



IRISH TIMES

Newsletter of the
Irish-American Society of New Mexico
www.irishamericansociety-nm.com

FEBRUARY 2021

Note: Irish-American Society meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month, except during July and August (and for special events). In the Before Times, the meeting location was the Memorial Hall at the First Unitarian Church, 3701 Carlisle Blvd NE, SW corner of Comanche and Carlisle (where someday we may meet again).

Next Virtual Meeting: Friday, February 12th, 7 PM A Poetry Salon with Three Irish Poets!



For our second general meeting of 2021, we are planning a virtual poetry salon with three contemporary Irish poets: Paul Muldoon, Attracta Fahey, and Adrian Rice. As usual, a link to the meeting will be sent out to all IAS members shortly before 7 PM.

Paul Muldoon was born in Portadown, County Armagh, Northern Ireland in 1951 in a farming family of the Nationalist (Catholic) tradition. Now a US citizen, he has taught at Princeton University for more than thirty years and served as Poetry Editor of the *New Yorker* magazine. He is the author of thirteen collections of poetry, including his latest, *Frolic and Detour* (2019). **Attracta Fahey** works in private practice as an Integrative and Humanistic Psychotherapist/Supervisor, and lives in rural County Galway with her children. She won the 2019 *The Irish Times* New Irish Writing award. Her new book is *Dinner in the Fields*, published 2020. **Adrian Rice** is from Belfast, Northern Ireland. He grew up in the working-class Loyalist ("Protestant") community there and graduated from the University of Ulster. He has taught and lectured throughout the UK and Ireland, and in America and on radio and TV. Adrian and his wife Molly live in Hickory, North Carolina, where he teaches English literature. His latest book is *The Strange Estate: New & Selected Poems 1986-2017*.

This Irish Poetry Salon is being supported by kind donations from
Jules Poetry Playhouse LLC of Placitas, NM and the New Mexico State Poetry Society.

And now a friendly reminder:

Your membership dues for 2021 were due on January 1. To renew your membership by mail, print and fill out the membership form on the last page of this newsletter and mail it in with your check to our PO box. To renew online by credit card, simply visit www.irishamericansociety-nm.com.

2021 Board Members and Committee Chairs

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Would you like to place a sponsorship in the *Irish Times* newsletter?

Business-card-sized ads are a mere \$5 a month. Larger-sized ads can be negotiated with the editor, Ellen Dowling (edowling@standuptrainer.com 307-1700).

Your sponsorship will also appear on the IAS website (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) at no extra charge.



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President's Message

By Ellen Dowling

Hello, everyone! Hope you are all staying safe and sane in these continuing chaotic times. But it looks like help is indeed on the way and maybe we will be back to normal by fall? (Fingers crossed.) In the meantime, we're lining up some really exciting online programs for this year. Next up is our Poetry Salon on February 12, with three world-class Irish poets. One of the few blessings of this pandemic is that Zoom technology allows us to get together in ways that would not be possible in person. For example, Paul Muldoon will be joining us from New Jersey, Adrian Rice from North Carolina, and Attracta Fahey from Ireland (where it will be 2 AM, but Attracta assures us that will be no problem for her!). Other visitors will be joining us from all over the US, and we even signed up a new member who lives in Ireland (welcome, Anne McDonald). How exciting!

Many thanks to Board Member Bill Nevins, who set up this program, and to member John Roche for helping with logistics. We are also joining up with Jules Nyquist of the Poetry Playhouse in Placitas and the NM Poetry Society to provide honorariums for the poets. And of course continued thanks to Kathy Wimmer, whose employer, KNME, graciously allows us to use their Zoom account.

We are also planning a big virtual St. Patrick's Day Party in March, with local musicians, dancers, and all kinds of craic and malarkey. Details to come in the March newsletter.

So hang in there, everyone. We'll make it through this together.

This month's question to the members: What is your favorite place to visit in Ireland? (If you've not yet been, what is the one place you really want to see?)

Last month's question ("What is Your Favorite Irish Drink"?) gathered these responses:

Bill Nevins: "Guinness bourbon barrel aged stout! Also, both Writers Tears and Redbreast Irish whiskeys. (In moderation of course.)"

Gwen Easterday: "I was recently introduced to Kavanagh's Irish Cream. My initial introduction was in coffee, so I was tempted to say my favorite Irish drink is Irish Coffee. But then I tried it over ice cream and I think that is my new favorite—an Irish Cream milk shake."

Kathy Wimmer: "Here's my favorite Irish drink story: Ken and I really enjoy Bailey's, or indeed any other good brand of Irish Cream liqueur. Years ago, during a hot summer visit to Las Vegas, we discovered a refreshing drink—Bailey's and Soda. Delicious and refreshing! So, on our first visit to Ireland during the hot summer of 2006, we were in a pub and asked for a Bailey's and Soda. We got a small glass of Baileys—and a can of club soda. When we asked for larger glass in which to mix the two, the bartender looked at us in horror and said, 'That's DISGUSTIN'!!!' (but he did cave in and give us a larger glass..



Membership Report

By Gwen Easterday

Céad Mile Fáilte: A hundred thousand welcomes to new member Anne McDonald in Ireland! And many thanks to those current members who have already renewed for 2021.

Just a note to let you know, if you also paid the extra \$5 for associate membership to the GAC, your cards will come as soon as possible—please be patient with me. We understand the German American Club (GAC) is not currently permitted to be open so you probably don't need the cards just yet. However, if the GAC should suddenly be able to open, please let us know you need your card right away and we'll do our best to get that to you. So far, there are 17 of us who have also elected to be Associate Members of the GAC. And remember, you won't receive an IAS membership card unless you've also paid to be an associate member of the GAC.

As of January 19, 2021 we have 22 individuals and 26 family (x 2) RENEWALS for a total of 74 members, thus far. Please remember that IAS members, paid up through December 31, 2020, will still receive newsletters through March of this year. After that time, if you have not renewed for 2021, your name will be dropped from the newsletter and alert list.

Message from Norita Callahan:

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE STILL SEEKING PULL-TAB DONATIONS! The aluminum or steel pull tabs donated from beverage cans or ANY kind of canned food (6000 + pounds annually) generate funds to offset the House expenses. YOUR donations make a significant impact and are very much appreciated. Thanks this month to Carol & Doug Cowan and Barbara Nagey.

Treasurer's Report December 2020

Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer

Category	Income		Category	Expenses
Membership—electronic (Square)	\$212.26		U-Stor-It monthly storage fee	\$35.00
Membership—cash/checks	\$250.00		USPS: Annual fee for PO box	\$168.00
GAC membership	\$55.00		Ch# 213: Brightburn Academy of Irish dance: Christmas party dance video	\$100.00
Donation	\$100.00			
Donation to defray NL costs	\$10.00			
Total Income	\$627.26		Total Expenses	(\$303.00)
			IAS Account prior month's ENDING balance	\$8,033.27
			Plus Income (current month)	\$627.26
			Less Expenses (current month)	(\$303.00)
			Current month's Ending Balance	\$8,357.53

Irish-American Society General Meeting Minutes January 8th, 2021

Virtual meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by President, Ellen Dowling, who then welcomed and acknowledged visitors and members. Ellen thanked everyone for joining the meeting as it had been so long since the IAS had a General Meeting. Introduction of Board Members present: Ellen Dowling, President; Larry Compton, Vice President; Tracee Edwards, Secretary; Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer; Gwen Easterday, Membership; Maureen Riley, Suzanne Taichert, and Bill Nevins, Board Members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is time to renew memberships for 2021. Renewal may be done on-line or by mail. Ellen expressed concern about losing members and would like to hear if anyone has ideas about what we can do to prevent same.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, February 12, 2021: Irish Poet Salon with poets Paul Muldoon, Adrian Rice, and Attracta Fahy. Thank you to Bill Nevins for putting this wonderful event together for the IAS! Bill also gave us a little background on each poet. It will be a delight and an honor to have three of the top Irish poets share their poetry with us.

MEET AND GREET

Scavenger Hunt: Ellen gave us a few minutes to find something Irish in our homes. We then took turns sharing our items and enjoying others. We enjoyed Waterford Crystal, coasters, mugs, hats, barbed wire, whiskey, bodhrans, maps, sweaters, magazines, and Belleek China just to name a few.

BUSINESS

St. Patrick's Day Committee is Bill Nevins, Gwen Easterday, Larry Compton, Maureen Riley, Suzanne Taichert, and Kathy Wimmer. Ellen suggested we use entertainers from last year that we had to cancel due to COVID. All agreed that was a good idea. There was discussion about having the virtual party the Sunday afternoon before St. Patrick's Day. Everyone agreed that the party will be announced at the Poets Salon on February 12th in order to attract more people. The committee will be meeting to make arrangements and final decisions.

Ideas were given for future meeting events/entertainment/presentations. Possibilities are Larry Kirwin, who is a historian and musician; Mick Moloney, musician; Malachy McCourt, author; T. J. English, author; Jeannie Page, musician; and Todd Lowrey, songwriter. Other ideas include a "readers theater" and presentation on the San Patricios, who are considered heroes in Mexico.

ENTERTAINMENT

Suzanne Taichert played the piano and led us all in a virtual sing -a-long. We sang The Fields of Athenry, Sing Irishman Sing, Black Velvet Band, and Star of the County Down. Such fun! Virtual sing a-longs work really well for those of us who love to sing but can't carry a tune!

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Minutes submitted by:
Tracee Edwards, Secretary

The Irish Book Club

One of the best things about being an online book club is that there need be no interruptions during this trying time. If you are on Facebook, just type The Irish Book Club into the search bar (or click on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2022642747761043/>) and you'll find us. Our book for discussion in November was *Long Lankin* by John Banville. In December, we'll discuss *Church End* by Colin Broderick.

Long Lankin: Stories, by John Banville

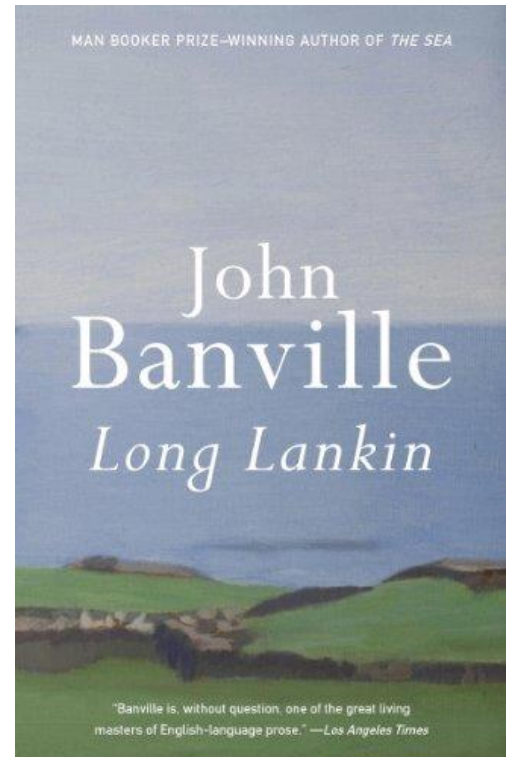
From Amazon: "A collection of short stories from the early years of Man Booker Prize-winning author John Banville's career, *Long Lankin* explores the passionate emotions—fear, jealousy, desire—that course beneath the surface of everyday life. From a couple at risk of being torn apart by the allure of wealth to an old man's descent into nature, the tales in this collection showcase the talents that launched Banville onto the literary scene. Offering a unique insight into the mind of 'one of the great living masters of English-language prose' (*Los Angeles Times*), these nine haunting sketches stand alone as canny observations on the turbulence of the human condition."

The title of the book comes from an old Scottish ballad about a bogeyman: "Beware of Long Lankin that lives amongst the gorse; Beware the moss, beware the moor, beware of Long Lankin Make sure the doors are bolted well Lest Lankin should creep in." And indeed, each of these stark, delicately described stories contain a bogeyman—sometimes a black man lurking in the woods, sometimes a dead body washed up on a beach and gawked at by children, sometimes an entire troop of acrobats who appear out of nowhere.

From *Kirkus Reviews*: "[T]here's some mystery at the heart of practically every one of these stories—an unexplained relationship or situation, an inscrutable murder (in more than one story), a dilemma not completely understood yet requiring escape. The Banville of his early 20s could write dialogue like this from 'Lovers': 'We'll be free. We're young and the world is wide. We'll be free.' Yet he already knows that such freedom is an illusion, an empty promise. And more often, his characters find themselves lamenting the passing of old ways, such as the stranger who seems oddly familiar to a son mourning his father in 'A Death': 'There is a new brand of despair in the world. The old ways are dying, and the old religion too. When people turn their backs on God what can they expect?' Other stories have similarly elemental titles—'Sanctuary,' 'Summer Voices,' 'Island'—and similar obsessions with transition and loss. 'Look it at,' says the drunken host at a party of friends he doesn't like. 'The new Ireland. Sitting around at the end of a party wondering why we're not happy. Trying to find what it is we've lost.'

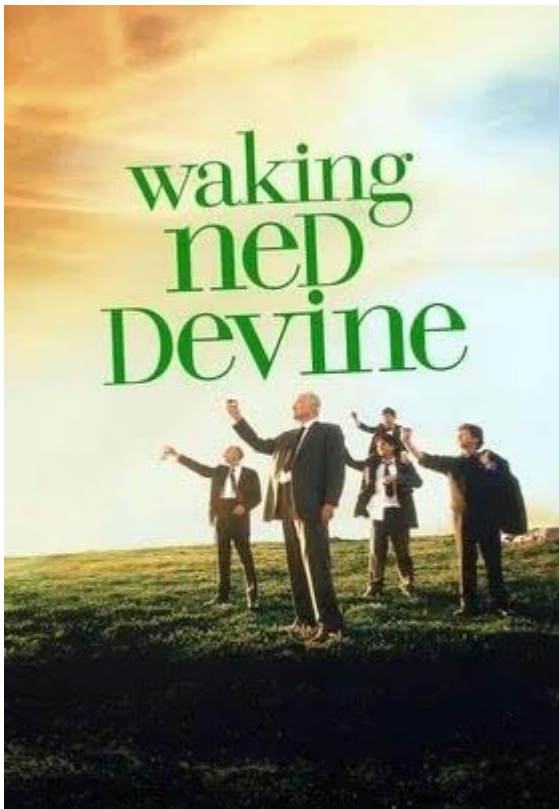
Formative work by an author who would later revisit what's best in these stories through longer and more ambitious fiction."

William John Banville was born in Wexford, Ireland, in 1945, the youngest of three siblings. He was educated at Christian Brothers schools and St. Peter's College, Wexford. After college John worked as a clerk for Ireland's national airline, Aer Lingus, before joining *The Irish Press* as a sub-editor in 1969. Continuing with journalism for over thirty years, John was Literary Editor at *The Irish Times* from 1988 to 1999. Under the pseudonym Benjamin Black, John has published the following crime novels: *Christine Falls* (2006), *The Silver Swan* (2007), *The Lemur* (2008), *Elegy for April* (2010), *A Death in Summer* (2011) and *Vengeance* (2012).



Movie Review: *Waking Ned Devine*

By Larry Compton



Waking Ned Devine is a 1998 comedy written and directed by Kirk Jones, starring Ian Bannen, David Kelly, Fionnula Flanagan, Susan Lynch, and James Nesbitt. It tells the story of how residents of a small Irish village scheme to claim a lottery jackpot. A joint British and French production, the film is set in Ireland, but was actually filmed in the UK, in the village of Cregneash on the Isle of Man.

Plot: In the village of Tulaigh Mhór, Jackie O'Shea tells his old friend Michael O'Sullivan that someone in their village has won the Irish National Lottery. Along with Michael's wife Annie, they try to find out who among the population of 52 is the winner. They manage to get a list of local lottery customers from the post office and invite them over for dinner. None of their guests seems to have come into any fortune. They then realize one person is missing: Ned Devine, a recluse. Jackie visits Ned to discover him sitting, clutching the winning ticket and smiling, but dead—apparently having died from the shock.

Jackie hatches a plot to claim the winnings by having Michael pose as Ned, pretend that Michael died, and then share the 6.8 million Irish pounds among their neighbors equally. The residents all sign a pact, except for the curmudgeonly old “witch” Lizzie Quinn, who threatens to report the fraud and claim a reward. A lottery inspector arrives to investigate their claim. In a hilarious scene, skinny old Michael races to Ned's house on a motorcycle—naked for some reason—to play the part. At Ned's funeral, Jackie gives a warm, loving eulogy for his old “late” friend Michael, who's sitting right there. The inspector is convinced. Meanwhile, Lizzie departs on her electric wheelchair to report them, and they wonder if she's going to go “all the way to Dublin.”

Will the villagers succeed? In the final scene Jackie and Michael stand on a coastal cliff, toasting Ned, to the song “The Parting Glass.” You decide.

Spoiler alert: Lizzie makes it to a phone booth on a cliff. As the inspector drives by, he sneezes, swerving to avoid an oncoming van driven by the local priest, knocking the phone booth and sending it through the air, with Lizzie inside, crashing onto the shore below. I am sure this scene was intended to be funny, slapstick in the style of Laurel and Hardy. But I was the only person in the movie theater who laughed! I actually don't like the gory, “sick” humor of Tarentino; we don't see the mangled body of Lizzie Quinn. Curious.

Accolades: Director Kirk Jones was nominated for a BAFTA award; David Kelly received a nomination for a Screen Actors Guild Award. The film was nominated for Producers Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild awards. Gene Siskel and Robert Ebert, both still alive back then, gave it a thumbs “way up.”

Board Member Spotlight: Gwen Easterday

By Bill Nevins



Here is my email- interview with Gwen Easterday, IAS Board Member and Membership Director. We had a fun time chatting about our backgrounds and interests in Irish culture. When I told Gwen that I came to New Mexico after many years in New York, New England, and greater Philadelphia, she replied, “I’m a ‘back East’ kid, myself, Bill, so we have some similar roots. I grew up mostly in Bethlehem, PA but also in northern Georgia, so my Georgia kinfolk used to say my siblings and I were ‘half a Georgia Peach and half a Damn Yankee.’” Gwen continued, “I think it’s probably safe to say that most of my formal education was at UNM (Civil Engineering and a Master’s of Water Resource Administration). Another thing I’d want to share is that I came to learn the folk harp late in life and that is probably the thing that prompted me to investigate my Celtic ancestry.” Now, here is “the rest of the story,” as Fred Harvey used to say . . .

Tell us a bit about your harp experience.

Many years ago, I attended the Rio Grande Highland Games and saw my first Harp Circle. Fast forward to 1997 when I heard an ad on the radio for a short course in learning the folk harp at Apple Mountain Music. I still consider myself a harp student despite the number of years I’ve been learning. I prefer to play in ensembles. Kathy Wimmer and I perform as

a duo called Bardic Sisters, as well as in an Early Music group called Cantores Festivi, where both Kathy and I perform with Lauri Rigler. Kathy, Lauri and I also participate in the Canterbury Harp Ensemble.

Could you tell us a bit more your own Celtic ancestry?

More Germanic ancestry than Irish and Scottish, although there was a McCarty ancestor from my dad’s mother’s side. My Irish and Scottish ancestry comes mostly from my maternal grandparents. My last update from Ancestry showed 22% from Ireland and 23% Scotland.

What would you say are your main interests in the activities of the IAS?

I enjoy it most when we have a speaker or musical group/individual giving a presentation. Celtic Festivals are exciting, too. I first attended one here in Albuquerque.

Would you talk a bit about your official roles with IAS?

Gwen: I became a board member a few months after 2019 St. Patrick’s Day. It was time to give back to the organization. I took on the Membership Director responsibilities from Norita Callahan. I appreciate hearing from other IAS members on how to recruit new members.

Where would you like to see the IAS in five years’ time?

I’d like to see more younger folks get involved. The IAS had more than 400 members when I first joined in the 1990s. It would be grand if we could get back to those numbers.

What do you enjoy most about Irish culture?

I enjoy the music the most! I also like stories and mythologies. When I first started to learn the harp, I was told if I wanted to get better at playing the tunes, I should learn to dance. So, of course, I went to Norita’s Wednesday night Ceili dancing sessions.

What are your plans for celebrating St Patrick’s Day in this very different year 2021?

I’m hoping to attend the Zoom party this year. It will be good fun as the 2020 Christmas party was. I hope more people will attend by Zoom so that they know the IAS of NM is still trying to keep up the culture!

Member Spotlight: The Gallegos Family

By Cian Fulton



Meet the Gallegos family! Joe, Elena, Angus (14) and Stevie Ray (12)!

How long have you been in the Irish American Society?

I think it has been seven years. We enjoy the parties and entertainment, and I think it has been a valuable resource of information about Irish culture and history for our family. Where else would you get a talk on Brexit one month and listen to Jug O'Punch the next? Priceless!

How did you first hear about the Irish-American Society?

I would see the booth at various venues and when I put my oldest in

Irish dance lessons, some of the parents there were members, including IAS member Tom Hennigan. (May he rest in peace.)

What got you interested in joining?

We are Hispanic and immersed in the culture here in Albuquerque. I wanted my boys to experience Irish culture as well, so along with Irish dance we joined the IAS. Since then, we have learned that Gallegos is a Celtic name and we are happy that the IAS has included other Celtic nations in the bylaws.

Do either of you have a favorite Irish band or movie?

We saw Barleyjuice one year at the zoo and they played "Potatoes" and I laughed so hard. They're definitely one of my favorites. Gaelic Storm—the lead singer is hilarious on stage! I also saw Danú in concert at Popejoy and they signed my CD. Such a great concert and a funny, charming group. The Script, Van Morrison, U2 . . . the list could go on and on. The same goes for Irish movies, there are so many good ones. "Philomena" is quite possibly the most heartbreaking movie I have ever seen. "Angela's Ashes" is another of my favorites, but I think the book was better than the movie. My boys laughed and cheered at a young Christy Brown's antics in "My Left Foot." Would anyone judge me if I said "The Boondock Saints"?

Have either of you gone to Ireland?

No, but it's on the list. We know a few good people who could steer us in the right direction.

Do you have familial ties to Ireland?

On my dad's side, one great-great grandfather is from county Sligo, one from England, and all other great-grandparents are from Ireland but I don't know the counties. They all emigrated from Ireland during the potato famine and settled in Pennsylvania.

Culture All Around

Dance Classes:

♣ **Brightburn Academy of Irish Dance (formerly Celtic Steps Arizona/New Mexico)**, at the McDermott Athletic Center, 801 Loma Colorado, Rio Rancho. Call 505-415-4390 or visit <https://www.themacsports.com/brightburn-irish-dance> for further information.

♣ **Ceili dance classes** are held every Wednesday at the GAC at 7:15 PM, \$4.00. No experience necessary! Call Norita Callahan at 298-2708. [Indefinitely postponed. ☹]

Celtic Music on the Radio and the Web:

♣ **The Thistle and Shamrock** program, featuring Fiona Ritchie, airs on KANW 89.1 FM, Mondays at 6:00 PM.

♣ **Celtic and Beyond**, with co-hosts Ellie Blair and Kelly Clement, 7:00 PM each Wednesday on KTAOS 101.9 FM. (Also broadcast on the Web at www.ktao.com.)



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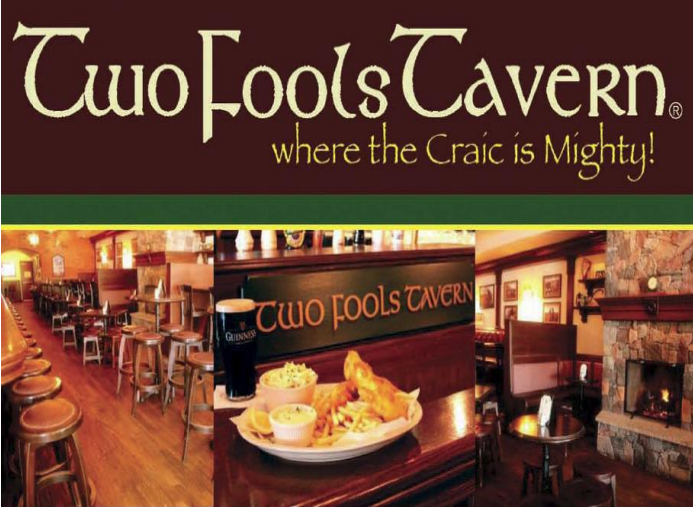
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Interested in learning more about your family history but don't know where to start? Come to THE GENEALOGY CENTER at the ABQ Library (2nd floor), on the corner of 5th and Copper, where volunteers will help you one-on-one in your quest. Celtic Research is held from 1-3 PM on the last Tuesday of the month.

Free parking for two hours at the parking garage on the SE corner from the library, just get your ticket stamped at the library.

Questions? Contact Robert Harper at robertharper48@comcast.net

Support Your Local Irish/Scottish/Celtic Musicians/Performers! (Especially Now!)

Shenanigans

Celtic and American Folk with a twist, variety of instruments and vocals. Contact: Kathy Wimmer (249-7012 kmillewimm@comcast.net)

Iscuma ("It Doesn't Matter")

Traditional Irish and Celtic music with Kathy Wimmer and Marc Roberts. For information, contact Kathy at 249-7012.

Saoirse ("seer shih," Irish for "freedom")

Celtic music from Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Galicia, spiced with jazz and world beat. Contact: Harlow Pinson at hpinson@indepthl.com or 994-2135.

A Jug O'Punch

A trio playing Irish music galore! Contact Suzanne Taichert: suzytmusic@earthlink.net

The Duke City Ceili Band will entertain you with fast paced jigs and reels, lilting waltzes, and rousing sea shanties from the Irish traditional repertoire. Find them on Facebook or contact Jim Crowley: jabbas40@yahoo.com.

Michele Buchanan, Harper

765-1288 (tmbuchs@gmail.com)



Rye Creek

Folk, Irish, western and good old mountain music. Contact Terry Ryan Axline, 293-8924 (neomexicana@hotmail.com) or Ron Trellue, 505-362-2551 (trellue@swcp.com) or visit www.myspace.com/ryecreeknm.

Celtic Coyotes

Traditional music from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. Contact: Doug Cowan celticcoyotes@yahoo.com (710-0583).

Friends Forever

Michael and Donna Coy play Celtic, Folk, Cowboy and Originals. Contact: 296-2017 or 250-4429; mmcoy3@msn.com.

The Singing Coyote Sisters

Donna Coy & Michelle Palmer perform Celtic, Folk, Gospel, and Sing-A-Longs. Contact: 296-2017 or 730-1985 mmcoy3@msn.com



Irish-American Society of New Mexico

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please Check One: ☐ Membership Application ☐ Membership Renewal

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

If this is a renewal, has your contact information changed? Yes ☐ No ☐

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please choose your membership level:

☐ Student (\$10) ☐ Individual (\$20) ☐ Family (\$25) *

☐ (Optional) Additional Associate Membership to the German-American Club (\$5 per person)*

* If you opt to add the additional GAC fee to a family IAS membership, please indicate which members of your family should receive a GAC associate membership card (and add \$5 per person to your total dues):

☐ (Optional) If you receive your newsletter by US mail (instead of electronically), please consider adding an extra \$5 to your annual membership to help offset the costs of mailing and postage.

Enclosed is a total of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to "The Irish-American Society" and mail to:

P.O. Box 13435, Albuquerque, NM 87192-3435

OR

You can also visit our website (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) and pay by credit card.

How did you hear about us? _____