
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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Night Eagle Café Closes its Doors

The Night Eagle Café – “Central New York’s Home for Acoustic Music” and host to such Irish/Celtic acts as Cherish the Ladies, Tommy Sands, Battlefield Band, Cathie Ryan, Enter the Haggis, Glengarry Bhoys, Lunasa, Solas, Patrick Ball and many more – has closed its doors...but hopefully not forever.

As part of our regular scouring of the media for Irish cultural events for this newsletter, we made a point of bookmarking the web site for this gem, established in 2002 in Oxford, NY, but recently relocated to Binghamton. Hoping to be bringing you news of an act or two for November, we instead were greeted with this letter on their home page:

“Dear Friends,

After 12 years of operating The Night Eagle, presenting some of the finest music and other performing arts to our area, it's with heart-felt sadness that I let you know that we have fallen on hard times. High operating expenses, increasing debt, the state of our economy and lack of attendance has made it extremely difficult to continue, and left us no choice but to close our doors for now.

...It is a sad way to conclude this part of the Night Eagle's story but I do believe we will be presenting incredible shows once again when I have eased this debt load.

Peace to you and yours and thank you all for your help in keeping live music alive..., [Ken Millet](#)”

And so another small venue goes the way of so many others locally whose owners had consciously elected to eschew the mainstream road to “success” – technocrap, interchangeable DJs and that bane of aural existence, Karaoke – choosing pure musicality, tradition, class and intimacy instead. You’ve seen it in the Utica area as well, where well-intended entrepreneurs try to make a go of a new venture, only to be forced to close their doors and their dreams for lack of support. Yes, times are bad, and maybe there’s more to this Night Eagle Café situation than meets the eye... but there may also be a lesson here. Whereas the maxim “If you build it, they will come” worked out just fine for a fictional baseball attraction, it makes for a rotten business plan in reality. The connection between the establishment and the people who frequent that establishment is not automatic -- far from it – and ultimately it’s not the building, the atmosphere, the owner or even the world-class acts who perform there that make a success of a business... it’s the people who go. It’s you and it’s me.

We started this newsletter in November 2004 for one purpose: “To promote and support Irish cultural events in the Mohawk Valley.” Opportunities to hear Irish music in the immediate area were rare, and despite best intentions, many of the venues who represented a groundswell movement to showcase local Irish entertainment did not last, going the same way as many of the local sports franchises who folded or left town because of low attendance.

Okay, maybe we can’t save the world. But we can help save those establishments who continue to offer us quality Celtic entertainment, against long odds and against the advice of their accountants. There are far too few Night Eagle Cafés left to let one more die off.

Homer's Center for the Arts Hosts Legend Tommy Sands

Fresh off a performance last month at Proctor's in Schenectady, **Tommy Sands** -- one of Ireland's most powerful songwriters and best loved singers -- finds his way to one of the fastest growing venues for high caliber entertainment of all types: **The Center for the Arts** in Homer, NY (you know, the kind of place that has chosen to place an emphasis on pure musicality, tradition, class and intimacy instead of technocrap, interchangeable DJs and that bane of aural existence, Karaoke?). Tommy has been lauded for "...his outstanding work as a musical ambassador for peace and understanding," and his songs, including "There Were Roses," have been recorded by major artists and translated into many languages. From the pioneering days with the highly influential Sands Family, bringing Irish Music from New York's Carnegie Hall to Moscow's Olympic Stadium, he has developed into one of the most powerful songwriters and enchanting solo performers in Ireland today, prompting respected US magazine "Sing Out" to regard him as "the most powerful songwriter in Ireland, if not the rest of the world." Maybe more meaningful to Tommy is this quote from Frank McCourt, author of "Angela's Ashes": "He is - and the world knows this - the bard of peace." Also appearing with Tommy will be his talented children, Moya and Fionán.



Tickets for the show -- 8 PM on Saturday, November 1st -- are \$25, with seniors paying \$20, and there is no charge for children under 14 or students with I.D. Tickets can be purchased at center4art.org, by calling (607) 749-4900, or by visiting Bev and Co. in Homer, Jodi's Hallmark and Sheridan's Jewelers in Cortland, Ithaca Guitar Works in Ithaca, or at the door. Beer, wine and desserts will be offered at 7 PM. The Center for the Arts is located at 72 South Main Street, Homer; just 30 minutes south of Syracuse, and 80 miles southwest of Utica.

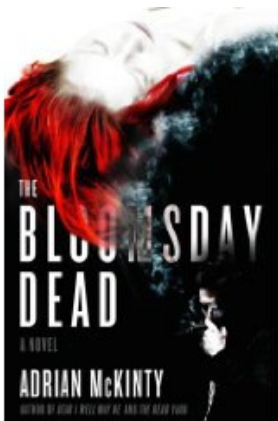
Kearney to be Inducted into Comhaltas Northeast Region Hall of Fame

On Saturday, November 1st, Kevin Kearney of the Craobh Dugan branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann is being inducted into the Northeast Regional Hall of Fame, in a ceremony to be held in conjunction with the annual Northeast Region meeting. Kevin is someone familiar to many in the region, being a long time member of Craobh Dugan, past President of the local division of Ancient Order of Hibernians and District Director as well, a Past Grand Marshall of the Utica St Patrick's Day Parade, and a member of the Great American Irish Festival planning committee. The meeting is being held at the American Legion Hall, 16 West Poplar Drive, in Delmar. The day will include their meeting of Delegates and Officers from 10-4, a mass from 5-5:45, a buffet dinner from 6:15-7:30, Hall of Fame Induction ceremonies at 7:45, followed by dancing and a session. Craobh Dugan Vice President Tom Malley reports: "The evening is always very nice...a great collection of Comhaltas folks from all the Northeast branches, with wonderful food, conversations and music/dancing. We hope to have a great crowd from Craobh Dugan in attendance." With his induction, Kevin joins colleagues Mike and Chris Hoke (2007), Tom Carville (2000), Kate (McDonough) Hill (2003) and most recently, Jim O'Looney (2006) as Craobh Dugan members now in the Hall of Fame. We here at the newsletter would like to offer our heartiest congratulations to our good friend Kevin Kearney.

What Do...?

What do the French playwright Molière, the chemical element Beryllium, the number 73 and the theme from TV's Mr. Ed have in common? Give up? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! I just had about an inch of white space to kill, and was too lazy to grab a graphic. This should just about do it. Wait for it, wait for it... there.

Book Review:
“The Bloomsday Dead”
By Mark Sisti



OK, I promise. This will be the last review of a novel featuring Adrian McKinty’s antihero, Michael Forsythe. I am not a fan of reviewing separate entries in a series; for example, Ken Bruen’s series of mysteries featuring Galway detective Jack Taylor is brilliantly written, but one book is not appreciably different from others in the series except in terms of plot. While Jack Taylor makes major lifestyle changes during the course of the series, he is still basically the same person from one book to the next. The same cannot be said of Michael Forsythe.

We have already become acquainted with the mercurial Mr. Forsythe in the first two parts of what is now becoming known as the “*Dead Trilogy*,” “*Dead I Well May Be*” and “*The Dead Yard*” (discussed in this newsletter, respectively, in August 2006 and August 2008; go ahead and review; I’ll wait.) Michael now returns in “*The Bloomsday Dead*,” a riveting novel that hurtles along with the heart-stopping pace and inevitability of a runaway train, as Michael returns to Ireland for the first time in decades, with the (admittedly slim) possibility of wiping the slate clean with old enemies and earning a chance to cease his endless running.

The novel opens in typical McKinty fashion, as Michael, now working as the head of security for a hotel in Lima, is trapped by two assassins looking to fulfill a long-standing and lucrative contract put out on him by his old flame, Bridget Callaghan, now riding herd over the Irish mob in New York after having filled the vacuum left when Michael killed her fiancé. But before the professional killers are able to complete their task, Bridget, now in Belfast, has an offer for Michael. Her twelve year-old daughter has been kidnapped and, with Forsythe’s familiarity with Belfast and his uncanny knack for survival, Bridget sees him as her last hope to rescue her daughter. Her offer is three-fold: if he travels to Belfast and finds her by midnight, she will cancel the contract she has on his life. If he does not find her, she will kill him. And if he refuses to help her, the two men who have him at gunpoint will kill him immediately. Of course, those of us familiar with Michael Forsythe by now could have warned the hitmen: as one character colorfully puts it, Michael Forsythe is “un-f%#@#in’- killable”. He dispatches the would-be assassins with cold efficiency, tossing in for good measure his assistant, who sold him out. However, even with the immediate threat removed, the idea that he can at last stop running appeals to him (along with his old feelings for Bridget) and he takes her up on her offer.

The three assassins are, of course, just the first in a long trail of killings, some by Michael, some by others. In fact, Michael has several notches on his proverbial gun within minutes of his arrival back in Ireland, not to mention a kidnapping, car-jacking and countless other crimes of varying degrees.

From the first scenes in Peru to the gripping, white-knuckle conclusion on a barren peninsula outside Belfast, McKinty never lets up on the breakneck pace and, while we aren’t quite as surprised by some of the twists and turns as Forsythe is, the payoff is well worth the frenetic trip.

What makes this series different from the run-of-the-mill mystery/action series is the transformation we have watched take place in Michael Forsythe from the first book to this one. At the start of “*Dead I Well May Be*,” Michael is almost Devil-may-care, capable of brutal violence but reluctant to resort to extreme measures unless absolutely necessary. We see the metamorphosis begin by the end of that novel and continue through “*Dead Yard*,” in which he comes to a greater understanding and acceptance of that part of his nature which has enabled him to survive. In “*The Bloomsday Dead*,” however, violence is no longer a last resort for Forsythe; it is, whether he likes it or not, an essential part of the way he conducts his life. But the Michael Forsythe we encounter in this book is tired of it all, and the physical weariness caused by days of being without sleep and constantly on edge is a reflection of the weariness he feels within.

As always, McKinty's writing -- crisp, poetic or witty as the situation calls for -- keeps it all from becoming ponderous and Michael is still capable of the rich, dark humor that makes him such a likable character despite his many and obvious flaws.

While it's not necessary to read the first two books in the series in order to enjoy "The Bloomsday Dead," it would help to have read at least "Dead I Well May Be" if only to follow the changes in Forsythe through the pen of the very talented McKinty. In addition, much of the plot and characters are carried over from "Dead I Well May Be," although McKinty skillfully uses backstory that will catch a new reader up without ever being intrusive.

Thistle and Shamrock Continues its Run



Thistle & Shamrock, the nation's most popular Irish radio program now in its 27th year, can be heard Sundays at 11 to noon on WAER, 88.3 on the FM dial, and the same show is repeated on Sunday evening, from 7 to 8 PM, on WRUN-AM; 1150 on your dial. The one-hour weekly Celtic music series from National Public Radio, hosted by the engaging Fiona Ritchie, features Celtic music performances captured

on location and exclusive in-studio appearances by leading Celtic performers from both sides of the Atlantic. For more information, visit the Thistle & Shamrock home page at <http://thistleradio.com/>. Anyway, here is the programming schedule for the Thistle and Shamrock radio program for this month, and a very special month it is:

November 9 - Thistlepod introduces...

Join us and browse music excerpted in our new releases podcasts to hear full tracks introducing emerging artists' brilliant debuts. (Some old favourites too!)

November 16 - Heart of the Session

From Matt Molloy's pub in County Mayo, Ireland to Edinburgh's famous folk bar "Sandy Bell's," we celebrate the sound of communal music making.

November 23 - St Andrew's Ceilidh

Celebrated throughout the world by anyone with Scottish connections, St. Andrew's Day is a time for ceilidhs and music-fuelled fun. We hear dance music from traditional bands and innovators, songs that make you want to dance, and Connie Irvine walks you through the steps of a Scottish Country Dance anyone can do!

November 30 - A Visit with Jean Ritchie

Join our intimate audience at the Swannanoa Gathering and meet songwriter and collector, dulcimer player and singer, Jean Ritchie.

Great American Irish Festival Update

Great American Irish Festival Volunteer Chairperson Claudette Johnson wanted us to remind you that the festival still needs volunteers for the 2009 festival, and that the Volunteer portion of the web site (www.gaif.us) is now open for the new season. She also notes that you need to sign up via the web page even if you've volunteered with the festival in the past. Several venues could use your help, and of course, volunteering 8 hours of your time over the course of the weekend makes you eligible to get all the great perks that aren't available to the general public.

From the Irish Kitchen (*recipes suitable for clipping*)

This month's recipe – “Cataplana” -- *A warm spicy fish and sausage stew - ideal for cold winter evenings.*

INGREDIENTS:

12 oz White fish fillets (e.g., cod, whiting, haddock, monkfish), skinned and cut into chunks.	1 med Onion chopped
1 lb Mussels or mixture of mussels, cockles or clams	2 can Chopped tomatoes
1 Clove garlic chopped finely	4 oz Chorizo sausage, (or any spicy sausage), sliced
	1 Glass dry white wine

METHOD

Make tomato sauce by frying garlic and onion in a little oil until soft. Add tomatoes and white wine, simmer for 15 minutes with your top off... uh, with the lid off. Wash shellfish carefully in cold water and add to the sauce - cook for 5 minutes until the shellfish open. Discard any that stay closed. Heat chorizo sausage in saucepan until oil runs (1-2 minutes). Drain on kitchen paper. Discard oil. Add sausage to the sauce. Add the white fish to the sauce and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes until the fish is cooked. Serve with fresh crusty bread or boiled potatoes.

If you try this recipe, feel free to share your experience with all of us; and of course, if you have a recipe you'd like to share, please contact Beth Loftis at bloftis@verizon.net.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

☘ **“Nuacht as Craobh Dugan”**---news from the Dugan Branch Craobh Dugan, the local branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, held their Annual General meeting on October 10th at the Seton Center in Utica. In addition to election of officers, reports were heard from various officers, and other subjects were discussed. The officers for the 2008-2009 are as follows: President, Chrissie Hoke; Vice President, Tomás Ó'Meallaigh; Treasurer, Mike Hoke; Recording Secretary, Mary DeRosia; Public Relations Officer, Jim O'Looney; Language Officer, Tomás Ó'Meallaigh; Convention Delegates, Chrissie and Mike Hoke. It was announced that the branch has nominated Kevin Kearney of Clinton to the Comhaltas Northeast Region Hall of Fame.

The musicians meet for weekly sessions every Thursday, the first three Thursdays of the month at Jim O'Looney's house, the fourth Thursday at Café Domenico on Genesee St, just south of Price Chopper. The dancers meet on Friday evenings at 7:00 at Seton Center, at the corner of Barton and Sunset Ave. Beginners are welcome to both groups. For more info on the sessions, call Jim at 732-0876 or Mike at 827-4291. For info on dancing, call Jim at 336-5966 or Mary at 724-6493.

☘ **Craobh Dugan Open Session** Ed Campbell wanted us to remind you that Thursday, Nov 20, is the monthly Craobh Dugan Open Session, held at Cafe Domenico, Utica from 7:30-10:00 PM. But wait, you say, isn't the Craobh Dugan open session – which is free -- always the 4th Thursday of the month? Yes, we respond (biting our tongues), except for the months of November and December, when it's scheduled for 3rd Thursday; since the 4th Thursday falls on or near the holidays. These monthly sessions are organized by the local Irish group Craobh Dugan -- the Central NY branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann -- which promotes traditional Irish music, dance and language. Membership is open to all. If you're interested in learning more, visit comhaltas.ie/locations/detail/craobhdugan/, or call Ed at 738-1495.

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

Nov 1	Tommy Sands w/ Moya and Fionán	Center for the Arts	Homer NY	8 PM	\$25; \$20 seniors; Students and 14 under free
Nov 1	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Blarney Stone Restaurant	Auburn NY	8:30 PM	Free
Nov 1	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Nov 2	Syracuse Irish Session	Wayside Irish Pub	Elbridge NY	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 2	Pat Kane	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 8	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13; resv. req.
Nov 8	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2:00-5 PM	Free
Nov 9	Cliudan	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 14	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Nov 16	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 20	Craobh Dugan Open Session	Cafe Domenico	Utica	7:30-10:00 pm	Free
Nov 21	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Nov 21	The McKrells	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$8
Nov 22	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Nov 22	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2:00-5 PM	Free
Nov 22	Derek Warfield of the legendary Wolf Tones	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	TBD; resv. req.
Nov 23	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Nov 28	The McKrells	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$8
Nov 29	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13; resv. req.
Nov 30	Flyin' Column	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free

That wraps it up for this month. If you have a book you'd like Mark to review, or a recipe to share, or a festival, concert or CD review of your own, feel free to contact us at sistia@adelphia.net, bloftis@verizon.net or marksisti@roadrunner.com. And as always, while we try to get things – prices, places, times, etc., -- as accurate as we can, sometimes we make mistakes. It always makes sense to call ahead to confirm some of these further-out trips.

Finally, Mark, Beth and I want to wish you all a great Thanksgiving. Secondly, remember to vote on Election Day – it is both a right and a privilege of democracy. Finally, and I believe, most importantly, be sure to remember that November 11th is Veterans' Day... the day we pay tribute to the brave men and women who fought, and in many cases died, to preserve, defend and protect the rights that our forebears carved out for all of us. We may have vastly different ideological notions about the causes of, or even need for, wars... but whatever our views, we must never, ever forget those brave souls who risked everything for the freedom we ALL enjoy.