



IRISH TIMES

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

MARCH 2026

Note: Irish-American Society meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month, **except during June, July, and August** (and for special events), at the First Unitarian Church Memorial Room (3701 Carlisle Blvd NE).

Next Event:
The Annual IAS St. Patrick's Party!
Friday, March 13, 2026
6 to 9 PM
At the First Unitarian Church



Wandering the Burren

**Come join us for some grand
craic, good food, and toe-
tapping entertainment!**

Details on p. 6



**The McTeggart Irish Step
Dancers**



The Irish Setters



Reminder: Membership dues for 2026 were due on January 1st.
If you've already renewed, THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

2026 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 505-307-1700). Your sponsorship will also appear on the IAS website at no extra charge.

President's Message

By Caren Garcia

Hello everyone! I hope you have enjoyed the nice weather we have been having in New Mexico. I love it, in spite of the dry downside.



We had fun at our February meeting featuring the wonderful duo Two Leaf Clover (pictured on the right). Thanks to them for the entertainment and thanks to everyone who brought snacks for us to enjoy and to Tracee Edwards for bringing the supplies despite grandma duties. [On the left is a picture of our February raffle winner, guest Jim Ney, holding his prize—a lovely Irish dish donated by Belinda Martorelli from her late mom's collection.]

We are getting everything ready for our BIG St. Patrick's Day Party that is right around the corner. Please register at the website (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) so we have a fairly accurate count, especially if you plan to have a beer or wine with your dinner! Please bring a dish to share and get ready to have a great evening. We don't usually have our parties in the evening, so this one is unique, running from 6-9 PM in the Social Hall across from our meeting room.

The City of Albuquerque did not grant us the use of their Gallery to celebrate Irish-American Heritage as we had hoped, but we'll find another forum for those plans in the near future, I hope. Keep an eye on this page for news and have an awesome Irish Heritage Month!!

Membership Report

By Molly Martin

Cead Mile Failte: No new members this past month. We currently have a total of 143 members: 1 student, 40 singles, and 102 family members.

St. Patrick's is around the corner and I hope to see all of you at the party. Do not forget to bring your dues to the party if you have not paid for 2026. This will be your last chance to pay before being taken off the active members. Do not get blown away in all these spring winds and join us for a party!

Reminder: Please bring your pull-tabs for the Ronald McDonald House to the monthly meeting for collection by Molly Martin!

PLACITAS WINERY
presents
"The IRISH SETTERS"

ABQ FOLK FESTIVAL FAVORITES
celebrate St. Patrick's Day early!

COMMUNITY FUN! SUNDAY, MARCH 15
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Treasurer's Report January 1 - January 31, 2026*

Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer			
Category	Income	Category	Expenses
Membership—electronic/Square (less fees; see expenses)	\$255.00	Square fees (membership)	-\$9.61
Membership: cash/checks	\$587.00	Ck #425: First Unitarian Church, rental for January 9 meeting	-\$110.00
		Check #426: Michele Buchanan, for NM Celtic Singers, January entertainment	-\$100.00
Total Income	\$842.00	Total Expenses	-\$219.61
		IAS Account prior month's ENDING balance	\$4,955.32
		Plus Income (current month)	\$842.00
		Less Expenses (current month)	-\$219.61
	Loss/Gain	\$622.39	
		*Ending Balance as of date of report	\$5,577.71

Team Ireland's Results at the 2026 Winter Olympics



It was another exciting Olympics full of surprise wins and losses. Team Ireland showed true grit and finished their races on tough slopes where many athletes did not finish. After allocations and re-allocations, four athletes qualified to represent Ireland. First up, Cormac Comerford (pictured 2nd from left) and Anabelle Zurbay both qualified for events in Alpine Skiing. (I missed her in last month's article.) She represents Ireland through her grandmother, Rosaleen McCarthy Miskella, who is from Rosemount, County Westmeath. This is her first Olympics and she was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony.

	Downhill	Super-G	Giant Slalom	Slalom
Cormac Comerford	34th, 2:04.40 (+12.79)	37th, 1:34.58 (+9.26)	42nd, 2:41.75 (+16.75)	31st, 2:10.24 (+16.63)
Anabelle Zurbay			48th, 2:31.70 (+18.20)	48th, 1:58.50 (+19.4)

Men's Cross-Country Skiing	10km + 10km Skiathlon	10km Free Interval Start	50km Mass Start Classic
Thomas Maloney Westgaard (on the right)	35th, 49:24.6 (+3:13.6)	54th, 23:08 (+2:31.8)	23rd, 2:18:56.5 (+12:11.7)

Finally, in **Freestyle Skiing, the Men's Freeski Halfpipe event**, Ben Lynch (pictured left) made Olympic history by being the first Irish skier to advance to the finals. He landed in 8th place with a score of 75.00. A brilliant first Olympics for him!

The Irish Book Club

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 January was *Amongst Women* by John McGahern; for February, we read *The Ginger Man* by J. P. Donleavy; and in March, we'll discuss *The Night Boat to Tangier* by Kevin Barry.

Amongst Women by John McGahern

Description from AI: "*Amongst Women* is a 1990 novel by Irish author John McGahern, shortlisted for the Booker Prize, that centers on Michael Moran, a tyrannical, widowed former IRA officer raising his five children on a small farm in rural Ireland. The story explores the patriarchal control he exerts, alternating between love and abuse, as his children grow and seek independence, reflecting broader themes of Irish society, family dynamics, and the struggle between tradition and modernity. **Key aspects of the novel:**

Protagonist: Michael Moran, a former guerrilla fighter from the Irish War of Independence, who struggles with his past and exerts control over his family.

Setting: A farm in County Leitrim, Ireland, spanning about twenty years in the mid-20th century.

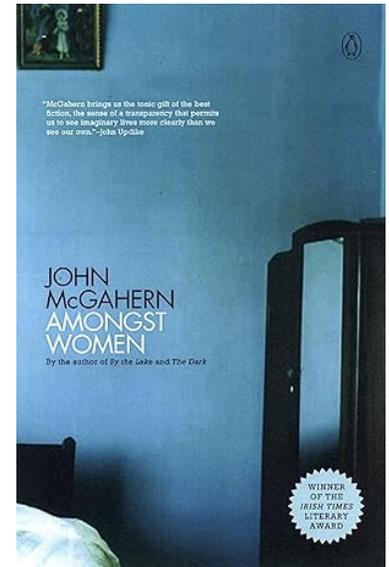
Plot: Moran's life with his second wife, Rose, and his five children (two sons, three daughters) as they grow up and leave home, highlighting his shifting moods and the family's struggle for autonomy.

Themes: Patriarchal power, the impact of the past on the present, the changing role of women in Ireland, and the conflict between love and tyranny within a family.

Critical Reception: Considered a masterpiece of Irish literature, praised for its realistic detail and exploration of complex family relationships."

Ellen's take: "I once had a friend who told me she had broken up with her boyfriend because he was 'too high maintenance.' Have you ever known someone like that? Someone who is so surrounded by self-inflicted eggshells that you have to carefully step over and around, so as not to set the person off and risk, at best, cruel ridicule, and at worst, sudden violence? This is the character of Michael Moran, the embittered and short-fused 'Daddy,' whom his three daughters worriedly love, whom his lovely wife Rose tries to protect and deflect, and with whom his two sons clash and ultimately crash.

Every evening, EVERY evening no matter what, Moran demands that his family drop to their knees beside the dining room table (the smaller children kneel beside chairs) to say the entire rosary, all five 'decades.' And at hay harvest time, all are similarly expected to help with the baling, no matter how long or painful the work. Yet they all love this long-retired IRA man, one who still mourns and longs for his prior days of military service, days when life was often cheap but the accomplishments were grand. I can't stop thinking about this family. It was a pretty quick read because it's only 184 pages long and the writing is absolutely stunning, the sentences carried along by an underlying sense of dread and the characters all achingly real. If you really want to know what life was like on an Irish farm in the 50s, read this book."



Come Join Us!

The Annual IAS St. Patrick's Party

Friday, March 13, 2026
6:00 to 9:00 PM

First Unitarian Church Social Hall
3701 Carlisle Blvd. NE



Entry Fees: Online Preferred Option (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com)

Adults (12 years and over): \$10

Adults (21 years and over)—includes two drink tickets for beer or wine: \$20
(must present ID at the door)

Child (5-12 years): \$5

Under 5: Free

Entry Fees: At the Door (cash, check, or credit card)

Adults: \$20 (Includes two drink tickets if over 21; must present ID)

Child (5-12 years): \$5

Under 5: Free



Featured Entertainment

6:00 - 6:30: The McTeggart Irish Step Dancers

6:45 - 7:45: Wandering the Burren

8:00 - 9:00: The Irish Setters



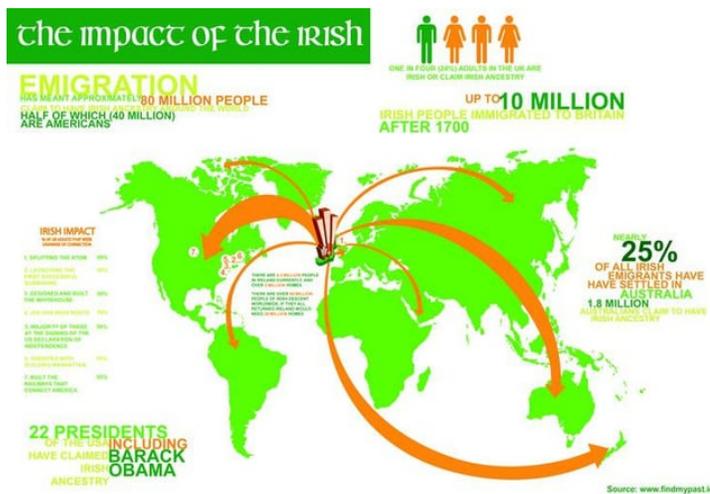
Pot Luck!!

Please bring a dish to share and mark your utensils with your name.
(Kitchen available for reheating.)

The IAS will provide coffee, tea, water, and sodas.

Support for the Irish Abroad

By Caren Garcia



Did you know that the government of the Republic of Ireland is actively involved in supporting the descendants of Irish citizens known as the Irish Diaspora throughout the world? In times past, so many were forced to leave because of starvation and heartless policies that there are far more Irish descendants throughout the world than there are remaining in the homeland. As of April 2025, there are 5.46 million people in the Republic, but over 70 million people world-wide who claim Irish heritage, with one out of every 10 Americans claiming Irish ancestry.

Following extensive research and public outreach, in 2019 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade created an organization to address the needs

of the diaspora with the goals of encouraging economic development and overall goodwill among descendants of those who live abroad but retain emotional and family ties to Ireland, The Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) operates via numerous organizations in many countries with stated objectives of “support for the vulnerable and underrepresented (and) nurturing Ireland’s cultural heritage abroad among the diaspora.” (www.ireland.ie) Since 2004, grants of over 250 million Euros have been provided via over 900 agencies in 51 different countries. This kind of investment shows how much the Irish government wants to foster pride and support the advancement of those who identify with their Irish cultural heritage.

Organizations supporting the diaspora and businesses serving their communities can apply for grants to assist them in their efforts. I don’t know of any other country that has shown this much interest in and concern for their nation’s emigrants. Due to the longstanding domination of the Irish people by Great Britain and the repressive nature of the associated laws and tactics, followed by years of economic struggle, Ireland could not support their people in times past. They had to stand by and watch as their citizenry fled. Today a strong and vital state exists and is seeking to reach out and support the descendants of those men, women, and children.

I became aware of this effort through contact with the [Irish Consulate](#) for our region, which is located in Los Angeles. The newest Deputy Consul General, Dominic Berkeley, came to visit last year and VP Tracee Edwards and I met with him in Albuquerque, as reported in this newsletter. It’s great to have that kind of interest and support.

You might be interested to know where the Irish diaspora lives today other than the US, where there are 36 million claiming Irish origins (five times more people than currently live in Ireland). Here are the most populous landing places:

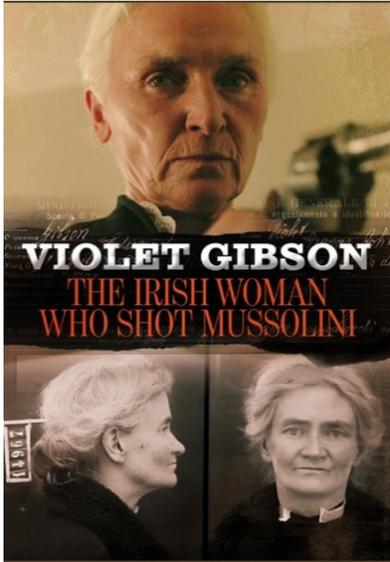
- ♣ The UK has the most, as the average citizen of Britain has over 20% Irish blood; 6 million people claim Irish descent and over half-million of the total UK population are Irish-born.
- ♣ Canada has over 40,00 Irish citizens living there and 11.2% of the total population are of Irish descent.
- ♣ The number of Irish-born people in Australia is now over 100,000 in 2024 of which 66% have applied for Australian citizenship.
- ♣ In Spain, 1.4 million people identify as being of Irish descent and about 3% of their residents are Irish citizens.
- ♣ Other nations with large Irish populations are Germany, India, and China. I bet you didn’t think of that! About a million people in China claim Irish ancestry. Significant numbers are also found in France, New Zealand, Argentina, Poland, Mexico, and the Caribbean nations. (www.irishresearchers.com)

Biopic Review: *Violet Gibson: The Irish Woman Who Shot Mussolini*

By Elena Gallegos

“I’m so glad God gave me an Irish tongue to lead them all on a merry dance.”

—Hon. Violet Gibson in a letter to a friend



Older historians have dubbed her a “demented Irishwoman,” a “half-mad mystic,” “a crazy Irish spinster,” and so on, but was she? Whether a re-introduction for those who forgot this bit of world history or for those who just never knew it, this 2020 biopic explains why this story became a footnote in the history books.

The film, directed by Barrie Dowdall, is based on a 2010 book by Frances Stonor Saunders with the same title. Both offer an extensive look into Violet’s early life and a re-examination of the facts that led up to the shooting and her subsequent incarceration in an asylum. Although Violet did lead them all on a “merry dance,” she was not insane. At the time, however, silencing her was politically expedient and helped the family save themselves from further embarrassment.

Saunders’s book, which brought fundamental attention to Violet Gibson’s story, previously inspired a 2014 RTÉ radio documentary (<https://www.rte.ie/radio/doconone/647669-documentary-irishwoman-shot-mussolini-violet-gibson>). Moreover, Dublin Councillor Mannix Flynn proposed a memorial to honor Violet as an anti-fascist revolutionary. In 2022, a plaque recognizing that sentiment was mounted on the exterior wall of her childhood home at 12 Merrion Square in Dublin.



The subtitles added to the movie are sometimes confusing or interpreted with the wrong word. For instance, Saunders says “alms,” but it’s subtitled as “arms.” It can also be confusing for Americans trying to follow the family history and the name changes that accompany changes in British titles. Overall, however, the film is informative and entertaining. It is packed full of details and interviews with the author herself, historians, an Italian archivist, and family members. Olwen Fouéré convincingly portrays Violet Gibson, and quotes highlighted throughout the film bring her voice to life. As the credits roll, Irish folk singer/songwriter, Lisa O’Neill sings “Violet Gibson,” an interpretation from Violet’s point of view. The song is on her album *Heard a Long Gone Song*.

The biopic is available for streaming on the CABQ library’s eResource, Hoopla. The DVD and book are also available for checkout.

Support Your Local Irish/Scottish/Celtic Musicians/Performers

Bardic Sisters

Storytelling, narratives, readings and poetry with and through musical accompaniment. Gwen Easterday and Kathy Wimmer on Celtic harps, other folk instruments, and vocals. Contact Kathy at kmillewimm@comcast.net (505-249-7012).

Colleens and Lassies

Featuring Irish and Scottish songs and tunes with Mary Templeton and Kathy Wimmer on fiddle, Celtic harp, and other instruments. Contact Kathy at kmillewimm@comcast.net (505-249-7012).

Saoirse (“seer shih,” Irish for “freedom”)

Celtic music from Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Galicia, spiced with jazz and world beat. Contact: John Brinduse: jbrinduse@swcp.com

A Jug O’Punch

A trio playing Irish music galore! Contact Suzanne Taichert: suzannetaichert@gmail.com

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 Harlow Pinson (hpinson@indepthl.com)

Michele Buchanan, Harper 505-765-1288 (tmbuchs@gmail.com) and contact person for ***The Celtic Singers of NM.***

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).

Wandering the Burren

Performing the traditional music of Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, Brittany, Galicia and Astorias, as well as Quebec. We also play original music that celebrates these traditions. To contact, email ssponar07@gmail.com or rebecca@unm.edu

Irish Setters

A Celtic folk band playing traditional Irish tunes and songs on fiddle, banjo, guitar, and bass. Contact: Erika Gerety (erika@unm.edu)

Celtic Band Trí (meaning “three”), are Eileen Sullivan, Louis Scuderi, and Dain Forsythe. In addition to fiddle and flute, add Irish bouzouki, ballads, and Irish traditional songs. Contact: Louis Scuderi or Eileen Sullivan at ljscuderi@gmail.com or estreetfiddle@yahoo.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.brightburnacademy.com> for further information.

♣ **The McTeggart School of Irish Dance**, Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Founded in Cork, Ireland, in 1939, and in New Mexico in 1997, they offer classes to children and adults ages 4 and up, from beginner to championship. For more info, visit <https://irishdancenewmexico.com/>

♣ **Ceili dance classes** are held every Wednesday at the GAC. The **new** time is 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience necessary! (For info, call Steve Lavery at 505-688-4756.)

Celtic Music on the Radio and the Web:

♣ **Larry Kirwan's Celtic Crush radio show** happens on The Loft station on SIRIUS XM radio according to his schedule (times in ET). Eclectic styles of music from Ireland, Scotland, and the world's "Celtic music" diaspora! Great fun! More info: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNloyz-LHidbztD_eGnKScyMQr-NWxVrq

♣ **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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(505) 415-4390
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<https://www.brightburnacademy.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

Calendar of Events

IAS Events

Date	Day	What
March 5	Thursday	<i>IAS Board of Directors meeting</i> , 7 PM on Zoom. (All members are welcome; email Don Hardy for the link.)
March 13	Friday	<i>IAS Annual St. Patrick's Day Party</i> , 6-9 PM. See details on p. 6.
April 2	Thursday	<i>IAS Board of Directors meeting</i> , 7 PM in person at the Quarter Celtic Brewpub on Lomas.
April 10	Friday	<i>IAS Monthly Meeting and Program</i> : A discussion by author of Irish mysteries, Carlene O'Connor.

Celtic Community Events

March 1 & 15	Sundays	<i>Two Leaf Clover (Nikelle Gessner and David Garcia)</i> play for Sunday Brunch at Two Fools Tavern every 1 st and 3 rd Sunday of the month from 11 AM – 2 PM.
March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Tuesdays	<i>The Irish Slow Session</i> meets Tuesdays at 6:30 PM in the Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational center, near Central and Eubank. For info, contact Kip Malone on Facebook .
March 4, 11, 18, 25	Wednesdays	<i>Ceili Dancing Classes at the GAC</i> , 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience necessary! (Call Steve Lavery at 505-688-4756 for info.)
March 4, 11, 18, 25	Wednesdays	<i>Celtic Music Session</i> at the Singing Arrow Community Center (13200 Wenonah Ave SE) from 5:45-7:45 PM. This is a sheet-music-discouraged (but not prohibited) format and the music is the High & Dry list. For more info, contact Bob Deaver (bpdeaver@gmail.com).
March 4, 11, 18, 25	Wednesdays	<i>Irish Trad Music Session in Taos</i> , 6-8 PM, at the Barra Vino, 241 LeDoux St. For more information, contact Jamie at jaima@taosnet.com or 575-779-1018.
March 5, 12, 19, 26	Thursdays	<i>Albuquerque Traditional Irish Music Open Session</i> from 7-9 PM at Hops Brewery, 7222 4 th Street. For more info, contact Harlow Pinson at hpinson@indepth1.com .
March 7 & 21	Saturday	<i>First and Third Saturday Irish Session</i> , from noon to 2 PM, at The Lucky Goose, 3503 Central NE. All levels are welcome. Our pace can be fast or moderate, but hopefully always fun. The food is vegetarian and terrific. For info, contact Susan Sponar at https://www.facebook.com/susan.sponar/about
March 15	Sunday	<i>The Irish Setters</i> performing at the Placitas Winery, 4 to 6 PM. (Details on p. 3.)
March 16	Monday	<i>Irish band Lunasa</i> performing at Fusion in Albuquerque, 7:30 PM. For tickets and info, click here .
March 23	Monday	<i>Welsh guitarist Gwenifer Raymond</i> performing at Fusion in Albuquerque, 7:30 PM. For tickets and info, click here

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 (\$25) Individual (\$30) Family (\$35)

(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? _____

You can also visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Irish-American-Society-of-New-Mexico-175569365825710>