, the eve of the feast

For the second year in a row we will offer a celebration of St Brigid on the eve of her feast day, Tuesday January 31, 2012. Fulbright teacher Padraic Deiseach will host the event and give instructions for the making of the cross.

Julia Campbell, who teaches the children arts and crafts at our Celtic Adventures for Kids in July, will assist him. The good news is that we will provide reeds for the crosses. Those of you came last year remember that we used

straw which proved too dry to create a satisfactory cross.

Those who attended, though leaving with no cross to place over the door for protection, nevertheless were pleased with the event. They certainly had fun practicing using strips of paper. We created a good memory.

We encourage our members to put the date on your calendar and plan to join us for the celebration in honor of the great female Irish saint.



Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to Sean Patrick Crane on the death of his mother, Kathleen Tobin Crane; and to Sister Judith Kappenman on the death of her brother, Thomas Kappenman.

The Irish Cultural Center strives to “keep the Irish arts alive.”

The Irish Cultural Center...

- Serves as a public forum for events, including lectures, musical presentations, films and exhibits
- Promotes ties between the Center and educational organizations in Ireland, especially with the Blasket Cultural Center
- Serves as an academic link with Irish American social organizations in Western New England.

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Children and language combine to celebrate “the ties that bind”

For the 13th year in a row we celebrated Christmas with an Irish Touch on December 3, 2011. The Dan Kane young singers' voices rang with familiar songs and hymns through Veritas Auditorium, delighting the crowd of over 300. And the one who delighted the audience the most was the young child who gave a rendition of “Christmas in Killarney.”

The liturgy followed with an emphasis on the Irish language so important to the Irish Cultural Center with readings and parts of the mass read by our Irish language enthusiasts. Father Mark Stelzer reminded the attendees of the one whom we anticipate in this time of Advent.



Above, one of the young singers charms the audience; below, Elms student, Kayla Peloquin (2011 Springfield St. Patrick's Parade Colleen) with two of her court join the audience.

Actors bring Synge alive in dramatic recital

Several days after the winter storm of October 29, the small but rapt audience members were transported to the Aran Islands with a brilliant performance by Tegolin Knowland and Sean Coyne of Ireland.

The listeners heard the words of the great playwright J. M. Synge as



narrated by one or the other of the actors, or heard two islanders sharing stories of loneliness or complaints of island life.

Left: Tegolin Knowland and Sean Coyne; above, the actors are joined by the adaptor and director, Eamon Grennan.



The programs we offer remind us of “the ties that bind”

Our ancestors, ourselves. We’ve often heard that phrase. We inherit from our ancestors much more than a physical likeness and/or personal characteristics. How many times have you heard someone say, “You look like your grandfather?” or “That would be something your grandmother would do.”

We inherit our ancestors’ culture, beliefs, and value system. The Irish Cultural Center offers programs and events year round that enable each of us to tap into “the ties that bind.”

Reviewing the membership renewal papers reminds us of the theme of the year.

Remitting dues or sending in a donation is a strong affirmation of the Center and its work of offering Irish programs and events.

We share a common goal to remember who we are and where we, or our ancestors came from. The following were listed on renewal forms: Kerry, Cork, Mayo, Waterford, Armagh, Antrim, Galway, Cavan, Meath, Louth, Tipperary,

Clare, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, Dublin, Sligo, Laois, Monaghan, Roscommon. With that list we take a virtual tour of many of the counties. Have we included yours?

The list of family names is even longer—too long to list here, but proudly listed on many forms.

People remember stories of their ancestors; we have chronicled some of those in past issues of the newsletter, and encourage our members to send in short pieces for future issues.

In this issue we have one such tribute written by a former participant in our Celtic Adventures for Kids program. Cassidy is now a senior in high school.

We look forward to the year 2012 and the programs of the year. The first, of course, is the language study that begins January 23 with three levels offered both on a for credit or non-credit basis. Padraic Deiseach and Tom Moriarty will teach the classes.

The annual film series that begins on

January 25 is outlined on page 1. On January 31, we will celebrate for the second year in a row, the feast of St. Brigid with instruction on making your own St. Brigid’s cross.

Add to your calendar March 11, the date of the Ceili, again to be hosted at the Sons of Erin, Westfield with music by Leo Doherty and friends and dance directions by Mary Ellen O’Brien and Kelly O’Sullivan. Last year we had a full house with families of all ages enjoying the music and fun.

Sometime in March Maurice Fitzpatrick hopes to return with a presentation on John Hume. Watch for the date. Some of you may remember that in 2010 we hosted Maurice for his presentation on “The Boys of St. Columb’s.”

The language committee is working to find a date in April or May for La Na Gaeilge, the annual day-long workshop. On May 3 Brenda ni Shiileabhain will present a documentary on the “Men of Ventry.”

Watch for notice of additional programs added to the calendar.

Why I am proud of my great-grandfather By Cassidy Cunningham

I am proud to be the great-granddaughter of Eddie Cunningham, a World War I veteran and a man who dedicated his life to mentoring youths at various parks and recreation sites in Springfield, Massachusetts. As director and playground mentor at Emily Bill Playground, Eddie spent seven years mentoring children so successfully that “Eddie Cunningham Day” was held in his honor, and according to a local newspaper, Eddie brought the true playground spirit to thousands of boys and girls who came under his supervision.

On Eddie’s day, *The Springfield Union*

said that more than 5,000 North End youngsters and parents gathered for a parade, led by the Sons of Veterans drum corps, followed by field sports and capped off with a gift presented to Eddie by the girls and boys he mentored.

After his father, John Cunningham retired, Eddie left Emily Bill Playground to take over his father’s former role as caretaker of Van Horn Park. At Van Horn, Eddie quickly became a “playground mentor” and helped to develop many talented amateur and semi-professional sports teams. These sports teams included the Shamrocks, Arbor AA, Sacred

Heart, Russian-American, Rosary AA, Irish-Americans, Acorns, East Springfield AA and Our Lady of Hope. Eddie retired in 1945 due to a physical disability caused by multiple sclerosis. He was honored for his contributions at the “Appreciation Night’ gala in 1951.

During his thirteen years at the Emily Bill and Van Horn Parks. Eddie changed the lives of many youths, mentoring and steering them on a good path. Years later, both Eddie and his father were honored for their work with Springfield’s children and parks when the city named a street off Armory Street as Cunningham Street.

**Irish Cultural Center
at Elms College
291 Springfield Street
Chicopee, MA 01013-2839**

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**Phone: 413-265-2537
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**“Keeping the Irish
Arts Alive!”**

ICC Calendar of events

Ongoing: Language Classes offered each semester; call the Registrar at 413-265-2314 or Continuing Ed Office at 413-265-2490.

Genealogy volunteer
Ed Callahan 413-527-5091 or email eastgram@aol.com

Film Series: Alumnae Library Theater

Jan 25 7 p.m. “The Secret of Kells”

Feb 1 7 p.m. “Rat”

Feb 8 7 p.m. “Playboys”

February 16 7 p.m. “Cré na Cille” (Graveyard Clay)

(note: shown on Thursday)

January 31, 7 pm Irish Center
St. Brigids Day cross making

March 11 Ceili at Sons of Erin

March 18
Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade

March TBA presentation by Maurice Fitzpatrick on John Hume

April or May TBA
La Na Gaeilge—day-long Irish workshop

May 3 presentation “Men of Ventry” with Brenda Ni Shúilleabháin

July 23-27
Celtic Adventures for Kids

August 25-September 3
Journey of the Soul - Trip to Ireland

September 14-30 exhibit at the Big E, WS with Dingle merchants

For information on our partner Irish organizations, check out the programs on these web sites.

AOH
www.AOH-Holyoke.com

John Boyle O’Reilly Club
www.jbo-club.com

Sons of Erin
www.sonsoferin.com

St. Patrick’s Parade Committee
www.holyokestpatricksparade.com

