

The year in review



Irish Language

Introduction to Irish throughout each semester
Irish Study Group throughout each semester
Independent Irish language group—year round
La Gaelige (day-long workshop)

Just for children

Celtic Adventures for Kids
Middle School essay contest

Elms College Students

Sligo Seven set off for study in Ireland

Lectures and book reading

Tom Moriarty
Damien Murray
Peggy O'Brien
Ann O'Farrell



Travel

Journey of the Soul to Ireland
Worcester play—Stones in his Pockets
Stockbridge play—Faith Healer
Pittsfield—genealogy research



Special events

Christmas with an Irish Touch
March Tea Party
Wine Tasting with an Irish Accent
Holyoke's St. Patrick's Parade



Big E

Exhibit and information
Music sessions
Entertainment by the children from the Camp

Art exhibit

Ireland's Literary Revival
R. Todd Felton



Films

Fall series of 3
Winter series of 4

Ongoing

Genealogy assistance
Monthly Music session
Resources—books, tapes, etc. available by calling or visiting the Center

Bus trips offer entertainment and pursuit of roots

During the last several months two bus trips traveled to opposite ends of the turnpike to attend high quality plays. Twenty-eight participants enjoyed a dinner theater experience in Worcester on May 3 when they saw the Pilgrim Souls Production of *Stones in His Pockets*. The play, written by Marie Jones and directed by Matthew J. Carr, tells the story of two west Kerry men trying to earn an “easy” living as extras for a foreign produced film, some of the only work available. The real story is about the lives of the members of the community impacted by the “movie people.” The play includes much comedy and humor, but also much sadness.

Following the performance the group enjoyed a buffet presented by the Hibernian Center, thus enjoying the full dinner theater experience.

On June 14 a smaller, but no less appreciative group traveled west to Stockbridge to attend the Berkshire Theater Festival play *The Faith Healer* by Brian Friel. We boarded the Elms College athletic department bus and headed to the Berkshires on a lovely Sunday. We began our visit in Stockbridge with a quick stop at the Divine Mercy Shrine and then went to the theatre. Eric Hill (formerly of Stage West) directed this play about a man losing faith in himself. We met Frank, the Faith Healer, his faithful

wife Grace and his manager Teddy and heard them all question themselves and Frank’s work. It is a very powerful production with several plot twists.

A great day for all.

Plan to join us for another dinner theater experience in Worcester November 15 for *Big Maggie* by John B. Keane.

On a Saturday in May another group traveled to Pittsfield to use the resources of the National Archives in pursuit of their family roots. With several volunteers available to help anyone who required help, some came home satisfied that they had begun the study of their ancestors.

The Irish Cultural Center Celebration of its 10th Anniversary 1999-2009

Join us in the celebration

Save the date!



Friday, October 9:

Vincent Crotty art exhibit opening
Evening Music Session

Saturday, October 10:

Workshops and films during the day
Evening Makem and Spain Brothers concert

Sunday, October 11:

Liturgy in Our Lady’s Chapel
Brunch with speaker, Peter Quinn
(novelist, essayist, Chair of the Irish Echo)



John Johnson's gift promotes the language by Gearoid MacOisdealbhaigh

IRISH LANGUAGE AWARD APPLICATION

Read the article below before completing the form.

Complete and mail to the Irish Cultural Center, 291 Springfield Street, Chicopee, MA 01013

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Answer the following questions; use additional paper, if necessary.

Circle the organizations of which you are a member: ICC, Sons of Erin, John Boyle O'Reilly, AOH

Why would you like to study the Irish language?

John Johnson was a man devoted to the Irish Language. In addition, he wanted to give others the same opportunity to enjoy and learn about the distinctiveness of this Gaelic language. When he died two years ago, his family suggested that gifts be given for language study. Both the Center and the Sons of Erin received donations in his memory; subsequently the Sons sent the funds to the Center for this purpose. We will award a scholarship for the Irish language courses offered through the Elms College and the

Center each semester.

In order to be considered for the award, we ask that the applicant complete a written application explaining why the course would be valuable. Completed applications must be received by August 24, 2009 to qualify for the first semester courses. Complete the above form and send to the Center.

The selection and granting of the award(s) will be made in September 2009 for the fall semester that begins in mid September 2009. Interest

in the language has grown over the years. Each semester we offer an introductory class and an intermediate group. Throughout the years since the Center started in 1999, Irish language study has been a steady component in our programming. The ordinary cost of the class is \$150 or \$100 for members of the Center. If you have always wanted to know more about the language of your ancestors, this is a great opportunity to learn in a fun and relaxed setting.

La Gaelige brings together language enthusiasts

On a beautiful June Saturday fifty people gathered at the Elms College either to be introduced to the Irish language or to hone their language skills. They ranged in age from high school students to senior citizens. Each of the four levels was taught by an expert teacher, either from the Irish program in New York or Boston.

After registering and enjoying a cup of coffee or tea, and scones, they

moved to the first of two language sessions, where they chose their level of competence.

In between the two language classes of the day, the participants had an opportunity to take part in two of three workshops: drama, dancing and Irish Internet sources, led by ICC members.

After a buffet luncheon of salad and sandwiches, the group reported to the Alumnae Library Theater to

view the documentary Bibeanna, where Kerry women told in Irish of life when they were young: we viewed the section on superstitions. At the end of the day, all gathered in the Center for a session. Many of those attending sang an Irish song or led the group in a sing-along. To conclude the program Kathleen Gilhooly led the session and accompanied those assembled in singing the Irish National Anthem.

Our last days offer new experiences in Ireland by Tim Allen

The trip to Killarney was short and pleasant. We saw a little of Killarney National Park and Torc Falls. The beauty of Killarney would be great to see, but we were still on a Dingle high.

In Dingle the whole trip had come together. People had time to see the beauty, time to experience incredible rainfall followed by a spectacular day of sunshine and clear skies, and time to connect. The free day allowed everyone to do what they want and there were all kinds of stories from the day. From connecting Irish friends to American friends to field trips that stirred the soul, we were connected tighter than we had been. Some of us took a jaunting car ride through the National Park, and a boat trip from Ross Castle around the island of Innisfallen where we could see the ruins of an 11th century monastery.

Our first night in Killarney saw some of us at the nearby session while others wandered the town. Killarney at night, like Dingle, offers many options.

On Friday we took a long day trip to Cobh to see the museum which honors the port where so many ships left for America. There we saw the statue of Annie Moore and her young brothers. The museum is recommended if you'd like to understand a little more about the emigration to America.

Then we headed for Blarney Castle where we hoped to acquire the gift of eloquence. This stop has a reputation of being too touristy and overdone, but I have found most people really love it. Climbing up through Blarney Castle to kiss the Blarney Stone is interesting and challenging. The walk through the lovely gardens and grounds is relaxing. You can find



Pictured above: The statue of Annie Moore and her brothers. This young woman had the distinction of being the first person processed at the newly opened Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Below: Ross Castle

good food in the town and overall, it's a fun stop. Our trip back to Killarney was highlighted by a stop at Moll's Gap and a section of the Ring of Kerry.

That night our dinner was highlighted by the awarding of the Paper Plate Awards. Each traveler had been awarded a prize for something special about them. It was a spirited awards session sparked by Jenni, Punky, and Beth Ann. It was followed by a bountiful team dinner.

The following day we left Killarney for the Limerick area and stayed near Bunratty Castle, where we attended the Medieval Banquet. Later we visited and reminisced in the bar, thinking about such good times together, not just on this trip but over the past 8 years.

There was now a little time for reflection. Our trip to Ireland had solidified our friendships. As we

took our various flights back to America on Sunday, it was clear that our 10 days would be etched in our hearts forever.

The athletic careers of our daughters had brought us together, but we would stay together because of much more. This group of people had decided they would travel again together and the next stops were under discussion. Israel? Malawi? Italy?

I felt a sense of relief that the trip had really been a success. I think everyone's expectations had been met or exceeded. As the organizer, it is a great feeling when people are happy they went.

It really didn't matter what the next stop would be. Our friends would be with us.

Afterword.

Since the trip to Ireland, two members of the lacrosse team have gotten married. My daughter Mary Kate's wedding was held on Cape Cod in October 2008 and just last week Allison's wedding was held in Middlebury, Vermont. At each of these festive occasions, the discussion of the next trip has come up. I have been nominated as trip leader so planning will begin soon. In the lead is Malawi (probably a smaller trip), followed by Italy. Something could happen in 2010. Something will happen sometime. The Ireland trip was just a beginning.

