

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

JUNE 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, June 11th, 7 PM

An Exploration of The Tain in Irish Culture

Do you enjoy fantastical tales of handsome magical warriors, bold beautiful women, royal intrigue and derring-do? Did you like Game of Thrones, The Crown and such recent TV epics? Would you like to know more about the very IRISH mythological tales which inspired at least some aspects of those dramatic productions?

Well, IAS members Bill Nevins and John Roche, both college professors who spent a lot of quality time reading old Irish stories, poetry, and scholarly tomes, are going to bring you a bright and cheery and easily-digested summary and commentary on *The Tain* (pronounced "Toyne"), that wild old Irish epic. *The Tain* has been translated and interpreted over the centuries by ancient Irish *shanachies*, by pious Christian scribe-monks, by the poet Yeats's rich patron Lady Gregory, by the modern Irish poets Thomas Kinsella and Ciaran Carson, by Irish rock and heavy-metal bands and by many cartoon artists. It's a ripping good yarn that features appearances by the jealous war queen Medb (Maeve, here on the right), the fierce battle champion Cu Chulainn (Hound of Ulster), and a cast of thousands of spear-rattling, chariot-riding heroes and villains galore!



We will keep this talk moving along with videos, music, a few jokes, and of course questions from you IAS friends, which we will answer the best we can. We think you'll enjoy it all.

NOTE: As we have done for past Zoom meetings, the link to the event will be sent out shortly before 7 PM on June 11th. IAS members will be sent the link automatically. Feel free to forward the link to any friends who might be interested.

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

Bill Nevins

Board

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).

bill nevins@yahoo.com

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



President's Message

By Ellen Dowling

From my Dad who grew up in Long Island, New York: "Spring has sprung. The grass is riz. I wonder where da boidies is? Da boid is on da wing. Now ain't dat absurd? I always thought the wing was on the boid." (Does anyone else have this nonsense rhyme in their family history?) Anyway, happy spring and happy opening up!

We have been informed that the GAC is now once again open for business. If you purchased a GAC associate membership with your IAS membership, you should have received a card that will allow you to visit the GAC events and the bar. If you would like to get an IAS/GAC membership, please let membership chair Gwen Easterday know (greasterday@aol.com).

Thanks again to Irish artists Annemarie Ni Churreain and Niamh McCann, who gave us such a wonderful presentation of Irish poetry and visual arts at our May 14th meeting (and for staying up until 2 AM Ireland time to do so!). We are all looking forward to Bill Nevins' and John Roche's presentation on June 11th.

We are still waiting to hear from the City of ABQ as to when we can make a reservation for our picnic (tentatively scheduled for September 12) at Elena Gallegos picnic area. If we are successful, the picnic will be our only in-person event this year (we might also have a face-to-face Christmas party, but we'll know better about that down the line), besides the Edgewood Celtic Festival in October. Both venues are outside. Keep your fingers crossed! And because we still can't predict when we will be able to hold our monthly meetings in person (the Unitarian Church is still conducting all its events online), we will continue to meet by Zoom. As always, let us know if you need any help getting on board.

Membership Report

By Gwen Easterday

Céad Mile Fáilte: A hundred thousand welcomes to new members Lucy Quinn, Molli Thomason and family, and John Glynn of Glynstewart and family! (John Glynn is the new president of the St. Andrews Scottish Society of New Mexico.) If you are a new member of the IAS and have not seen your name here in previous newsletters, please let us know. And, finally, many thanks to those current members who have renewed for 2021.

Heard a rumor that the German-American Club (GAC) is now open. If you paid the extra \$5 to be Associate Members of the GAC, you should have received your GAC Associate member cards in the mail by the time you read this! If you have not received your card and believe you should have, please send me an email (greasterday@aol.com) with GAC Associate Member in the subject line. If you prefer to call me (505-400-2585), please leave me a message. (By the way, 28 IAS members have selected to be Associate Members of the GAC.) Remember, you won't receive an IAS membership card unless you've also paid to be an associate member of the GAC.

As of May 18, 2021, we have 48 individuals and 50 family (x 2) RENEWALS for a total of 148 members, thus far in this second year of the pandemic. While we are sad to see so many members decide not to renew, we are grateful for the folks who have stuck with us this past year and also for the folks who have decided to join for the first time this year. Sadly, we do not seem to have any students renewing or becoming new members. If you have thoughts on this topic, please let us know.

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 Don & Fran Hardy, Peter McKenna & Janet Patterson, and Barbara Nagey

Treasurer's Report April 2021

Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer

Category	Income	Category	Expenses
Donation: electronic (Bill Hanrahan		U-Stor-It monthly storage fee	\$35.00
for Larry Kirwan's zoom presentation;			
\$10/9.41)	9.41		
		Ck# 229: Larry Kirwan, April	
Membership—electronic (Square)	\$23.68	general meeting.	\$100.00
		Ck# 234: (electronically) NM	
		Secretary of State: Registered Agent	
Membership—cash/checks	\$20.00	change	\$10.00
		Ck# 235: (electronically) NM	
GAC membership	\$10.00	Secretary of State: Annual Report	\$10.00
		Ck.#236: Larry Compton (newsletter	
		mailing supplies)	\$70.53
		Ck. #237: Ken Callahan:	
		membership postage.	\$11.00
Total Income	\$63.09	Total Expenses	(\$236.53)
		IAS Account prior month's	
		ENDING balance	\$9,234.66
		Plus Income (current month)	\$63.09
		Less Expenses (current month)	(\$236.53)
		Current month's Ending Balance	\$9,061.22

A Message from the Rio Grande Celtic Festival:

Libby Casarez, Director of the Rio Grande Celtic Festival, is asking any and all folks associated with Celtic clans and societies to check in with her about participating in the Edgewood Celtic Festival, Octobr 16-17.

The task of wrangling the clans and societies at the Festival was originally coordinated by Sharon Busboom, who passed away earlier this year. Libby and Pete McKenna are trying to fill the void, but they need current contact info from clans and societies planning to attend in October.

If you have information, please share it with Libby (libbyrgvcf@gmail.com).

Calling all Clans and Societies.

For the Edgewood

Celtic Festival, October

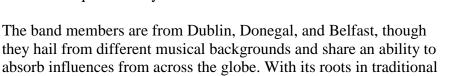
16-17th, 2021

Please email libbyrgvcf@gmail.com to get in touch with our clan/societies coordinator.

Irish Music Review: Kíla

By Bill Nevins

Kíla (whose band name means whatever you may think it means) is a most innovative group in Irish music, always growing and exploring. In fact, their creative curiosity has taken this band of seven (or more) musicians well beyond categorization as simply an Irish band. Formed in the late 1980s in Dublin, Kíla are now considered a world music phenomenon. Jazz, folk, tribal, rock, and even classical musical influences are all mixed into Kíla's tasty "gumbo." Yet, the band's roots are unquestionably Irish.





Irish music, Kíla features strong percussive-like singing (usually in Irish Gaelic, though sometimes in English) and gorgeous melodies driven by a serious rhythmical undercurrent. Kíla are widely renowned for their stunning live sets. The band's line-up has changed over the years, with the core founders being two sets of brothers and their pals: Rónán Ó Snodaigh on bodhrán, djembe, congas, bongos, guitar, and vocals; Rossa Ó Snodaigh on tin whistle, low whistle, clarinet, bazouki, mandolin, bones, and vocals; Colm Ó Snodaigh on flute, tin whistle, guitar, saxophone, percussion, and vocals; Lance Hogan on guitar, drums, and vocals; Brian Hogan on bass, double bass, and vocals; Dee Armstrong on fiddle, viola, hammered dulcimer, accordion, and bodhrán; and Eoin Dillon on uileann pipes, tin whistle, low whistle, shakers, and vocals.

Surprise guest performers at their shows have included trapeze artists, fire jugglers and belly dancers. Kíla have played throughout the world at festivals such as Glastonbury, Montreaux Jazz Festival, Stockholm Water Festival, a festival in Zimbabwe, and musical gatherings in the far west of Ireland. Their USA visits have been rare but always wildly anticipated and packed.

The band has performed on the soundtracks of the movies *The Secret of Kells*, *Song of the Sea*, and the just-released *Wolfwalkers*. In 2011, Kíla published *Book of Tunes*, a widely praised book of their compositions lavishly decorated with photos. They also have released DVDs of their live shows, and a continuing stream of albums, all of which can be purchased via their webpage https://www.kila.ie.

My CD and download recommendations for getting into Kíla are their early albums, *Tog e Go Bog e* ("Take It Easy") and *Lemonade and Buns*, the latter of which remains my personal favorite and which includes a delightful tongue-in-cheek fantasy song about how some Irish rebels commandeered a railroad train and then misplaced it. Kíla are beloved for their slyly irreverent sense of humor, both lyrically and musically. To get a taste of the band's current wild sound, you should pick up a copy of their concert CD, *Live Beo*, which includes some of the maddest bodhran beating you will ever encounter!

Here are two videos that will give you a taste of this great band's music:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O65dCPNOnxc

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81jegq4B9_M

The Irish Book Club

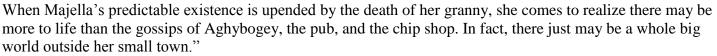
One of the best things about being an online book club is that there need be no interruptions during this trying time. If you are on Facebook, just type The Irish Book Club into the search bar (or click on https://www.facebook.com/groups/2022642747761043/) and you'll find us. Our book for discussion in May is *Travelling in a Strange Land* by David Park. For June, we'll read *Republic of Shame* by Caelinn Hogan.

Big Girl, Small Town, by Michele Galen

From Amazon's description: "Meet Majella O'Neill, a heroine like no other, in this captivating Irish debut that has been called Milkman (the novel by Anna Burns) meets Derry Girls (the TV show).

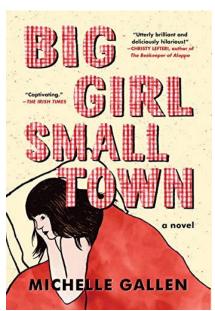
Majella is happiest out of the spotlight, away from her neighbors' stares and the gossips of the small town in Northern Ireland where she grew up just after the Troubles. She lives a quiet life caring for her alcoholic mother, working in the local chip shop, watching the regular customers come and go. She wears the same clothes each day (overalls, too small), has the same dinner each night (fish and chips, microwaved at home after her shift ends), and binge-watches old DVDs of the same show (Dallas, best show on TV) from the comfort of her bed.

But underneath Majella's seemingly ordinary life are the facts that she doesn't know where her father is and that every person in her town has been changed by the lingering divide between Protestants and Catholics.



Not everyone in the Irish Book Club liked *Big Girl, Small Town*, but most of us thought it was a hoot and a half. Kathy Wimmer had a personal reaction: "I know I mentioned that I probably enjoyed the book more than others might have because I listened to the audio book read by one of the actresses from the Derry Girls TV series, and that added an extra dimension to the novel. I also think my Catholic upbringing contributed to my understanding of a lot of the humor. I was driving in my car listening to the scene where Majella describes practicing first Holy Communion using flying saucers and I laughed and laughed and laughed out loud. Because that's exactly what I did when I was a kid. You have to know what flying saucers are (the candy) and you have to know what it is for a little Catholic girl to imagine receiving her first communion to really get it, I think."

Here are some more excerpts: "Majella had been to school with Proinsias when he was just plain oul Franci O'Neill, or Franci the Feel as he'd been called after their fourth-year school trip to the Jet Centre in Coleraine when Franci was seen down the back of the bus with Fionnula Quinn, his hands rummaging around underneath her pink shellsuit. Majella hadn't been keen on pink shellsuits before then, and went right off them after that. In time, Franci had joined Sinn Fein, changed his name and started saying Gee A Ditch every time he met anyone." And here's our girl Majella—who works at A Salt and Battered!, a "chipper" (fish and chips shop)—musing about a competitor's shop, The Cod Father: "It got its name in the mid-nineties when Alistair, the oldest son, took over and refurbished old Phip's Chips. Majella had never been inside The Cod Father in her life and had also never knowingly tasted a Proddie chip. But she'd been told that A Salt and Battered!'s chips kicked the shit out of The Cod Father's chips any day of the week. From time to time she'd even seen the odd Prod sneak in during daylight hours to order one of their superior giant battered sausages and some onion rings. Prods never risked a visit after dark, however, in case the Daly boys were feeling frisky."



Board Member Spotlight: John Roche

By Ellen Dowling



John Roche is the newest member of the Board of Directors of the IAS. Here are his responses to my questions.

1. Tell us about your professional and personal background. And what brought you to New Mexico?

I grew up in Hartford, Connecticut. I'm a poet and retired English professor, having taught for the better part of forty years at such schools as Michigan State, Emory University, and Rochester Institute of Technology. At RIT, I got to teach the occasional Irish Literature class, following the retirement of our beloved chair, Sister Mary Sullivan (biographer of Catherine McAuley, and official historian of the Sisters of Mercy).

In 2011, I hosted the distinguished Albuquerque poet Margaret Randall at RIT and she told me about a great annual symposium, the Albuquerque Cultural Conference (hosted by West End Press). I attended it that August, which is where I met my future wife Jules Nyquist, also a poet. We now run Jules Poetry Playhouse in Placitas, and have a small press, Poetry Playhouse Publications.

2. What is your interest in Irish culture? Do you have Irish ancestors?

I am seven-eighths Irish, Roche being an Anglo-Norman or Anglo-Flemish name fairly common in Wexford, Limerick, and especially the Fermoy area of north Cork. I've been doing some family history of late, spurred by the COVID-related death at Christmas of our family matriarch, 93-year-old Barbara Roche. I'm descended from Sheas and Laings and Aherns on my father's side and Bradys, Dalys, Crehans, Toners, and McGahans on my mom's side.

3. Have you ever been to Ireland?

I took an undergraduate Irish Literature class with Lee Jacobus at the University of Connecticut in the mid-70s, which inspired me to enroll in the M.A. in Anglo-Irish Studies program at UCD (University College Dublin).

I lived in the Dublin Rathmines and Rathgar neighborhoods in 1977-78 while completing the program, and got to travel around the country pretty extensively. I went back to visit friends in 2005, and again in 2018 (with Jules).

4. What would you like to see the IAS focus on in the coming months?

I'm quite excited to see the way Zoom has opened up opportunities for conversations with Irish authors and artists, despite the time zone difficulties. But I'm also looking forward to the return of in-person events like the picnic.

Alive: But Not a Movie Review

By Elena Gallegos

[Editor's Note: The valiant Elena Gallegos has bravely stepped up to answer the call as Roving Reporter for the *Irish Times*! If you have any items of Irish or Celtic interest that would be suitable for a newsletter, please let her know! (elenavgallegos@aol.com)]

We've been watching a lot of movies in this COVID world, and recently we watched, or in my case re-watched, *Alive*. This 1993 movie is based upon the true story of the Uruguayan rugby team's fight for survival after their plane crashed in the Andes mountains on route to Chile for a tournament. However, my article here is not a movie review, except to say that for those who have not seen the movie *Alive*, I highly recommend watching it.



The thing that struck me upon watching this movie again is that the crest on the rugby players' uniforms contains a shamrock. I don't remember noticing this the first time I watched it, or if I did the notion was lost upon getting involved in the story. This time I looked it up and indeed there is an Irish connection as explained by Hugh FitzGerald Ryan in the journal *Society for Irish Latin American Studies* entitled, "The Development of Rugby in the River Plate Region: Irish Influences." In summary, a religious organization founded in Ireland called The Irish Christian Brothers established schools in Ireland and throughout the world.

In Uruguay the school is called Stella Maris College. The Irish Christian Brothers, or The Brothers, as they were informally known, established rugby as the principal game to be played at Stella Maris. According to the author, The Brothers chose rugby, despite its British origins, because the sport encourages teamwork and The Brothers felt that the spirit of the game would positively influence the students throughout life. In 1965, according to the author (see footnote), alumni

members of the school established a rugby club and named it the Old Christians Club. For the crest they placed a shamrock over a blue background as a symbolic emblem of the school's Irish origins.

The 30th anniversary DVD of *Alive* has a special features section worth watching. There are interviews with survivors, footage of the rescue, and of them playing rugby. I checked out a copy from the public library. For all the readers out there, the movie is based on the book *Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors* by Piers Paul Read.

Here is the link for the full article referenced above: https://www.irlandeses.org/0803ryan3.htm
Alive, Directed by Frank Marshal, starring Ethan Hawke and Josh Hamilton, Touchstone Pictures and Paramount Pictures, 1993 and 2002 for the 30th anniversary edition.

Footnote: In the article the author cites 1965 as the founding year of the club, but the club's website states 1962 as the founding year. (Historia - Old Christians Club | Rugby . Fútbol . Hockey)

Ireland 1921-2021

From The Journal. IE

[Editor's Note: At our April 9 meeting, Larry Kirwan gave us a stirring, profound look at what it might have been like to grow up in Ireland during the 1950s, and also discussed the impact of the 1921 War of Independence on later generations. To commemorate the centenary of that War, here is a continuation of the timeline of events from the May issue.]

June

2 June: Two weeks after the failed attack in Kilmeena, the West Mayo Brigade led by Michael Kilroy win a significant victory at Carrowkennedy between Lennane and Westport. Seven members of an RIC patrol are killed.

22 June: King George V delivers a speech at the formal opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland and appeals for peace.

24 June: Prime Minister David Lloyd George invites De Valera to London to discuss a settlement.

24 June: The IRA bomb a troop train in Armagh. Four soldiers and two civilians are killed. 80 horses are also killed.

July

9 July: A truce is called between British and Irish forces, coming into effect as of noon on 11 July.

10 July: Four British soldiers and five IRA men are killed in a gun battle at Castlemaine, Co. Kerry. It is the last major engagement of the War of Independence.

11 July: Truce comes into effect at noon. It's estimated that since the Easter Rising, about 2,000 people have

been killed in the conflict, including 550 IRA volunteers, 410 RIC members and over 700 civilians.

September

14 September: Dáil meets and approves the delegation that are to attend the peace conference with the British side. De Valera announces he will not go and his decision is supported by Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack and Robert Barton and opposed by Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins and Willam Cosgrave.



October

11 October: Negotiations between the Irish and British governments begin in London, with the delegation of Irish plenipotentiaries led by Griffith.

Talks last for almost two months and include tense communications back and forth between the Irish negotiators in London and the rest of the government in Dublin.

December

6 December: The Anglo-Irish Treaty is signed but still needs to be ratified by the elected representatives of both Britain and Ireland.

14 December: The Dáil begins debate on the Treaty, which continues into the New Year.

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



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. ③]

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.)





Free Genealogy Research Days!

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

Irish-American Society of New Mexico

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please Check One: Me	mbership Application
First Name:	Last Name:
If this is a renewal, has your	contact information changed? Yes No
Phone:	State: Zip:
Please choose your members	hip level:
Student (\$10)	dividual (\$20)
(Optional) Additional Asperson)*	ssociate Membership to the German-American Club (\$5 per
• -	onal GAC fee to a family IAS membership, please indicate which ald receive a GAC associate membership card (and add \$5 per
	e your newsletter by US mail (instead of electronically), please o your annual membership to help offset the costs of mailing and
Enclosed is a total of \$	
	ks payable to "The Irish-American Society" and mail to: Box 13435, Albuquerque, NM 87192-3435 OR
You can also visit our web	site (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) and pay by credit card.
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