
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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Great American Irish Fest Advance Sale Tickets Available Online

Looking for that perfect holiday gift? For a limited time, the Great American Irish Festival is offering the opportunity to purchase full weekend passes to the July 27-29 Festival for only \$20. "Our entertainment committee is promising the best lineup yet," said Festival Chairman Matt Sullivan, "and people can order their tickets now in time for the holiday gift giving. It's the perfect stocking stuffer." As previously announced, the festival has expanded to add a third day this summer, making the full weekend pass even more of a bargain. To order, go to the Great American Irish Festival website (www.greatamericanirishfestival.com) and click on the Click N Print link. People can purchase their tickets online and print them right out at home. The 2007 Great American Irish Festival is scheduled for Friday July 27, Saturday July 28 and Sunday July 29 at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds in Frankfort. The festival will also feature Irish and Celtic merchandise and food booths, Irish football tournament, a Gaelic mass on Sunday, pipers, Irish dance and music demonstrations and workshops. "We know fans of Irish music will want to attend all three days of the festival," said Sullivan, "and what better gift can you give them than the gift of song, dance, culture and fun?" For more information, call Mark Sisti, 315-768-7667.



Here We Go A'Caroling

Okay, ready or not, the Christmas season is upon us; a time for family, a time for reflection, a time for wishes for peace on Earth... and a time for shamelessly butchering time-honored Christmas carols of old, as a way of leading into the great lineup of Irish/Celtic musicians coming our way in December. So without further thoughts of sugarplums, good taste or decorum, we present this month's set list.

"We Three Tenors of Ireland Are..."

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**," appearing at the Clemens Center in Elmira. 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... and then came The Celtic Tenors. 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 (less for Members). For tickets, call 607-734-8191 or 800-724-0159; or [Order Here](#).

“God Rest Ye Larry’s Gentlemen...”

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. If word of mouth is any indication, this show is shaping up to be one of those rare “you shoulda been there” nights. Tickets for the 8:00 PM show start at \$25.

“O Holy Night Eagle Café...”

On **December 2** at 8 PM, the Night Eagle Café welcomes the fabulous Glengarry Bhoys for a night of traditional music, fused with the multicultural sounds of modern and contemporary Celtic music. The Bhoys, featuring Miranda and some guys... okay, not fair... featuring five outstanding musicians, began some six years and five albums ago and have established themselves through a devoted work-ethic of touring and recording as one of the top draws on the Irish festival and club circuit. Tickets for the show are \$20.

“The First... Showing of Irish Christmas in America”

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 \$18-\$22. Tickets may be ordered by calling the Earlville Opera House at **315-691-3550** (with your Visa or Mastercard) or may be picked up at all three Cazenovia Jewelry locations (Cazenovia, Hamilton, and Manlius). Last year’s concert sold out, so you might want to consider ordering early.

“All I want for Christmas is my two... chances to see Irish Christmas in America”

If you don’t see it on the 10th in Cazenovia – or better yet, if you saw it and enjoyed it so much you wished you could catch it again – you won't want to miss "Irish Christmas in America" at The Egg at The Empire State Plaza in Albany on Tuesday **December 12** at 7:30 PM; starring Ireland's hot young lads "Téada," the five-member string ensemble centered in County Sligo recently voted Ireland's "Best Traditional Newcomers," and Cathie Ryan, the voice that led Cherish the Ladies to the world's stages. They'll be joined by Grainne Hambly on Irish Harp, Tommy Martin on Uilleann Pipes and Irish dancers for a great evening of rousing traditional Irish music to celebrate the Holiday Season and benefit the Irish American Heritage Museum. Tickets are a \$20 donation, with an Early Bird special of \$18 by December 1. All seats are reserved only through the Museum by calling the Museum at 432-6598 or by visiting the Museum on the first floor of 991 Broadway (the RCA Building with the RCA dog "Nipper" on top) in Albany. Reserve your tickets now to "Irish Christmas in America" on December 12 at The Egg, the Capital Region's Premier Holiday Concert!!

“The Legend of the Christmas Candle”

Christmas is a season of peace and joy; a season of family celebrations and traditions. In Ireland the tradition of the Christmas candle is lovingly handed down from generation to generation. Placed on the sill of the most conspicuous window in the house is a tall, thick candle. On Christmas Eve the youngest child usually lights it and the candle stands as a beacon of welcome to any travelers who, like Joseph and Mary, may be in need of shelter and warmth.



“Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha” *Book Review by Mark Sisti*

In a previous review, I mentioned in passing two “must-reads” by Roddy Doyle, one of which was his 1993 Booker-prize winning *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*. However, it has since become clear that not everyone had read this “must-read.” Do yourself a favor; rectify that immediately. This is not simply a good book; it is not even enough to call it a great book. It is a miraculous book that reflects, perhaps like no other, the magic, the mystery and the miseries of childhood.

A simple description of what passes for a plot would not do this novel justice since there is, in effect, no real plot, and it is similarly unsatisfying to describe it as a coming-of-age or end-of-innocence story. This is not childhood remembered, or even childhood relived; it is childhood being experienced as it happens. It is the story of 10-year-old Paddy Clarke and his daily existence as he passes through a crucial part of his life. The most important facets of his life – his neighborhood, his friends, his family and his school – are changing and, while he can observe these changes, his understanding of them is skewed by the fact that he is, after all, a child. The result is an amalgam of all of the feelings of a child on the verge of adolescence – confusion, fear, uncertainty, helplessness. But don’t think for one minute that the book is a somber, introspective exercise in self-pity. It is, more often than not, laugh-out-loud funny with a sense of humor that ultimately only adds to the power and poignancy.

Doyle has a love of words and an understanding of the magical power of language that is on a par with Joyce, and his use of the slang of working class Dublin instantly creates a sense of time and place (although it does take some getting used to for American readers.) The author has called himself “a slave to realism,” and this novel is hilariously and painfully realistic, but it is realism through the eyes of a 10-year-old, and the author never loses sight of that. The most compelling aspect of the story is that Doyle always manages to maintain the present sense of the child narrator. It never reads as if it is an adult looking back and imposing his experiences and his knowledge of what happened upon the events as they unfold. As a result the reader sees the gradual unraveling of Paddy’s divergent worlds as he does, peeled away layer by layer.

As Paddy himself says in a scene where he tries to make his brother’s hot water bottle explode, “Sometimes when nothing happened it was really getting ready to happen.” Paddy is able to observe that his world is changing, but he doesn’t fully grasp it, nor is he capable of dealing with it. He notices that new neighborhoods and roads are being built, gradually overtaking the fields where Paddy and his friends once played, and, while the reader can see this erosion of his world as a metaphor for the gradual disintegration of Paddy’s family, Paddy does not, and his observations of the growing distance between his ma and his da are confusing to him.

Like most 10-year-olds, Paddy’s mind is never still, and the non-linear narrative style reflects that. Paddy narrates in a stream of consciousness that jumps from subject to subject unpredictably, but with a childlike logic that (on his level) makes perfect sense. While it can be a little jarring at times, it is always fascinating, as Paddy’s descriptions of his parents arguing can be immediately followed by facts about world capitals, with no sense that the subjects are in any way disconnected.

Doyle also brilliantly incorporates the chants and songs of childhood, reflecting at the same time a child’s fascination with the power of words and the casual cruelty of children, as, after his parents have separated, his friends taunt him with the devastating “Paddy Clarke/ has no da/ Ha ha ha.”

The understated yet powerful ending reflects Paddy’s loss, but there is bravery in 10-year-olds that most adults will never understand, and the ending also carries an unmistakable sense of hope. He can still love both of his parents, they still love him and, while he has become a little harder (as shown in his more formal style of speech), the reader gets the feeling that Paddy is going to be all right. “Ha ha ha” can be a taunt, but it can also just be laughter.

From the Irish Kitchen (*recipes suitable for clipping*) – presented by Beth Loftis

Irish Mist Trifle

This is adapted from a recipe for Irish Whiskey Trifle which appears in *Classic Irish Recipes*, a cookbook by Georgina Campbell.



Ingredients:

Custard:	Sponge cake:	Additional Ingredients:
1/2 cups whole milk 1 vanilla pod or a few drops of pure vanilla extract 3 eggs 2 tablespoons sugar	3 eggs 3/4 cup sugar 1/3 cup hot water 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract 1 1/4 cups cake flour 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder 1/2 teaspoon salt	1 8-oz jar All-Fruit Raspberry Preserves 1/2 cup Irish Mist (pretty sure that's "one-half," and not "one or two") 1 small container of fresh raspberries (or frozen - thawed and drained) 1 16-oz can of apricots in fruit juice, drained 1 cup heavy cream Blanched almonds, fresh raspberries and slices of kiwi fruit to decorate.

Method

Make the sponge on the day before you plan to serve the trifle

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour 8x8x2 square pan

Beat eggs in small mixing bowl on high speed for 5 minutes; pour into larger mixing bowl

Beat in milk, vanilla and lemon extract on low speed

Beat in flour, baking powder and salt on low speed; beat just until batter is smooth. Pour in pan

Bake until top springs back when touched lightly in center, 25 to 30 minutes.

Cool cake and then remove from pan. Place on a cake plate, cover, and leave out overnight.

Make the custard. Pour the milk into a pan and bring it almost to a boil. Remove from the heat. Whisk the eggs and sugar together lightly in a bowl. Gradually whisk the milk into the egg mixture. Rinse out the pan with cold water, return the mixture to it and stir over very low heat until the mixture thickens. Do not allow it to boil. Turn the custard into a bowl and add vanilla extract to taste. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin forming.

Assembling the trifle

Halve the sponge cake horizontally. A friend recommended that I use dental floss, and after I smacked her for making a comment about my personal hygiene, she explained that she merely meant to say that it is easier and faster than a serrated knife. Spread with raspberry jam and make a sandwich. Cut into slices and arrange them on the bottom and around the sides of a large glass dessert bowl. Sprinkle generously with Irish Mist. Cut the apricots into quarters and mix lightly with the raspberries. (Reserve a handful of raspberries for decorating the top). Spread the fruit over the sponge cake to make as even a layer as possible. Pour on the custard, cover and then chill (I don't think they mean "relax." I think it's probably a cooking term). Right before serving, whip the cream, spread it over the custard layer and then decorate with blanched almonds, the reserved fresh raspberries and slices of kiwi fruit. Serves 6 to 8.



RANDOM RAMBLINGS

☘ *“Santa Claus Is Coming To The New Hartford Shopping Center” (I preferred “I Saw Bonnie Kissing Santa Claus,” but got voted down)*

On Friday, December 8th, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, make a point to check out the **1st Annual New Hartford Shopping Center Christmas Stroll!** Santa arrives at 7:15 PM by fire truck, there will be live reindeer, horse-drawn trolley rides, food...and FREE hot chocolate, donuts, balloons and candy canes. Also on tap (ha ha) will be tap dancing, the New Hartford Choir, a (do we dare hope it's “the”?) garbage can band, and wine tasting. You are encouraged to bring a canned good to decorate your own ornament (I'm gonna have to go just to see what that means!).

Meanwhile, Bonnie Ehre and the girls of **Accents of Ireland** (50 New Hartford Shopping Center) are having a drawing for a \$100.00 gift certificate, and Santa's Leprechauns will be in their store giving out treats to all children! As always, they stock Irish music (including new CD's ranging from Celtic Woman Christmas, Moya Brennan, and more), and lots of great Christmas goodies. Be sure to make it one of your regular Christmas shopping stops. While you're there, you can also sign up for quality giveaways at many stores in the shopping center. For holiday hours and other details, call 733-4940, or email them at IriShoppe@AccentsIreland.com. Finally, the “Girls from Accents” want to wish you all **Nollaig Shona Duit**.

☘ **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 **December 3rd**. The Riverside Diner is located at 9663 Route 49 in Marcy.

☘ Piggy Pat's Head Hog Pat McCann is starting up a newsletter of his own, and has asked our readers to contact him if anyone is interested in receiving them. In his own words (and really, who could make this up?): “If anyone wants to be on our e-mail list for newsletters, specials, prizes and surprises (the surprise is that there are no prizes), visit www.piggypats.com, and go to “contact us” and mail their desire to hear from me. I expect the response to be overwhelming.” Welcome to the mad world of e-media, Patrick!

☘ Sue and Ed Miller invite you all to the Plaide Palette's “**Christmas Open House,**” from 10 AM to 5 PM, on 1-3 Dec. Sue says: “On Saturday, Swedish Hill Winery will have wine tasting throughout the day. They will be featuring their Christmas wines. On Sunday, Bear Pond Winery will be here from 1-3 for tastings and sales of their wines. As always, lots of goodies, beverages and samples all three days.” And as always, this is a great opportunity – and place -- to buy some unique items of Celtic interest, and save a “punt” or two at the same time. To find out more about this special social event, contact the store at (607) 264-3769, or visit www.celticart.com. The Plaide Palette is located on 45 Main Street in Cherry Valley.

☘ Looking even further ahead, we find **Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul** also at Munson Williams (Jan 11th), Irish singer-songwriter **Paul Brady** appearing at the Egg (February 9th), 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 December:

Dec 1	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Dec 1	A Holiday Evening with the Celtic Tenors	Clemens Center	Elmira	7:30 PM	\$29/25/18
Dec 1	Causeway Giants	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 2	Black 47	Munson-Williams Proctor Institute	Utica	9:00 PM	\$30
Dec 2	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 2	Glengarry Bhoys	Night Eagle Café	Oxford NY	8:00 PM	\$20
Dec 3	Syracuse Irish Session	HalfPenny Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Dec 9	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8:00 PM	\$12, res. req.
Dec 9	Searson	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 10	Irish Christmas in America, w/Teada and Cathie Ryan	Cazenovia College Theater (show details)	Cazenovia	4:00 PM and 7:00 PM	\$18-\$22
Dec 12	Irish Christmas in America, w/Teada and Cathie Ryan	The Egg	Albany	7:30 PM	\$20, or \$18 by 1 Dec
Dec 14	Traditional Irish Music Session w/host Annalisa Quinn	Night Eagle Café	Oxford NY	8:00 PM	Free
Dec 15-16	Neil Emberg	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 15	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Dec 15	The Dady Brothers	Night Eagle Café	Oxford NY	8:00 PM	\$15
Dec 17	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Dec 18-23	The McKrells' Christmas Show	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	7 PM (4 & 8 PM on the 23 rd)	\$12, reservations required
Dec 22	Blarney Rebel Band: "A Piggy Pat Christmas"	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Dec 22	Emish Corey	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 23	Gerry Dixon	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 29	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Dec 29	Old Friends	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 30	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Dec 30	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8:00 PM	\$12, res. req.

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@verizon.net or marksisti@adelphia.net. And finally, from our homes to yours:

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Daí
(Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year)

May you know only peace, harmony, laughter and friendship during this holiday season and throughout the new year--