

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

April 2025

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 **Ramada Plaza** (2020 Menaul Blvd NE).

# Next Meeting: April 11, 2025 7 PM A Musical Performance by Saiorse!

Saoirse (Seer-sha, Irish for "freedom") is a multigenerational (ages 22-77) Celtic eclectic band that has been performing in Albuquerque, in one configuration or another, since 2004. Their music, both vocal and instrumental, is drawn from the various Celtic Nations and their diaspora, and includes modern as well as traditional pieces.



They are inspired by the works of contemporary musicians from Ireland, Scotland, Galicia, and Atlantic Canada. *Saoirse* has performed at the Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival, Albuquerque Folk Festival, Albuquerque Renaissance Faire, Wildlife West, and the Edgewood Celtic Festival, as well as numerous concert and club venues throughout Central New Mexico. They have also recorded two CDs, *Celtic Eclectic* (2007) and *Rigs* (2012).

Members of the band include Claire Brown (lead vocals, backup guitar), Tessa Frias (cello), Lisa Nichols (flute), Lucy Wang (fiddle), Ryan Merrill (percussion), and John Brinduse (guitar).

We hope to see you there and we hope you will bring a sweet or salty snack to share!

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Lic. #416173 GB98 www.jacksnm.com john@jacksnm.com 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 springtime! So glad the weather is warming up and there are lots of activities in our area to enjoy. Speaking of great events, we just had our biggest annual celebration on the eve of St. Patrick's Day. We had a marvelous turnout and fabulous entertainment. We all left well-fed and smiling. Thanks to all those who helped



Wandering the Burren

Please come out for our monthly General Meeting on April 11, which features the group *Saoirse*. You don't have to be able to say it correctly for admission and you could win our door prize! Everyone gets a ticket just for coming to the meeting. Bring a snack to share and feel free to enjoy the cash bar and grill next door to our meeting room at the Ramada.

with set-up and clean-up. A special thanks to Molly Martin, who makes sure we have all the supplies we need and decorations galore. Hats off to the musical groups *Wandering the Burren* and *the Irish Setters*, who made the event such fun, as well as McTeggart's School of Irish Dance, who never cease to impress with their skills. Thanks to Ellen Dowling for working with them to make it happen.



The Irish Setters

# **Membership Report**

By Molly Martin

Cead Mile Failte: 100,000 welcomes to our newest members: Kathleen Hays, Beth Crowder and family, Martin and Kelly Sullivan, and Judi Anderson. Welcome back Carey Doyle and family, John Blakeslee, and Linda Thomas. We now have a total of 103 members after all the renewals were counted.

The St. Patrick's party was great fun. We got several new members and welcomed some returning members.

Hope you all had fun at the party, and we will look forward to seeing you at the next meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup> for some great music.

# Collection of aluminum pull-tabs for Ronald McDonald House Continues



Please bring your aluminum beverage tabs to an IAS meeting for collection by Molly Martin.

# Treasurer's Report February 1 – 28, 2025\*

**Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer** 

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Category	Income		Category	Expenses
Membership: cash/checks	\$485.00		Square fees: Membership	-\$8.64
Membership: electronic/Square (less fees—see				
expenses)				
	\$225.00		Square fees: Donation	-\$1.45
Newsletter sponsorship—check from Two Fools	\$120.00		Square fees: St. Pat's tickets/entry	-\$0.88
Donation: Karen Wall; electronic/square less fees			Fees (printing and postage) to mail	
(see expenses)	\$50.00		Visa materials for Irish musicians	-\$53.45
			City of Albuquerque: reservation of	
			Elena Gallegos open space, Kiwanis	
St. Pat's tickets/entry fees—cash/checks	\$40.00		pavilion, for September picnic	-\$225.00
St. Pat's tickets/entry fees—electronic/square			Check card (POS): Ramada hotel, for	
(less fees—see expenses)	\$20.00		General Meeting Feb. 14.	-\$152.51
			Ck # 400: Renata Golden, talk at	
Check Card credit: Ramada Hotel for Feb. 14			general meeting (\$100) and copy of her	
meeting	\$6.10		book for door prize (\$18.00)	-\$118.00
T-shirt sales	\$40.00			
Reimbursement of fees (printing and postage) to				
mail Visa materials for Irish musicians	\$53.45			
Total Income	\$1,039.55		Total Expenses	-\$559.93
			IAS Account prior month's ENDING	
			balance	\$4,448.06
			Plus Income (current month)	\$1,039.55
			Less Expenses (current month)	(-\$559.93)
	Loss/Gain		\$479.62	
			*Ending Balance as of date of report	\$4,927.68

## Another Work of Art by an IAS Member!



Artist and IAS member Virginia Maria Romero (who designed our fabulous Salmon of Knowledge IAS T-shirts), has also been chosen to design the poster for the 2025 Las Cruces International Film Festival (LCIFF). The 10<sup>th</sup> annual LCIFF, which runs from April 9-13, is supported by New Mexico State University and Visit Las Cruces. Romero's artworks have been selected for collections around the world. She is one of a few non-Hispanic artists to master traditional New Mexican santero techniques. Although born in Ohio, Romero has lived in New Mexico since 1982. She and her husband moved from Santa Fe to Las Cruces in the 1990s. In 2013, Romero was recognized as a distinguished artist and poet by the American Council for Polish Culture. Her Polish ancestry

is the other major inspiration for Romero's religiously themed art.

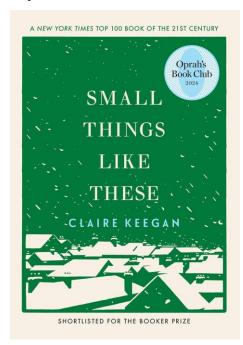
#### The Irish Book Club

If you are on Facebook, just type The Irish Book Club into the search bar (or click on <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/2022642747761043/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/2022642747761043/</a>) and you'll find us. Our book for February was *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan; for March, we're reading *The Woman Who Walked into Doors* by Roddy Doyle; in April we'll read the second book in Roddy Doyle's trilogy, *Paula Spencer*.

#### Small Things Like These, by Claire Keegan

Amazon's description: "Small Things Like These is award-winning author Claire Keegan's landmark new novel, a tale of one man's courage and a remarkable portrait of love and family. It is 1985 in a small Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal merchant and family man, faces into his busiest season. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Bill makes a discovery which forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church. An international bestseller, Small Things Like These is a deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy from one of our most critically lauded and iconic writers."

Book Club members react: "Oh, what a small gem of a small novella is *Small Things Like These*. For those of you who haven't read it yet, it's really a short story—took me two hours to read the whole thing." (Ellen)



"A real masterpiece. I met Claire Keegan at a writers' festival and she told me she writes a huge amount of drafts—like dozens, honing each one until she feels it's ready. Another of her books, *Foster*, is also beautiful and it has been made into an Irish language film, *An Cailin Ciuin (The Quiet Girl)*. The film is stunning, much more beautiful visually than *Small Things*. If you can get your hands on it, don't let the fact that it is in Irish put you off. There is minimal script and subtitles. One of the most beautiful films I've seen." (Anne McLoughlin) [Note: *The Quiet Girl* is currently streaming on Hulu and Disney+.]

*Small Things Like These* has also been made into a wonderful movie, starring Cillian Murphy (of *Oppenheimer* fame). It's available on Amazon Prime to rent for \$5.99. Impressions:

- 1. There is no one on this planet better playing at brooding angst than Cillian Murphy. (Those eyes, those cheekbones!)
- 2. There is no one better at playing a mother superior with a heart of coal than Emily Watson. (She also reminded me of her comic doppelganger, Sister Michael in *Derry Girls*.)
- 3. The film is so dark, so cold, even with the Christmas lights and a blazing hearth, the Coal Man cannot seem to find any warmth in his town of squinting windows. (Reference to an earlier book we read, called *The Valley of the Squinting Windows*. Same idea: tut-tutting busybodies quick to criticize, slow to show any signs of human decency.)
- 4. The film is just an almost perfect depiction of the events in the book, including the final scene. I had the same reaction to both endings: What is Eileen going to say about all this? And who cares—Bill has done the right and decent thing.

# Movie Review: Joyride

By Elena Gallegos



As I was perusing the movies at my local library, *Joyride* caught my eye. I turned to the back cover and saw that Emer Reynolds directed it. (For those who love science, she also directed *The Farthest*, the multiple award-winning documentary about the two Voyager space probes). I was sold!

From the synopsis on the back of the DVD: "Fleeing from his father, 12-year-old Mully (Charlie Reid) steals a taxi and is shocked to find Joy, played by Academy Award and Emmy Award winner Olivia Coleman (*The Favourite*, *The Crown*), in the back seat with her baby. Joy has decided to give her baby away to a friend, and Mully is on the run from his debt-ridden dad. And so two loveable rogues go on a wild journey across Ireland, gradually finding the friendship and love they never knew they needed in each other."

The 2022 movie is billed as a comedy/drama and is not rated. Ailbhe Keogan wrote the screenplay and it also stars Lochlann O'Mearain (*Outlander*) as Mully's dad.

Joy's mantra throughout the movie is, "I'm going forward, not backward!" Yet there are hiccups that keep her from that

trajectory, including meeting Mully, a very mature pre-teen with a blunt, witty (and foul) tongue. After a truth or pass game, the two strike a deal to help each other with their perceived goals.

The movie has some funny lines and heartwarming moments. The verbal sparring between the two is fun to watch and the rapport between Joy and Mully is believable. Overall, the performances by Olivia Coleman and Charlie Reid are very good.

There is some water imagery that is used in the movie to try to draw some parallels between the characters. Other scenes are confusing and don't seem to do anything to advance the story. At one point I thought Joy was ill and needed to go to a hospital, but it turns out the writer and director just wanted to emphasize the messiness of new motherhood.

This movie is probably more for the Olivia Coleman fan, but it is a good introduction to the up-and-coming Irish actor, Charlie Reid. He is able to hold his own with the Oscar-winning actress and he can also belt out a Cab Calloway classic. Undoubtedly, we will be seeing him again.

[Note: *Joyride* is currently streaming on Hulu and on Disney+.]

# Life in Ireland: 100 Years and Counting

By Caren Garcia

I want to explore what life is like in today's Ireland compared to 100 years ago, when she gained her independence. I'm sure you are aware that there have been substantial changes. The year 1920 ended with the creation of the Irish Free State and the territory of Northern Ireland. Irish Prime Minister Eamon de Valera presided over the official formation of Eire, which became a republic in 1949, sans six counties. In 1922-23, the Irish Civil War raged, and many young men were caught up in it, died, or were imprisoned. All this chaos prevented a census from being taken until 1926. Because of a 100-year release law, that full census will not be published until about April 2026, so available information is partial.



In the early days of independence, much of the population lived in small, semi-rural communities or on farms, still using pack animals and hard physical labor to make a living. Most travel was local and involved walking or riding horseback. Children often went shoeless, and homes were self-built. Horse-drawn carts are seen in footage of the era carrying needed equipment and supplies. Virtually everyone attended Sunday mass wearing their best clothes saved for the occasion. Ireland had barely moved from subsistence farming and lake/stream fishing to outside work, such as sea fishing and factory labor. A bit better employment as a clerk, teacher, banker or merchant was dependent on education or the ability to get start-up funds for shops and shipping. Few women were

employed in anything other than family businesses and home-making. Besides cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing, many also marketed their farm's produce or catch of the day, repaired fishing nets, or did laundry for others. Big changes only began about 25 years ago.

I doubt that any of that comes as a big surprise to you, but I include it for comparison to today, when Ireland is very much a part of Europe and its economy. Initially considered one of the poorest four members of the European Union in the 1980s, Ireland rose by the 2000s to become one of the EU's fastest growing economies, with many involved in the high-technology industry and other manufacturing fields. Here are some things you might not know: At the same time that most people are now living in cities, 80% of the land area is still devoted to pastureland, as sheep and cattle markets remain a major source of income and mostly for export. Stud farms are a very lucrative field, especially in County Kildare, and farmers are not growing so many potatoes either, as barley is the number one crop (used for livestock feed as well as beer!).

Education has been a major factor in these changes. Children begin school at age five and must remain until age 16. During second level schooling, students take a junior certificate exam that helps them determine if they should pursue a college education or trade school training.

Culturally, Ireland is not one single entity, but several very different ones, depending on whether the area is more urban or rural in nature. Dublin, of course, has a very European and modern style, while rural communities may be distinctly different. In quality-of-life surveys, Dublin was ranked at the top for both

Ireland and the United Kingdom (which includes Northern Ireland). Some shared things remain, and Trad events, which include music and dancing, craft, and even storytelling are well attended, as are local and national sporting events. The pub remains the focal point of social life, having recovered from a downturn after new laws were passed providing for family hours, smoking bans, and stricter enforcement of "drink driving" laws.



You can learn a lot about the changes by looking at some statistics.

	1920	2022	
Population	2,971,992	5,150,000 (ROI)	1,256,322 (NI)
Down 5.3% from 1911		8% increase from 2016	

**Religion** 92.6% Catholic 69% Catholic/14% No Religion (ROI)

I could not find a statistic for life expectancy in 1926, but for 1950, a chart showed it was 65.5 years of age; in 1960, 78.5; in 1960, 82.66; and in 2022, 84.2 for women and 80.9 for men.

#### The labor force in 1926: The labor force now:

51% Agriculture
Wholesale/retail had the most workers.

Health and Social Work

Manufacturing, Construction

Telecom

Agriculture/forestry/fishing-only (82,000 workers)

Presently, three times more people are retired versus 2016, and around 10% of people over 65 are still working. The number of men looking after the home has increased by 33%, and about 20% fewer women report that they are employed looking after the home. The largest number of women in the labor force are in the age group 25-34 at 83%. About 8% of individuals 15 and over are unemployed. A little additional data from Northern Ireland: The population 70 and over is about 4.8% (60,501 people), and the most older folks live in Fermanagh and Tyrone, 7.1 and 6.8% respectively. The most super (over 70 years) seniors live in Belfast at 2.8% of their population. The urban population is at 50.7% of which 72% live in either Belfast or Londonderry (Derry). The move from country to city seems to be more due to emigration than migration.



# Piper Jones Band to Headline this Year's Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival!

Back by popular demand, the Piper Jones Band will not only play at the Festival on May 3 & 4, but also at a house concert on Friday, May 2. (Details to come.)

The Celtic Festival is in need of volunteers! All you need to do is work at least one shift (4 to 5 hours) in exchange for a Festival Volunteer T-shirt and free admission! To sign up, go here: https://celtfestabq.com/volunteer

# 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 <a href="mailto:kmillewimm@comcast.net">kmillewimm@comcast.net</a> (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 <a href="mailto:kmillewimm@comcast.net">kmillewimm@comcast.net</a> (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: <a href="mailto:suzannetaichert@gmail.com">suzannetaichert@gmail.com</a>

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 <a href="mailto:ssponar07@gmail.com">ssponar07@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:rebecca@unm.edu">rebecca@unm.edu</a>

#### 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 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 <a href="https://www.brightburnacademy.com">https://www.brightburnacademy.com</a> 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 <a href="https://irishdancenewmexico.com/">https://irishdancenewmexico.com/</a>



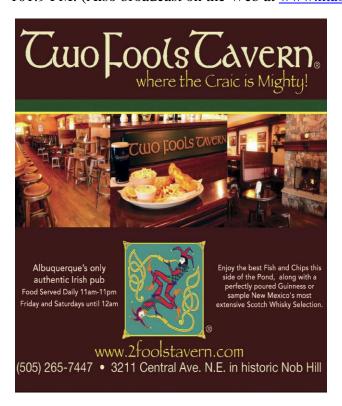
FOR INFORMATION ON CLASSES FOR CHILDREN AGES 4 & UP, AS WELL AS ADULTS,
SEE OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT KATE PADILLA, MSW, AT
(505) 415-4390
OR BRIGHTBURNACADEMY@GMAIL.COM

https://www.brightburnacademy.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 Laverty 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: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNloyz-LHidbztD\_eGnKScyMQr-NWxVrq">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNloyz-LHidbztD\_eGnKScyMQr-NWxVrq</a>
- ♣ 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Copper, where volunteers will help you one-onone 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
April 3	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting, 7 PM in person. Location TBD. (Email
		Caren Garcia for info.)
April 11	Friday	IAS Monthly Meeting & Program: 7 PM at the Ramada. A musical
		performance by Celtic eclectic band Saiorse.
May 1	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting, 7 PM on Zoom. All members are invited
		to attend. (Email Kathy Wimmer for the link.)
May 9	Friday	IAS Monthly Meeting & Program: 7 PM at the Ramada. A musical
	-	performance by the Sandia Celtic Ensemble.

## **Celtic Community Events**

April 6 & 20	Sundays	Two Leaf Clover (Nikelle Gessner and David Garcia) play for Sunday
		Brunch at Two Fools Tavern every 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month from
		11 AM – 2 PM.
April 1, 8, 15, 22,	Tuesdays	The Irish Slow Session meets Tuesdays at 6:30 PM in the Manzano
29		Mesa Multi-Generational center, near Central and Eubank. For info,
		contact Kip Malone on Facebook.
April 2, 9, 16, 23,	Wednesdays	Ceili Dancing Classes at the GAC, 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience
30		necessary! (Call Steve Laverty at 505-688-4756 for info.)
April 2, 9, 16, 23,	Wednesdays	Celtic Music Session at the Singing Arrow Community Center (13200
30		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).
April 2, 9, 16, 23,	Wednesdays	Irish Trad Music Session in Taos, 6-8 PM, at the Barra Vino, 241
30		LeDoux St. For more information, contact Jamie at <u>jaima@taosnet.com</u>
		or 575-779-1018.
April 3, 10, 17, 24	Thursdays	Albuquerque Traditional Irish Music Open Session from 7-9 PM at
		Hops Brewery, 7222 4 <sup>th</sup> Street. For more info, contact Harlow Pinson at
		hpinson@indepthl.com.

#### A little Irish humor to end with:

A car full of Irish nuns is waiting at a traffic light in Donegal when a car full of drunk fellas pulls up next to them. One of the lads leans out the window and shouts, "Alright, sisters, do ye fancy coming back to ours for a bit of fun?!" The head nun gasps, then turns to Sister Assumpta. "I don't think they realize who we are. Show them your cross."

Without hesitation, Sister Assumpta rolls down the window and shouts, "DRIVE ON, YOU SOB'S BEFORE I COME OVER THERE AND KNOCK THE SH\*TE OUTTA YE!"

She rolls the window back up and turns to the head nun. "Was that cross enough?"

# Irish-American Society of New Mexico

# **Membership Application/Renewal Form**

Please Check One:	plication
First Name:	Last Name:
If this is a renewal, has your contact inform	mation changed? Yes  No
Address:	_ State: Zip:
Please choose your membership level:	
Student (\$25) Individual (\$30	Family (\$35)
<u> </u>	etter by US mail (instead of electronically), please I membership to help offset the costs of mailing and
1 ·	"The Irish-American Society" and mail to: Albuquerque, NM 87192-3435 OR
You can also visit our website (www.iri	shamericansociety-nm.com) and pay by credit card.
How did you hear about us?	
	ps://www.facebook.com/The-Irish-American-Society- xico-175569365825710