
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

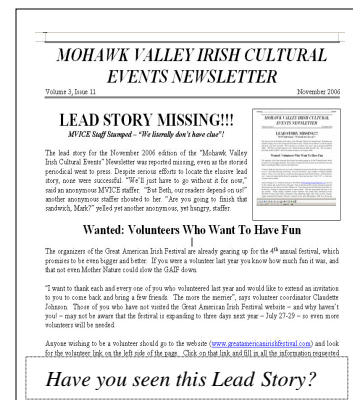
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LEAD STORY MISSING!!!

MVICE Staff Stumped – “We literally don’t have clue”!

The lead story for the November 2006 edition of the “Mohawk Valley Irish Cultural Events” Newsletter was reported missing, even as the storied periodical went to press. Despite serious efforts to locate the elusive lead story, none were successful. “We’ll just have to go without it for now,” said an anonymous MVICE staffer. “But Beth, our readers depend on us!” another anonymous staffer shouted to her. “Are you going to finish that sandwich, Mark?” yelled yet another anonymous, and hungry, staffer.



Wanted: Volunteers Who Want To Have Fun

The organizers of the Great American Irish Festival are already gearing up for the 4th annual festival, which promises to be even bigger and better. If you were a volunteer last year you know how much fun it was, and that not even Mother Nature could slow the GAIF down.

“I want to thank each and every one of you who volunteered last year and would like to extend an invitation to you to come back and bring a few friends. The more the merrier,” says volunteer coordinator Claudette Johnson. Those of you who have not visited the Great American Irish Festival website – and why haven’t you! – may not be aware that the festival is expanding to three days next year – July 27-29 – so even more volunteers will be needed.

Anyone wishing to be a volunteer should go to the website (www.greatamericanirishfestival.com) and look for the volunteer link on the left side of the page. Click on that link and fill in all the information requested and any times and jobs that you would be willing to do. If you have any special skills please point them out; the festival is looking for experienced people in various venues. There are opportunities and times to suit any schedule. Venues needing volunteers include Children's Area, Retail Sales, Information Booth, Beer/Wine Pouring, Ticket Takers, Hospitality, Setup, Marketing, Stages, Take down, Security, Cleanup, Cashier (experienced), Volunteer Check-In, Volunteer Booth, Artist Merchandise, GAIF Food Booth and EMS.

All volunteers are asked to put in 6-8 hours over the course of the whole festival. For your time and effort you will get a volunteer staff shirt (only available to volunteers) and free access to the rest of the festival when you are not volunteering.

“Come and be part of the fastest-growing and most fun Irish Festival in the Northeast and bring your friends,” invites Claudette. “It is one big Irish celebration with lots of ‘craic.’”



Reaching Out to Irish Musicians, Singers and Lovers of the Music

“If you love playing and/or singing traditional Irish music or just enjoy listening, we’d love to have you join us,” says Harvey Nusbaum, coordinator of the Syracuse Irish Session. “We get together twice a month and we’ll always have an empty chair for you.”

The Syracuse Irish Session is an informal gathering of people who come together to play traditional Irish music. At any given Session you will find musicians who play at a beginning level, as well as professional caliber musicians. The instruments they play regularly include the fiddle, guitar, mandolin, banjo, whistle, flute, piano, concertina, and accordion, with the occasional harp or hammered dulcimer thrown in for good measure. The mix of instruments is often enhanced by a singer, who routinely gets a round of applause not only from those who come to listen to the Session, but also from the other musicians. “The music,” says Harvey, “is enthusiastic and lively, and really very good.”

One of the wonderful aspects of Irish culture is the tradition of getting together to enjoy music. As a result, you can go to most any pub in Ireland, and to some pubs in every city in the US, and find a session. “We’ve had people look us up on the internet and drop by when they come to town. Last weekend a fellow from New Hampshire stopped by the Bally Bay for a couple hours and played the flute with us. It was great! There are so many traditional songs, that some of the Session musicians are bound to know some of the same songs that you do,” said Harvey.

If you have any questions, you can send Harvey an email at Harv@twcny.rr.com. The session also has a website at <http://web.mac.com/houseofchai/iWeb/SyracuseIrishSession/Home.html>. There you'll find directions to where we play. "We're a welcoming bunch and whether you come to listen or play we'd really enjoy it if you'd drop by."

The Sessions run from 4-7 PM, at the HalfPenny Pub in Armory Square on the 1st Sunday of the month, and at Johnston's Bally Bay Pub, on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Close, but no cigar

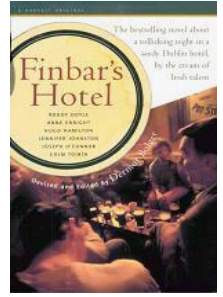
For true fans of Celtic entertainment, traveling a few miles presents no obstacle. This month offers a healthy helping of Irish music and dance... even if it means going out of town to get it.

The amazing family band **Leahy** will be making a couple of appearances within traveling distance in early November, including dates at University of Buffalo's Center for the Arts (Nov 3rd), Staller Center for the Arts in Stony Brook, NY (Nov 5th) and at the Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira (Nov 8th). *The Los Angeles Times* raves – "(Leahy's) approach seems so gloriously free of the commercial pollution of so much American pop that it felt like a tonic for the Spirit." If you've never seen these outstanding musicians, it is a definite must... On Friday, November 3rd, **Jim Malcolm**, one of Scotland's finest folk singers and songwriters and former lead singer with the world-renowned Old Blind Dogs, comes to the Night Eagle Café (Oxford NY). Tickets for the 8:00 PM show are \$15... Another family band, **Searson**, will be performing at the [Capital District Celtic Cultural Association's Ceilidh](#) (or "Gaelic social dance"), on Saturday, November 4 at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$15, with no charge for children 10 and younger... The Gothic metal band **Celtic Frost** brings its "Monotheist" Tour to Troy's [Revolution Hall](#), on Saturday, November 4th at 8 p.m... The Parting Glass (Saratoga Springs) welcomes in **Greenwich Meantime** (Saturday, November 4, 9:30 p.m., \$8), **Hair of the Dog** (Nov 11th and 24th, 8 PM, \$12) and **The Wolftones** (Nov 18, 8 PM, \$20)... Finally, On November 30th, the fabulous **Cherish the Ladies** are coming home after a lengthy tour across the pond, and one of their first shows upon their return will be at the Morris Central School Auditorium, in Morris, NY.

“Finbar’s Hotel”

Book Review by Mark Sisti

Let me start out by saying I distrust gimmicks. So, having read of the concept of *Finbar’s Hotel*, I approached it with some trepidation. The idea behind the book (it calls itself a novel, but it is actually a collection of loosely interwoven short stories) was to gather seven of the top Irish writers and have each contribute a chapter dealing with the various occupants of Finbar’s Hotel, once one of the top hotels in Dublin, but now slated to be torn down and replaced by a modern structure by the property’s new owner. The catch here is that the authors – Joseph O’Connor, Anne Enright, Colm Toibin, Roddy Doyle, Jennifer Johnston, Hugo Hamilton and Dermot Bolger chose not to reveal which installment should be attributed to which author, thus leaving a puzzle to be solved for readers familiar with the styles of the various authors, if they’re so inclined (I wasn’t). Fortunately, the quality of the writing is so consistent that individual authorship becomes irrelevant. Despite vast leaps in tone, from tragedy to farce, from dark humor to depression, the book viewed as a whole somehow takes on a cohesive quality that makes a determination as to which author contributed which story unimportant.



The former landmark hotel itself is a place with both character and history, but it has seen better days and now plays host to individuals who are similarly down on their luck. Each author chooses (or is assigned) a room and tells the story of the occupant or occupants of that room. In room 101 (“Benny Does Dublin”) we meet Ben Winters, a timid middle-aged gentleman who’s never been in a hotel and wants to experience just one wild night away from the dull routine of his suburban middle class life, but finds that his taste of the wild life is not quite the adventure he expected. Across the hall from Ben in Room 102 (“White Lies”), sisters Rose and Ivy are in the middle of a tense reunion, as homebody Ivy tries to persuade her London-based sibling to come back to Galway to see their mother, whom she not seen since leaving home at age 17.

Room 103 (“No Pets Please”) gives us the amusing tale of Ken, who carries with him a ghetto-blaster and a plot to get his revenge on the woman who jilted him, a plot which includes kidnapping her beloved pet cat.

The tales in Room 104 (“The Night Manager”) and 105 (“The Test”) are the best in the anthology. Night manager Johnny Farrell, whose grandfather was one of the founders of Finbar’s, has a final encounter in Room 104 with the last descendant of the original Finbar, Alfie FitzSimons, who used to harass Johnny when they were children but now finds a dramatic change in their relationship. Maureen Connolly is dying of cancer and has recently learned that she probably has no more than another year to live. She comes to Finbar’s to hide from her fate but instead arrives at a level of acceptance, as her clandestine meeting in Room 105 with an American tour guide gives her the courage to tell her husband and children her sad secret.

In Room 106 (“An Old Flame”) May Brannock returns to the place where her firefighter father once helped to save from the flames and, while in Dublin to settle her father’s estate, tries to rekindle the connection with her childhood friend Kevin. And, last, but certainly not least, Room 107 (“Portrait of a Lady”) presents a fascinating picture of a paranoid art thief who, while waiting for the men who have come to Dublin to purchase his latest loot, stalks the hotel corridors and other rooms, imagining at every turn that he has been followed.

Amusing, touching and sad in turn, *Finbar’s Hotel* works well as a collection of unrelated short stories, but the novel also does an admirable job of telling the story of Finbar’s Hotel, its staff and its last guests. Roddy Doyle is probably the best known of the included authors among American readers, having written *The Commitments* and a number of other fine novels -- including two absolutely brilliant must-reads, *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* and *The Woman Who Walked Into Walls* -- but this collection makes it clear that all these authors are worth visiting. For those unfamiliar with these writers (and with contemporary Irish literature in general) *Finbar’s Hotel* serves as a wonderful introduction.

“Must Be Christmas...”

Yes, yes, we know that this is the November issue of our newsletter, and we're way out of line talking about Christmas now. Our only excuse is that we were busy when Walmart and the rest of the industry proclaimed the start of the Christmas shopping season last July by setting up the shimmying Santa next to the Kingsford charcoal briquettes and citronella candles. Apologies aside, here are just a few of the things coming up in December, in case you want to schedule your office parties around them:

On Friday, **December 1st**, you'll want to start the season out (sorry, Walmart; “continue the season”) with **“A Holiday Evening With The Celtic Tenors.”** If you think that all tenors from Ireland are alike, then think again. In 2002, thanks to the overwhelming success of the acclaimed and very traditional Irish Tenors, the Irish tenor genre here in the US quickly became synonymous with an audience brimming over with very conservative and usually older Irish music lovers. **The Celtic Tenors** were beginning their own world tour, pioneering a whole new style of “cool” never before seen on the classical stage. Of all the new tenor groups to emerge since Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras, nowhere else in the world have three tenors flawlessly maintained the great tenor tradition, yet at the same time managed to create a totally new and unique audience experience. Don't miss the excitement of **The Celtic Tenors** experience! See why audiences worldwide are raving about these three dynamic young talents. Inspiring, captivating, try as one might, mere words can't begin to capture the phenomena which truly is **The Celtic Tenors**. Tickets for the 7:30 PM show are \$29/25/18 (\$26.10/\$22.50/\$16.20 Members). For tickets, call 607-734-8191 or 800-724-0159; or [Order Now](#).

Reprising their very successful concert last year, the Earlville Opera House presents **“Irish Christmas in America,”** with **Teada** -- the hottest traditional group on the concert circuit -- and special guest **Cathie Ryan**, former vocalist for Cherish the Ladies and a unique talent in her own right. This very special offsite concert will be held at 4:00 PM on Sunday, December 10th and at 7:00 PM on Sunday, December 10th at the **Cazenovia College Theater**. Tickets range from \$15-\$22. Last year's concert sold out, so you might want to consider ordering early.

On Tuesday **December 12th**, Irish 2000 is proud to also sponsor **“Irish Christmas in America,”** with **Teada**, **Cathie Ryan** and champion dancers of the Farrell school of Irish Dance performing at the Hart Theater at the Empire State Plaza in Downtown Albany. Proceeds from the concert will go to benefit the work of the Irish-American Heritage Museum. Tickets for this fabulous show are \$18 before Thanksgiving and \$20 afterward. To order tickets please call the museum at 518-432-6598.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ☘ **Irish Breakfast** On the first Sunday of every month from 8:00 to noon, Charley Thomas serves up a hearty breakfast of two eggs, Irish bacon, Irish Sausage, Black and White Pudding, two kinds of Irish Soda bread, a Broiled Tomato, toast, and coffee or tea, all for the low price of \$5.95. The next one is on **November 5th**. The Riverside Diner is located at 9663 Route 49 in Marcy.
- ☘ On **Nov. 11**, the Butler-Sheehan Academy of Traditional Irish Dance will give a performance and demonstration at the annual **Festival of Trees**; an annual fundraiser for Faxton-St.Lukes Healthcare, held at Hart's Hill Inn, in Whitesboro. Their performance runs from 3 to 4 PM, and the entry fee is \$6.
- ☘ On Friday, November 24th, Pat McCann of Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub is putting on his annual Thanksgiving party, celebrating another great year in business, as well as the one year anniversary of his wildly popular Irish Happy Hour. Come enjoy the food, drink, prizes, raffles, dancers and music from the Blarney Rebel Band.

✿ On Saturday, **Dec 2**, one of New York City's most compelling live acts, **Black 47**, brings its powerful and passionate Celtic rock to Munson-Williams-Proctor-Institute. Songs penned by frontman Larry Kirwan, a noted Irish author, playwright, and songwriter, cover topics from the Northern Ireland conflict to civil rights and urban unrest in contemporary New York. Tickets for the 8:00 PM show start at \$25.

✿ Looking even further ahead, we find **Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul** also at Munson Williams (Jan 11th), Authors **Frank McCourt** (*Angela's Ashes*), and his brother, actor and author **Malachy McCourt** (*A Monk Swimming*) as "A Couple of Blagards" at Munson Williams (Mar 23-25), the **Irish Rovers** at the Turning Stone (March 17th)... and, oh yeah, an outfit calling themselves **The Chieftains** will be coming to Proctor Theater in Schenectady, on March 14th. Finally, the "...highly acclaimed celebration of Irish music, song and dance" known as "**Riverdance**" comes to the Crouse-Hinds Theater Mulroy Civic Center at Oncenter, from March 20-22, 2007. Stay tuned for more details on these and other events.

Celtic Club Calendar Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for November:

Nov 3	Leahy	Center for the Arts	Univ of Buffalo	8:00 PM	\$22, \$15
Nov 3	Jack McGuire	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 3	Jim Malcolm	Night Eagle Café	Oxford NY	8:00 PM	\$15
Nov 4	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 4	Cielidh with Searson	Celtic Hall	East Greenbush	6:00 PM	\$15 (kids free)
Nov 4	Celtic Frost	Revolution Hall	Troy, NY	8:30 PM	\$20 (\$18 Adv)
Nov 4	Greenwich Meantime	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9:30 PM	\$8
Nov 4	Hair of the Dog	LeMoyne Manor	Liverpool, NY	7:30 PM	\$24
Nov 5	Syracuse Irish Session	HalfPenny Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 5	Leahy	Staller Center for the Arts	Stoneybrook	7:00 PM	\$32
Nov 8	Leahy	Clemens Center	Elmira	7:30 PM	\$18-\$35
Nov 10	Searson	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 10	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Nov 11	Butler-Sheehan Dancers	"Festival of Trees"	Hart's Hill Inn, Whitesboro	3:00 – 4:00	\$6
Nov 11	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8:00 PM	\$12
Nov 11	The Flyin' Column	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 17	Aoife Clancy	Mother's Wine Emporium	RPI, Troy, NY	8:00 PM	TBD
Nov 17	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Nov 17	Old Friends	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 18	Wild Geese	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Nov 18	Wolftones	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8:00 PM	\$20
Nov 19	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 24	Thanksgiving Party w/Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Nov 24	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8:00 PM	\$12
Nov 24-25	Neil Emberg	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free

That wraps it up for this month. In the coming months, look for features on Irish history, recommended reading and listening lists, recipes, links to some useful/interesting web sites, and much more; including details on those great upcoming shows. Of course, this is your newsletter too... so if you have anything you want to add, feel free to contact us at sistia@rl.af.mil, bloftis@adelphia.net or marksisti@adelphia.net. And a Happy Thanksgiving to you all!