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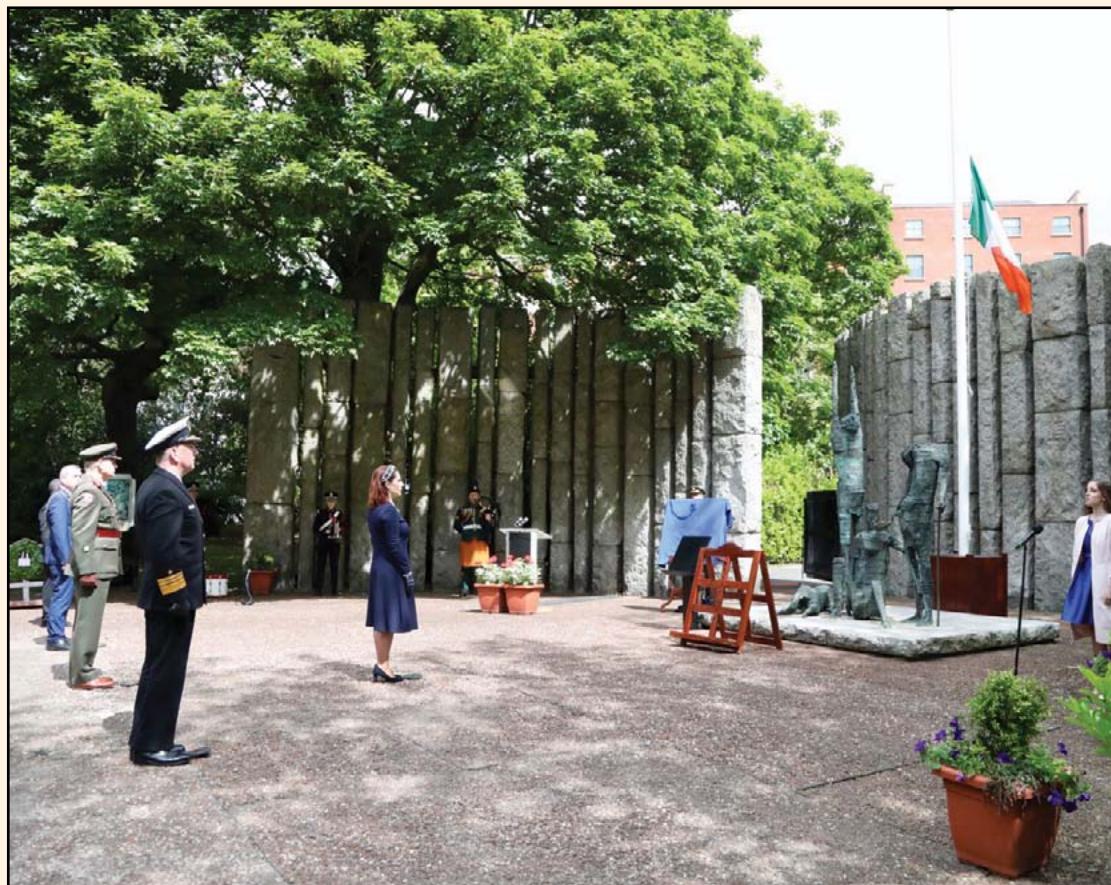
# The Irish Herald



California

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## Victims of An Gorta Mór Remembered At Commemoration in Dublin, May 17

The annual commemoration of An Gorta Mór (The Great Hunger) which claimed the lives of over a million Irish people in the mid-nineteenth century and forced over two million more to emigrate, many to America, was held in St

Stephen's Green, Dublin on Sunday, May 17.

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD officiated at the ceremony.

The commemoration is held each year in different venues around Ireland to

mark the fact that the disaster affected all parts of the country. This year's event was to be held in Buncrana, County Donegal, but was moved to the capital city because of the coronavirus pandemic. Buncrana will now host next year.  
**Continued on page 7 inside**

## Covid-19 Numbers Start To Improve Across Ireland

AS OF MAY 30, THE DEATH toll in the Republic of Ireland from coronavirus stood at 1,651. The total number of reported cases was 24,929. Approximately one third of those cases were healthcare workers. In the north of Ireland there were 4,696 confirmed cases and 521 deaths reported.

The rates of increase in the numbers infected and dying from the disease are shrinking across the island. In the last week of May new cases reported on a daily basis were under the 100 mark in the Republic and the basic reproduction rate of the virus was thought to be between 0.4 and 0.6, described by one government minister as "remarkably stable." On May 29 the Health Service Executive in the Republic declared there were 42 people being treated for coronavirus in Intensive Care Unit beds, down from a high point in April of 160.

The group tasked with measuring the spread of the virus in the Republic is the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). It said that there has been no sig-

nificant increase in numbers of cases in the Republic since Phase 1 of the government's reopening roadmap was implemented on May 18. Professor Philip Nolan, chair of the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group with NPHE, said this is because Irish people "have learned how to go about their business and not spread this virus."

Nolan urged people to continue to maintain social distancing, exercise hand and cough hygiene, to wear face masks, and to self-isolate and contact their doctor if showing symptoms, for testing and tracing. If people continue to be conscientious, he said that it would be possible to restart many activities, albeit "in a cautious manner," without setting off another wave of infection.

Nolan said the virus will continue to decline if community infections remain low and the reproduction rate of the virus is kept below one. He said that half of recent cases are contacts of known cases, for example in households.

**Continued on page 3 inside**

## Returning The Favor, Irish Respond To Navajo Nation Coronavirus Appeal

IRISH PEOPLE HAVE BEEN sending money to a GoFundMe appeal for funds to help the Navajo and Hopi Nations, which have been hit hard by the coronavirus.

As of May 11, the Navajo Nation—which stretches across parts of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico—had 3,204 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 102 deaths. As a ratio of its population, the Navajo have more confirmed cases than any US state.

Navajo and Hopi families set up the GoFundMe campaign to raise money for food, water, essential supplies and personal protective equipment. At press time the appeal had raised \$4.4 million out of its target of \$5 million.

Many of the Irish donations were inspired by the story of the Chocktaw Nation which, in 1847, collected money to send to Irish victims of An Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger. This singular act of

generosity came only a few years after almost 6,000 Choctaw Indians died on the Trail of Tears, having been forced to leave their ancestral homelands in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The story is remembered and honored in Ireland.

The Kindred Spirits sculpture (pictured here) by Cork-based artist Alex Pentek was unveiled in the town of Midleton in 2017 by Choctaw leaders.

The GoFundMe page singled out the Irish contributions:

"In early May donations to the Relief Fund's GoFundMe campaign spiked with contributions from Ireland. After reading news coverage of the crisis on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, many Irish felt compelled to reciprocate support from Indigenous Nations that dates back more than 170 years.

**Continued on page 7 inside**



*The Kindred Spirits' sculpture in Bailic Park, Midleton, County Cork, commemorates the generosity of the Choctaw Indian Nation during An Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger in Ireland of 1845 - 1851.*

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### St. Patrick's Appeal 2020

As we have reported in our recent communications, we have fully complied with "Shelter In Place" orders issued the week of March 15 by shutting down our facility and it has remain closed for the duration of this COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we have had to cancel all events and meetings and we are anxiously awaiting to reopen to the public in mid-June. Please help us weather this storm and keep the momentum we built last year by making a donation to our St. Patrick's Appeal.

The campaign goal is \$75,000 and we are well underway. Visit [irishcentersf.org/appeal](http://irishcentersf.org/appeal) to view our St. Patrick's Appeal 2020 video and to see the fundraising stories from Board Members and Appeal supporters alike. We are deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, and community partners - you make our work possible.

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### • IRISH NEWS •

## Coronavirus Update From Ireland

Continued from front page

Meanwhile, caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar (Fine Gael) said that he would like to accelerate the Government's roadmap, but it was too early to make that decision.

On Friday, May 29, Varadkar said that bringing forward Phase 2 might be possible, provided that the virus remained under control.

"The reason we can't make a judgement call yet is because it's only two weeks after restrictions are relaxed that you know if the virus is spreading again, that's why we have three week intervals," he said. "So we'll know next week if we're on track."

Varadkar told reporters, also on May 29, that the aim is for schools to open on time at the end of August. Ultimately the plan to reopen schools will be contingent on how well coronavirus is being contained.

"We are also learning from countries that have had to reimpose restrictions. There have been outbreaks in schools in France and several schools in South Korea had to close due to outbreaks," Varadkar said.

"It might mean that not every student is able to return to school but we will try to ensure it is as normal as possible."

"Provided the virus does not make a comeback between now and then, primary and secondary schools will reopen at the end of August.

"It may not be possible for every student to return for the full day, every day, but that is the point we are trying to get to, so it may be necessary to phase in the reopening of schools, but our objective is to open them as fully and as soon as possible provided the virus does not make a comeback," he added.

The Taoiseach made his remarks shortly after the publication of an Irish-focused study

which found 'no evidence' that coronavirus was transmitted in Irish schools before the government closures on March 12.

The study was conducted by the journal Eurosurveillance. The authors suggested that their findings add to a growing body of evidence that children do not appear to be drivers of coronavirus transmission.

"Children are thought to be vectors for transmission of many respiratory diseases including influenza," the study notes.

"It was assumed that this would be true for Covid-19 also. To date however, evidence of widespread paediatric transmission has failed to emerge."

However, the authors acknowledged that their study was limited by its size, that only symptomatic contacts were tested, and that asymptomatic secondary cases were not captured.

"While this study, based on small numbers, provides limited evidence in relation to Covid-19 transmission in the school setting, it includes all known cases with school attendance in the Republic of Ireland," the study said.

At the other end of the age spectrum the figures in Ireland replicate those of other countries in showing that Covid-19 overwhelmingly affects old people the worst.

According to the Central Statistics Office over 90 percent of the deaths so far recorded in the Republic are of people over the age of 65. Deaths in long-term residential care facilities represent over 60 percent of total Covid-19 deaths in the Republic and more than 50 percent of those in the north of Ireland.

There have been slightly more men than women killed by the disease, despite more women being infected.

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## COUNTRY CUTTINGS

WORLD'S SHORTEST ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE TO TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER

THE WORLD'S SHORTEST ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE IS NOW SET TO TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER AFTER IT WAS ORIGINALLY CANCELED IN MARCH DUE TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS. HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, WILL HOLD ITS 98-FOOT LONG PARADE ON BRIDGE STREET ON OCTOBER 16 AND 17 THIS YEAR.

The parade has been renamed the First-Ever Second Annual 17th Annual World's Shortest St Patrick's Day Parade, if you can wrap your head around that ridiculous combination of words.

Some people have joked that the parade's name is longer than its route.

Bill Solleder, Marketing Director with Visit Hot Springs, said that Hot Springs residents deserve a celebration later this year due to what they're going through now.

"Why would a St Pat's parade work in October? Well, basically, why not? As far out and do-it-the-way-we-want attitude we've always had about the World's Shortest St Patrick's Day Parade, why not just do it in October?" he told the *Hot Springs Sentinel*.

Solleder admitted that the event's name was "ridiculous" but again questioned "why not?"

He explained that the event will be called the "second annual" St Patrick's Day parade because he held a "very small parade" with fellow parade organizer Alexis Hampo on March 17.

—IrishCentral.com

SOCIAILY-DISTANCED QUEUES AT WEST BELFAST CHURCH AS PRIEST HEARS CONFESSIONS

THERE WERE SOCIALLY-DISTANCED QUEUES AT A WEST BELFAST CHURCH AS A CATHOLIC PRIEST HEARD CONFESSIONS. FATHER PADDY McCAFFERTY OF CORPUS CHRISTI IN BALLYMURPHY WAS KEPT BUSY FOR AN HOUR TODAY AS PARISHIONERS WAITED IN LINE.

He sat in front of the church behind the gates while those making their confessions stood about two meters in front of him.

"I started hearing confessions at 11.40 and I was kept busy for about an hour with a constant stream of people, with everybody observing social distancing," he told the PA news agency.

"As they came to me outside the church, there was a two-meter distance, maybe more."

"There was no one close to them to hear what they were saying and it was easy for me to hear what they were saying."

"Everything was observed, the sanctity and privacy as well as protecting people from the virus."

"I intend to do it again next week and so on until we are able to get people back into the church again."

Fr McCafferty said previously he had been hearing confessions by appointment, meeting parishioners outside the church at a safe distance. "There is nothing to stop you hearing confessions from people provided you observe all the precautions. I am aware of other priests who are doing it too. We are not breaching any of the safety mechanisms and it does help people. A lot of people were very moved to be able to do it, and we have to comfort people and strengthen them in every way possible."

—Journal.ie

HAIRDRESSERS BEING OFFERED 'THREE OR FOUR TIMES' NORMAL PRICES TO CUT HAIR WHILE SALONS ARE CLOSED HAIRDRESSERS HAVE BEEN OFFERED 'THREE OR FOUR TIMES' THE NORMAL PRICE OF A SALON HAIRCUT BY CLIENTS DESPERATE TO HAVE THEIR HAIR DONE DURING THE CURRENT LOCKDOWN, ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES.

President of the Irish Hairdressers Federation, Danielle Kennedy said people aren't prepared to wait until mid-July to have their hair cut or treated and are willing to pay treble the price they normally pay to have hairdressers come to their homes.

"It has just erupted, and it has erupted even further since the announcement came that we're not currently opening until the 20 July because people aren't prepared to wait that long to get their hair done," she said speaking on RTÉ Radio 1's Sean O'Rourke program.

"(They're offered) roughly €150 to €200 for a haircut ... compared to €40 or €50, which is the normal price—so three or four times the normal price, people are prepared to pay."

Pictures across social media in recent weeks have shown people dying their hair using off-the-shelf products—some of which have turned out horribly—but Kennedy said the majority of requests at present are for people looking for a trim.

Kennedy said hairdressers are looking at measures to protect clients and staff in order to reopen sooner than July.

"We have come up with a set of structured Covid protection guidelines that we would be prepared to go to if needed to get salons opened sooner," she said.

—Journal.ie

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**The Irish Herald**

• IRISH NEWS •

## Archbishops In Ireland Initiate Talks On Resuming Mass

DISCUSSIONS ARE ONGOING IN IRELAND BETWEEN FAITH LEADERS AND THE GOVERNMENT OVER HOW TO OPEN UP PLACES OF WORSHIP OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

Archbishops Eamon Martin, Diarmuid Martin and Kieran O'Reilly met with caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar May 14, and shared with him the work that is being done by the Catholic Church to develop a national plan to restart Masses and other services. The plan incorporates coronavirus mitigation measures, such as social distancing, to ensure the health and safety of congregations.

Churches have been shuttered since March and there are also fears for the safety of priests, many of whom are over 70, placing them at higher risk from the disease.

Currently, churches are set to reopen no earlier than

## Martin McGuinness Remembered



Paul Kavanagh said it would be a special and poignant tribute.

He commented: "Obviously the way many of us carry out events of remembrance and celebration have had to change because of the Covid-19 crisis, and we are no different. The Chieftains Walk, (which

raises funds for the North West Cancer Centre and other good causes), which is also organised in memory of Martin, had to be postponed but I know the organising committee are very grateful to everyone who continues to register to take part when the walk is rescheduled."

The event also featured tributes and recollections from leading figures in the world of politics, both at home and internationally, who shared their memories of McGuinness.

"Martin McGuinness remains a much loved and much missed figure for countless people around the world. We hope this event gives them the opportunity to come together to remember him and celebrate his life in a unique and poignant way," said Kavanagh.

The event was streamed on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

about his travels to Ireland. O'Donnell sings from a safe distance and uses a portable sound system.

The star is seen chatting to the residents through their windows, asking: "Are you all well?"

At the end of the video O'Donnell receives a great round of applause from staff members and residents. The over 70s in Ireland have been 'cocooning' for two months, which involves never going outside and avoiding all social contact.

Ani O'Donnell, who filmed the video, thanked O'Donnell on Facebook.

"On behalf of all the

residents and staff in Falcaragh Community Hospital, we would like to say a massive thank you to the one and only Daniel O'Donnell. Words can not express the joy you brought to the residents this afternoon," she wrote.

O'Donnell has also performed for patients in care facilities in Gweedore and Dungloe.

Speaking on Irish radio, he explained why he wanted to perform in care homes across Donegal.

"Sure it passes the time for me, takes nothing out of me, and gives a wee bit of a change of atmosphere to those people who are in the hospitals and various places."

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• IRISH NEWS •

## Suspension Of Diagnostic And Screening Programs Could Result In More Deaths Than Coronavirus

**F**EARS ARE GROWING IN IRELAND that the number of people who will die from preventable causes, because coronavirus measures stopped them getting the treatment they needed, will exceed deaths from the virus itself.

Speaking in the Dáil Éireann (Ireland's parliament) last month Labour Party leader Alan Kelly said that the suspension of so much non-coronavirus healthcare is a matter of "life and death." Kelly said that the resumption of normal diagnostic and screening services "cannot wait any longer."

Kelly concluded that preventable non-Covid-related deaths "will surpass Covid-related deaths if the trajectory goes on the way it is going in

the coming weeks."

Kelly's comments are borne out by the facts. Cancer screening programs have been largely shut down because of the pandemic. There were no mammograms carried out by BreastCheck in April this year, compared to 13,763 in April 2019. CervicalCheck laboratories received 937 samples for analysis in April this year, compared to 21,037 last year. Prostate cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer and colorectal cancer are five of the top ten leading causes of death in the Republic of Ireland.

Experts have warned that the continued suspension of such programs could have devastating long-term consequences.

There are also concerns

that patients who need urgent care are not showing up to Emergency Departments, either because they don't want to overburden the healthcare system or because they are worried about contracting Covid-19.

Figures released by the Economic and Social Research Institute showed there were 45 percent less emergency department attendances per day in the week ending March 29 than there had been the case in the week ending March 1. The drop in the more serious cases, classified as very urgent, was 27 percent.

The ESRI said the public must be encouraged not to ignore symptoms and to attend emergency departments when they need treatment.

• IRISH NEWS •

## Honoring The Generosity Of The Choctaw During An Gorta Mór, Irish Contribute To Navajo & Hopi Covid-19 Appeal

*Continued from front page*

"During Ireland's Potato Famine of 1847, the Choctaw Nation raised \$170 dollars (about \$5,000 now) for starving Irish families. Today over 25,500 Irish donors have contributed over \$870,000 to the Relief Fund and the Navajo and Hopi elders, immunocompromised, COVID-positive, and vulnerable families it serves."

Relief Fund founder Ethel Branch stated: "We feel real kinship with the Irish, who have a shared legacy of colonization, and we are truly grateful for ... all donations that have come from our Irish brethren. Go raibh maith agat and a'hééhá! Someday we hope to repay you for these beautiful

and meaningful acts of solidarity made during our time of great need."

Irish donor Pat Hayes said: "From Ireland, 170 years later, the favor is returned! To our Native American brothers and sisters in your moment of hardship."

Another said: "They didn't forget us. We won't forget them."

On May 10, Navajo Nation Attorney General Doreen McPaul, who also serves as the Donation Branch Chief of the Navajo Nation's Health Command Center, filmed a special message of thanks to the Irish.

In the video, McPaul says she is: "especially proud of this

## National Commemoration Of An Gorta Mór In Dublin

*Continued from front page*

An Gorta Mór—also referred to as the Great Famine—was partially the result of the failure of the potato crop, the only food source for most Irish at the time. There was plenty of other food produced in Ireland but the British government and landlords denied the starving millions access to it. In all, through death and emigration, Ireland lost nearly half its population between 1845 and 1849.

Ward said: "In light of the World Health Organisation stating the Coronavirus could cause a global mental health crisis, I have called on the Minister to have a special sitting of the Dáil on mental health. I have also called for the reconvening of the Committee on the Future Provision of Mental Health Supports.

Ward also questioned the Minister for Health on why Pieta House staff have been laid off and queried the appropriateness of the Government's over-reliance on charities for essential services which should be provided by the state. (Pieta House is a charitable organization)

"Covid-19 has seen an upsurge in people looking to avail of mental health supports and the longer this goes on the

bigger the demand will be on services."

He added: "We all saw the big support and generosity of the Irish public towards Pieta House last week with their fundraiser on the RTÉ Late Late show. I, like many people, have supported this charity over the years.

"However, I was concerned to discover that Pieta House had introduced redundancies to clinical workers prior to this fundraiser. At a time of a pandemic and peoples' mental health being adversely affected, the Government needs to help Pieta to retain these clinical workers."

## Brendan Bowyer, Irish Showband Legend For 60 Years, Dies Aged 81

**O**NE OF THE GREATS OF THE Irish showbiz world, singer and entertainer Brendan Bowyer, died peacefully at home in Las Vegas on May 28. He was 81.

A native of Waterford, Bowyer lived and spent most of his career in Las Vegas, but truly never forgot his Irish roots. For more than six decades Brendan enthralled audiences around the world. The title of Ireland's answer to Elvis Presley rested easily on his shoulders.

He burst onto the scene in the late 1950s as a member of The Royal Showband with whom he performed what many consider his signature tune 'The Hucklebuck.' The Dancehall genre of music was at its height and packed out venues the length and breadth of Ireland throughout the 1960s. Other standards included 'Kiss Me Quick,' 'No More,' and 'I Can't Get You Out of My Heart.'

Bowyer's move to Las Vegas in the early 1970s was the stepping stone to international stardom with the Big 8 Showband which he formed with the late Tom Dunphy. He readily sold out venues in his adopted city and rubbed shoulders with the iconic performers of the time.



He made many trips back to Ireland for performances over the following 40 years and was made a Freeman of Waterford City.

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josephine Madigan TD paid tribute:

"I am extremely saddened to hear of the passing of Brendan Bowyer. He could justly claim to be in the very top echelon of performers of the dancehall era. His comparison to Elvis Presley is not an overstated one.

Bowyer's long career at the top of his profession won him fans on both sides of the pond, including in San Francisco, where he played to a full house at the United Irish Cultural Center on New Year's Eve in 2002.

"So many romances, mar-

riages and happy memories were created during many years of joy and entertainment that Brendan brought to this country and his adopted Las Vegas. He set a high bar and inspired so many other performers that followed. He will be so sadly missed."

Bowyer's long career at the top of his profession won him fans on both sides of the pond, including in San Francisco, where he played to a full house at the United Irish Cultural Center on New Year's Eve in 2002.

the café over the coming weeks."

"The proposed closure would result in the loss of all jobs in the café. The management team will now enter into a period of consultation with the impacted employees," the statement notes.

"We would like to sincerely thank all of the staff who work in the business for their loyalty and dedication which has made Bewley's Café on Grafton Street a landmark, iconic and memorable place to visit.

"We would also like to thank our loyal customers over the decades," it adds.

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#### • IRISH NEWS •

## New Isolation Measures For Passengers Entering Ireland As Airlines Grind To A Halt

**I**N EFFORTS TO FURTHER CURTAIL the spread of coronavirus the government in the Republic of Ireland have imposed a 14 day period of mandatory self-isolation for anyone arriving in the country—including returning residents. The measure took effect on May 28 and will last until at least June 18, when it will be reviewed.

Those entering the country also have to complete a 'passenger location' form and are being made aware that they may be subject to spot checks to make sure they are staying where they said they would be.

Announcing the new measures, Minister for Health Simon Harris said that no non-essential travel outside Ireland should be undertaken until further notice.

"We continue to advise everyone against non-essential travel," Harris said. "However, if a person does arrive into Ireland, they will legally obliged to fill out this form, regardless of their nationality."

"The form will be used to facilitate a system of follow up checks to make sure people who travel to the country are staying where they said that they would. The form will also ensure more accurate and quicker contact tracing, should we have a confirmed case on a flight or ferry coming into Ireland."

"Every measure we take is aimed at stopping the spread of Covid-19 and protecting people from this virus. This is no different."

Failure to comply with the regulations could result in fines of up to €2,500 or up to six months' imprisonment.

Ryanair CEO Eddie Wilson described the rules as "unworkable" and "unimplementable." Wilson said they would "dent confidence on people travelling to Ireland."

"It sounds great but it doesn't work," he said. "You're saying to people Ireland is closed, when Spain is open,



Greece and Portugal as well. We need to restore air links and air travel."

Ryanair, which carries more passengers than any other airline in Europe, released a statement in May projecting first quarter losses of €200 million and a drop in passenger numbers for 2020 of almost 50 percent, from 154 million last year down to 80 million this year.

"(Ryanair) expects to operate less than 1 percent of its scheduled flying program (in the first quarter, which covers April to June) ... Some return to flight services is expected in Quarter Two (July–September) and Ryanair expects to carry no more than 50 percent of its original Quarter Two traffic target of 44.6 million, as bookings will be impacted by public health restrictions (temperature checks and face coverings for passengers and staff) and quarantine requirements," the statement said.

Ryanair is expected to implement pay cuts and up to 3,000 layoffs, mostly of pilots and cabin crew.

In related news Willie Walsh, CEO of British-based IAG, which owns Aer Lingus, told a British government committee that his company was fighting for its life.

Walsh told lawmakers: "It's a very severe and very significant crisis. Quite honestly, the likelihood of any improvement in the short term is zero."

He also said the group is currently making zero revenue.

Aer Lingus have announced plans to lay off up to 20 percent of its staff when Irish government emergency funding runs out on June 21.

## Calls For Tourism Recovery Taskforce

**T**HE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN Ireland has been hit hard by coronavirus. New rules on self-isolation for people entering the country won't help, but in reality many of those involved in tourism have already largely written off 2020.

Year on year tourism numbers had been on the rise—both the amount of people visiting Ireland and also the amount they spend when they are there. Irish tourism has been an unprecedented success story for the better part of a decade. Last year the industry employed over 200,000 people, almost 10 percent of the entire workforce, and contributed over €6 billion to the economy, around 5 percent.

When things get back to normal, and they will get back to normal, it is vital that all aspects of the tourism industry are able to hit the ground running. Sinn Féin TD Darren O'Rourke has called for a tourism recovery taskforce to be formed. O'Rourke said the supportive measures introduced by the caretaker government would not be sufficient to bring back the industry.

Brendan Griffin, Minister

#### • IRISH NEWS •

## Leaders In The North Of Ireland Denounce Treats Against Journalists

POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE north of Ireland have joined forces with the editors of the north's main newspapers and labor leaders to condemn recent threats against journalists in the north.

An open letter signed by the power-sharing government's First Minister Arlene Foster (DUP) and Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill (Sinn Féin) was published in the *Belfast Telegraph*, *Irish News* and *News Letter* newspapers on May 19.

The letter called for the freedom of the press to be respected by all and hit out at the threats.

In April, an *Irish News* journalist was warned by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) about a threat against them.

O'Neil said politicians in the north stand shoulder to shoulder with journalists and would do everything possible to support them in doing their jobs without fear.

"Journalism is a bedrock of democracy and those who are keeping our communities informed and holding the powerful to account must not be intimidated or threatened no matter where it originates."

*Sunday World* editor Brian Farrell said that his newspaper would "not be silenced nor intimidated" and would not rest until those responsible were brought to justice.



Michelle O'Neill (left), Arlene Foster

must be defended.

"The recent paramilitary threats targeting journalists and politicians represent an assault upon our society and upon democracy. This cannot be tolerated," she said.

*Irish News* editor Noel Doran said the renewal of threats against journalists was "a deeply alarming development" but he welcomed the support at the political level.

*Sunday Life* editor Martin Breen said the newspaper would continue to hold everyone to account and "expose criminality and all wrongdoing no matter where it originates."

*Sunday World* editor Brian Farrell said that his newspaper would "not be silenced nor intimidated" and would not rest until those responsible were brought to justice.



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## No Freedom Without A Free Press

by Eamonn Gormley

**T**HE SUNDAY WORLD, a DUBLIN-BASED NEWSPAPER FOUNDED IN 1973, appeared throughout the 1980s at first glance to be a lowbrow tabloid that was driving sales using scantily clad women on the front cover. Yet farther down through the pages lay content that served a much needed role in society and which is endangered today: investigative journalism.

The paper is sold on both sides of the border with its northern edition carrying content tailored to the region. In a market awash with British tabloids branded as the "Irish edition," the *Sunday World* stands out as focusing on home-grown content produced by Irish writers. It has broken stories about child abuse in the catholic church, organized crime in the Republic, and corruption and paramilitary activity in the North. For over thirty years the dissemination of this information has had a profound effect on Irish society.

Unsurprisingly, this has caused the *Sunday World* to gather a good stock of enemies. Lawsuits have been filed in an attempt to muzzle its reporting, most of which have been thrown out in court.

The paper has shown a particular talent for showcasing the underbelly of paramilitary operations, much of it driven by drug dealing, extortion, intimidation, and other unsavory activity that conflicts with the more noble image that such groups would hope to project to their supporters.

Billy Wright, a notorious loyalist from Portadown, was said to be involved in the killing of up to twenty Catholics, most of them innocent civilians, while allegedly working on behalf of the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Branch. Acquiring the nickname "King Rat" in his local pub, the name and his work became common knowledge thanks to the reporting of Martin O'Hagan in the *Sunday World*, much to Wright's annoyance.

After Wright was assassinated in the Maze prison by the Irish National Liberation Army in 1997, loyalist groups attempting to claim control over the movement sought to avenge the killing and to prove their loyalist credentials with a campaign of terror and murder. O'Hagan, allegedly a former member of the Official IRA, had already been targeted for assassination by loyalists before, partly out of irritation at the *Sunday World's* exposure of their drug-dealing and racketeering operations. When they shot O'Hagan dead in his native Lurgan in 2001 he was the first journalist to be murdered in the conflict. The second would be Lyra McKee who was shot dead by dissident republicans in Derry in 2019 while observing street disturbances in the Creggan area.

In the South in 1996, the murder of Veronica Guerin, a reporter with the *Sunday Independent*, led to national outrage. Guerin had incurred the wrath of drug dealers who did not appreciate her coverage of the Dublin criminal underworld. This led to crime legislation that gave sweeping new powers to the police and the courts, and the creation of the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) which had the right to seize property acquired by illegal means. From its founding in 1996 to 2001, the CAB froze €70 million worth of criminal assets, as well as recovering unpaid taxes and fraudulently obtained welfare payments.

Yet the life of investigative reporters has not gotten easier. In the past year there has been a surge in threats made against journalists in the north. The UDA has threatened the lives of all journalists working for the *Sunday World* and *Sunday Life*, a weekend extension of the *Belfast Telegraph*. *Sunday Life* has a similar pedigree in investigative journalism. Dissident republicans have also threatened a reporter with the *Irish News*. Troublingly, politicians speaking up in defense of threatened journalists have also been targeted.

While the killing of journalists in Ireland has been rare, it never ceases to shock, and the threat of violence against reporters should generate the same outrage. A public statement titled "Stand Up for Journalism" has been signed by members of the north's power-sharing Assembly, MPs, members of the House of Lords, senators in the Seanad, trade unions, business and civic organizations, and media organizations. It calls for "the immediate withdrawal of all threats against journalists in Northern Ireland and for the freedom of the press to be respected."

Journalism is already under pressure on the economic front. Newspaper circulation worldwide has been dwindling with the rise of free online news sources. The *Sunday World's* circulation shrank from 311,000 per issue in 2001 to 123,000 in 2018. Yet the importance of investigative reporting has never diminished. The freedom of an open society depends on the freedom of the press to hold powerful people to account, be they in government, business, or in criminal gangs and paramilitary organizations.

In countries with illiberal regimes where the media is muzzled, people are considerably less informed and consequently less free. Authoritarian rulers with dubious agendas invariably clip the wings of the press because the media is a threat to their sinister goals, as well as being a soft target. It is by no coincidence that paramilitary groups also seek ink on a page as a threat.

Yet it is possible for their intimidation to backfire thanks to what is known as the Streisand Effect. Attempting to squash reporting of an issue just draws more attention to it than ever before as people become more motivated to see what is being kept from them. If investigative reporters are digging up so much dirt that they are being threatened, it is a call for everyone to subscribe to newspapers and read all about it. Long may the muckraking continue.

• COMMENT •

## What Happens Next In Irish Politics?

by Seán Canniffe

*A CASUAL OBSERVER OF POLITICS in the Republic of Ireland might be forgiven for thinking that we have entered some type of twilight zone. After the general election on February 8 this year we are now nearly four months without a new government. This is a record, surpassing the previous 2016 delay of 70 days between the election and formation of a new administration.*

*What makes this even more interesting, or frustrating depending on your view point, is that despite losing both vote share and seats the two establishment parties of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil look set, at this point, to remain in power, albeit in a different arrangement.*

*Fianna Fáil, the largest opposition party in the last Dáil, suffered the minor ignominy of losing six of its 44 TDs while seeing its share of first preference votes decrease from 24.3 percent to 22.2 percent. Not a terrible result you might think, until you consider the hype and over-confidence of that party before the election. Fine Gael fared much worse. It became the minority government until February, supported in a 'confidence and supply' agreement by Fianna Fáil. In a telling indictment of its performance in power Fine Gael lost 15 of its 50 seats and saw its vote share decline from 25.5 percent to 20.9 percent.*

*Sinn Féin, the bogeymen (and bogeywomen of course) of establishment politics in the Republic was the unquestioned winner on the day, almost doubling its vote share from 13.8 percent to 24.5 percent and its seat tally from 22 to 37. Yet this does not seem to be enough to unseat its incumbent rivals.*

*Elsewhere the Green Party recovered spectacularly from a 2016 drubbing to raise its number of TDs from 2 to 12; the Social Democrats tripled its representation from two TDs to six; Labour continued its dire run, losing one of its seven TDs; the Solidarity—People Before Profit alliance were down one TD for a total of five; and the remaining seats were taken by assorted independent candidates, some of whom were previously members of the establishment parties.*

*The results were a shock to virtually everyone. Even Sinn Féin couldn't have hoped for such an enormous change in its fortunes. Just last year it had underperformed expectations in local elections. Had Sinn Féin's leaders been thinking in terms of such a wave in their favor, they would have stood more candidates and would certainly have won even more seats. Nine of the top ten vote getters in the election were Sinn Féin candidates.*

*As if to underline the scale of Sinn Féin's achievement its leader, Mary Lou McDonald, topped the poll in the Dublin Central constituency with 35 percent of the vote, nearly*

*For all of Sinn Féin's success the election revealed a country balanced on a knife edge, with voters split almost evenly between candidates and parties reflecting the status quo and those representing change.*

needs to get some meaningful concessions. The last time the Greens played the role of junior partner in government they were literally wiped out at the following election, so the rewards must match the risk.

To complicate matters further the Greens have a potential leadership contest on the horizon and Catherine Martin TD, very popular among rank and file Green Party membership, looks as though she will challenge Ryan.

If the three parties can agree on a 'Program for Government' in the coming weeks, the proposals must then be voted on by their memberships.

If the Greens pull out of the deal, or if its members vote against it, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil can probably entice enough independents into the fold to form a government, although it will obviously have far less stability. There is no real appetite for another election in Ireland so expect a deal to be done somehow.

For both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, this might be a case of "Be careful what you wish for."

Since 1923 one or other of these parties has led the government in Ireland. For most of that time their combined support exceeded 80 percent of the vote. This February that combined share fell to just 43 percent, while support for candidates and parties that were previously looked on as outsiders swelled. Most analysts believe the 2020 election was fought on the 'Three H's—Housing, Homelessness and Health. All three are areas where both Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil are seen as having failed for two decades and more. The problems in all three will require money to fix, and money is the one thing that is going to be very hard to come by in Ireland for the foreseeable future after the economic havoc wreaked by the coronavirus pandemic.

Not to mention the fact that the historical enmity between the two parties is one of the biggest reasons why their respective voters vote the way they do. How can you dislike Fianna Fáil enough to vote Fine Gael if they are effectively two sides of the same coin, and vice versa?

All politicians want power, it's their nature. Is it possible that this desire for power might be the undoing permanently of either Fine Gael or Fianna Fáil or both?

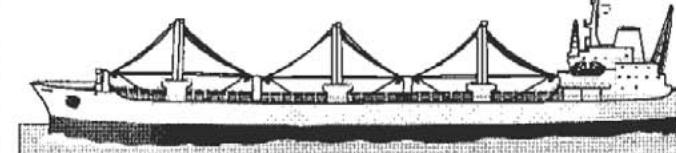
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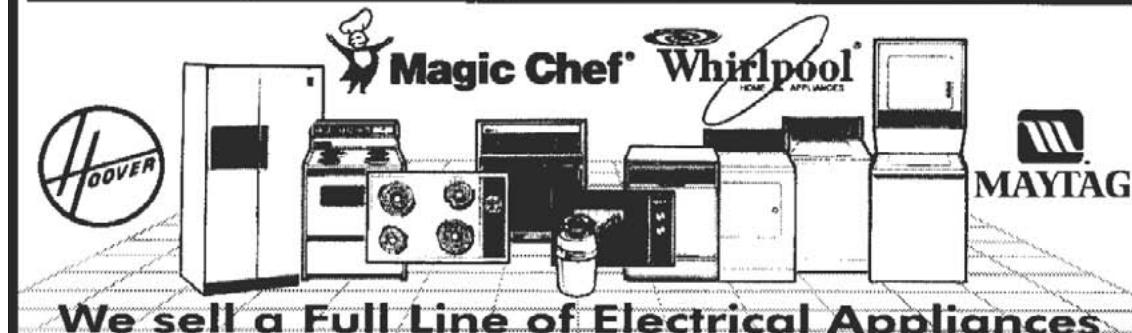
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• IRISH AMERICA •

## Little By Little The Castles Are Built

by Anne Cassidy-Carew, President, United Irish Cultural Center

THE OLD IRISH PROVERB "i ndiaidh a chéile a déantar na caisleáin" (little by little the castles are built) is several centuries old and traces its origin to the late 12th century following the Norman invasion of Ireland. The Normans were great castle builders and became as Irish as the Irish themselves such was their assimilation into the local population.

Through the last 45 years, there have been multiple efforts to raise large parcels of money independent of the ordinary day to day operations. The elevator installation back in the late 1980s was the most expensive upgrade the Center has incurred since it opened back in 1975. The downstairs bar was remodeled in the 1980s but that was a cosmetic change within the envelope of the building.

In the not too distant future, our roof needs to be replaced and additional upgrades need to be completed. In addition, we would like to add a solar power generating system on the rooftop, potentially shaving \$1,000 off our current monthly utility cost. These major capital improvements are above and beyond our ability right now to fund such upgrades.

And so as a board, we launched the St Patrick's Appeal—the first Board driven

fundraiser in three decades—on May 18, with the goal to raise \$75,000 by September 17, 'Half-way to St Patrick's Day.' Past revenue generating operations like the 32/50 club fundraiser and large banquets are no longer options currently available to the Center to pay for the ordinary expenses incurred in operating a 20,000 square foot facility.

The response from our

membership and community

has been heart warming and

overwhelmingly positive. I am

very pleased to report that the

campaign at the time of writing

has surpassed 60 percent of our

goal with \$44,300 pledged by

215 individual contributors.

Many thanks to all those who

have given to date. If you have

not contributed yet, please con-

sider doing so. You can donate

online at [www.irishcentersf.org](http://www.irishcentersf.org),

or by calling the Center at (415)

661-2700 or, if you're a mem-

ber, by filling out the donation

page in the center's newsletter

this month and mailing in a

check.

We look forward to seeing

you at the Irish Center soon.

Until then continue to wear

your mask, maintain your 6

feet social distance and stay

safe!

*The building of the UICC was truly a community effort. Here are a couple of pictures from the construction phase in 1974; breaking ground and volunteers taking a well earned break.*



• IRISH AMERICA •

## Summer Sunshine And Phased Roadmap To Reopening Bring Hope, But There's Still A Long Way To Go To 'Normal'

San Francisco native Madison Roche, now living and working in Dublin, with an update from Ireland's capital on how folks are getting through the pandemic.

GREETINGS FROM DUBLIN AGAIN. Since last month's article, it seems things are finally starting to change here in Ireland. We aren't "unlocking" at the rate of my hometown of San Francisco, but slowly and surely things are progressing here.

Since May 18, Ireland has been in "Phase 1" of the government's five-phase "roadmap" for restarting the country's social and economic life. While people are still encouraged to stay home, meetings of up to four people outdoors are allowed (as long as you're keeping at least two meters apart).

Garden centers and hardware shops have reopened, and over 50,000 people have returned to work. Perhaps most excitingly, beaches, tennis facilities and golf courses have opened. These are small freedoms, but people are happy to have the opportunity for some much-appreciated social interaction.

The next phase of the "roadmap" is scheduled to begin on June 8. This is all subject to change, of course, should the number of infections increase once again. Fortunately though, because the public has made such a concerted effort with social distancing, the number of confirmed cases across the country has been decreasing steadily. This past week (May 17-23) saw the first time since March that new cases have dropped below 100 per day. There is an air of cautious optimism as everyone waits to see what each stage of quarantine easing will bring.

There is still a heavy Garda presence on the roads and in parks and beaches where families and friends have gathered to reunite. Travel between counties and regions is still largely not possible, however, and some people have even



Statue of "Molly Malone" in St Andrew's Street, Dublin, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Molly is wearing a smiley face mask.

been sentenced to jail time for moving large distances without valid reasons. Sadly these restrictions aren't likely to ease until Phase 5 in August, which means that for some people it means that it will be months since they have been able to visit loved ones.

Still, the glorious summer

weather has done wonders for the general morale. Another

positive update is the huge increase in takeaway offers from restaurants and cafes! With these businesses not scheduled to open until Phase 3 on June 28—and even then with patron numbers limited—business owners have become

flexible and innovative. Even the poor desolate pubs, which will be the last hospitality businesses to open, are now looking to rebrand as restaurants so as to open earlier. The Journal recently reported that out of 300 pubs surveyed, 44 percent planned to re-open as restaurants starting in Phase 3.

Some pubs have resorted

to delivering drinks, including

cocktails and pints, to people's homes.

One may be concerned of the quality of a Guinness poured into a plastic pint glass and settling as it's delivered, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Though sadly we must wait at least another month for a fresh pint of plain in a pub, until then we are happy indulging in the constantly adapting restaurant offerings. Full roast dinner, bottles of wine, cocktail-making kits, cakes and sausage rolls can be delivered right to your home.

This has also enabled restaurants to reach a wider variety of diners. My partner and I have been able to order deliveries from restaurants where it has been impossible to get a reservation in the past. This has also strengthened the support for local businesses, and people understand that they are helping shops, restaurants and cafes stay alive by ordering out.

Sadly, a number of businesses have announced that they will be closing for good. Many of these are small, local businesses who are particularly vulnerable in circumstances such as these. However, even retail giants such as the department store Debenhams have been forced to close. This shows just how great the economic impact has been. Like the rest of the world, many are anxious about the future of the economy. April saw Ireland's saw the unemployment

rate jump to 28 percent as

companies are forced to make tough decisions. Thankfully, government unemployment schemes are still in place, although the numbers availing of them are falling as people gradually return to work. Certain companies in the banking and medical technology sectors are also actively hiring due to the demand for these services. Still, there is a long road ahead for the Irish economy.

If this news wasn't stress-

ful enough for parents, many are still struggling with teaching and entertaining their kids at home. Schools and colleges are not set to reopen until as late as September or October and for the first time ever, the Leaving Certificate has been cancelled and will be replaced with predictive grades. Students may opt out of this predictive grading and can instead sit the exam at a later date, but with no date able to be set many students are feeling under pressure. Pair that with students unable to say goodbye to beloved teachers, missing out on their debs and not having any graduation celebrations, and many teenagers are struggling.

Everyone's doing the best that they can right now. Working from home has almost begun to feel normal and people are taking pleasure in the little things. My partner and I are anxious to return to Galway, where numbers have been remarkably low. Like everyone else, though, we are mindful of the guidelines and their impact on public health overall. It's important to remember that while we miss the freedoms that we were once accustomed to, seeing the COVID-19 curve steadily flattening is the best news we could be getting right now.

Wishing you all good

health.

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• IRISH AMERICA •

## Judge Rules Telegraph Machine From The Titanic Can Be Salvaged

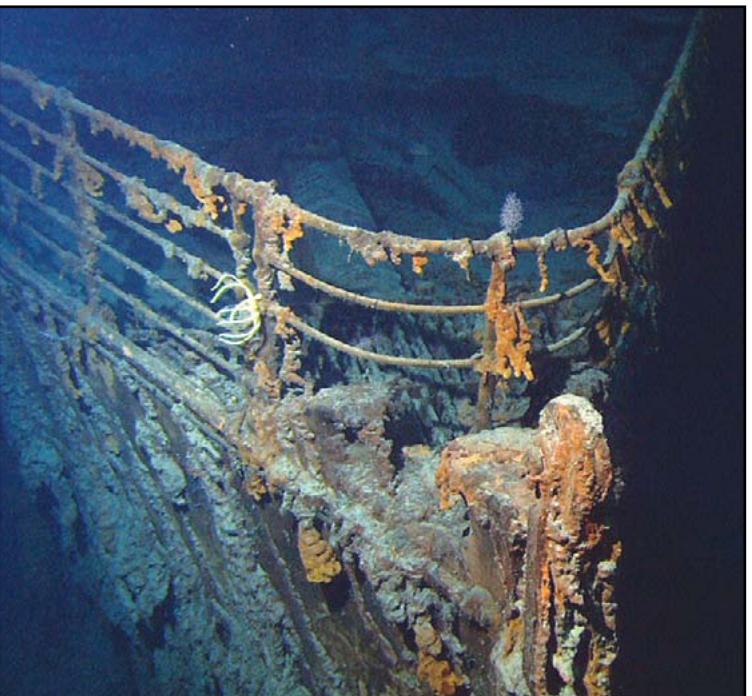
JUDGE IN VIRGINIA HAS ruled that the salvage of the wireless telegraph machine that sent distress calls from the Titanic is lawful. The luxury liner sank in 1912 after hitting an iceberg, with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. It now lies on the ocean floor, some 12,500 feet beneath the surface of the north Atlantic.

Judge Rebecca Beach Smith said the machine is important, historically and culturally, and could soon be lost forever given the rapid decay of the wreck site.

Smith, a maritime jurist, presides over all matters to do with salvage from the Titanic. She wrote that recovering the telegraph "will contribute to the legacy left by the indelible loss of the Titanic, those who survived, and those who gave their lives in the sinking."

The order has been welcomed by RMS Titanic Inc., which holds the salvage rights to the wreck. It supercedes an order from 2000 that prohibited cutting into the shipwreck or detaching any part of it.

However, several archaeological and preservation experts have objected to the proposed salvage expedition. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which represents the public's interest in the wreck, is adamantly against any attempt to recover the machine.



*The wreck of the Titanic, 2000 fathoms below the surface of the Atlantic.*

NOAA argued that the telegraph machine is likely surrounded "by the mortal remains of more than 1,500 people" and should not be interfered with.

RMS Titanic Inc wants to exhibit the telegraph machine together with stories of the crew who tapped out the distress signals "until seawater was literally lapping at their feet."

"The brief transmissions sent among those ships' wireless operators, staccato bursts of information and emotion, tell the story of Titanic's

desperate fate that night: the confusion, chaos, panic, futility and fear," the company wrote in documents submitted to the court.

In her judgement Smith explained that the salvage plans meet most requirements set forth in an international agreement between the US and the UK, where the ship was registered.

RMS Titanic Inc want to guide an unmanned submersible through a skylight or cut the heavily corroded roof to retrieve the telegraph machine.

## First President of The San Diego St Patrick's Parade Dies, Aged 80

by John Hyatt, in San Diego

VINCENT J LYNCH, who served as the first President of the Irish Congress of Southern California (ICSC) in 1981, passed away peacefully in April at his daughter Kelly's home in Redondo Beach. He was 80 years of age and was surrounded by family including his son Patrick.

Vince, along with Jim Foley and several others, created the idea for a St Patrick's Day Parade in San Diego to celebrate the rich heritage of their Irish roots. Vince's hard work and determination as President helped orchestrate the first St Patrick's Day Parade and develop a blueprint for the future. His leadership helped set the organization on a great trajectory. He worked with the ICSC for many years before moving to Chicago.

In the late 70s and early 80s the San Diego Irish community was strongly connected. Those who emigrated to the US and eventually settled here would gather at the Blarney Stone in Clairmont Mesa, The Irish Shop, and the House of Ireland. The idea of a parade and festival to celebrate Irish heritage was immediately well received. "Vince was the perfect first president. He was well thought of throughout

San Diego and gave the event legitimacy that has lasted to this day," said past parade chair and ICSC President (1985, 1986 resp.) Brian McClellan.

Vince's wife, Charlene, who predeceased Vince last year, was the person that came up with the idea for the Smilin' Irishman Contest. The story goes that she was with the parade founders one evening at the Blarney Stone Pub when they were discussing fundraising. She proposed the Smilin' Irishman concept and the rest is history. The Smilin' Irishman Contest is organized and run by the Friendly Sons of St Patrick and is the largest fundraising event to support the event.

Lynch attended most of the parade events in recent years, and was extremely proud to see how the parade and festival has grown to become what it is today. He sat in amazement every year at the events and was deeply disappointed that the 40th Anniversary Parade had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Vince was a really good guy," McClellan said. "He was a pure gentleman, always had a smile, and got along with everyone. We'll miss him."

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*



The San Francisco Youth GAA would like to congratulate our 2020 high school graduates!

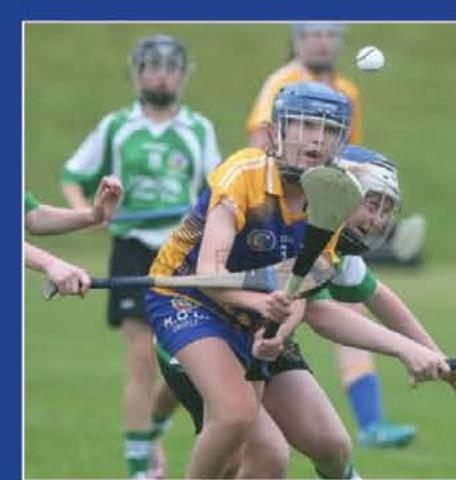
**CONGRATS GRADUATES**  
**2020 Class of**  
**YOU DID IT!**



Fiona O'Donoghue

High School: Burlingame High School

College Attending:  
Skyline College



Hannah O'Connell

High School: St. Ignatius

College Attending:  
University of Santa Clara



Kate Rose Keighran

High School: Notre Dame

College Attending:  
Indiana University



Megan McHugh

High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral

College Attending:  
UCLA



Michaela Mulkerrins

High School: St. Ignatius

College Attending:  
Saint Joseph's University



Molly Gorman

High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral

College Attending:  
CSU Chico



Aidan O'Reilly

High School: St. Ignatius

College Attending:  
Purdue



Cathal Coakley

High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral

College Attending:  
Saint Mary's College of Moraga



Conor Burke

High School: Westmoor High School

College Attending:  
City College of SF

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# Congratulations to our 8th Grade Graduates!

On behalf of the San Francisco Gaelic Athletic Association (SFYGAA)



**Jimmy McKeon**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Con McKeon**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Jimmy Hughes**  
Elementary: Sinaloa  
High School Class of 2024:  
San Marin High School



**Grace McCusker**  
Elementary: A.P. Giannini  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Chloe Casement**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Claire Donohue**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
Convent of the Sacred Heart



**Ameila Murphy**  
Elementary: Presidio Middle School  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Noah Hennessy**  
Elementary: A.P. Giannini  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Andy Powell**  
Elementary: St. Phillips  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Liam Donohue**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
Stuart Hall High School



**Colm Grieb**  
Elementary: St. Thomas Apostle School  
High School Class of 2024:  
Archbishop Riordan



**Nellie Sell**  
Elementary: St. Raphael School  
High School Class of 2024:  
Marin Catholic



**Sammie Schulze**  
Elementary: Charlotte Wood Middle  
High School Class of 2024:  
San Ramon Valley



**Niamh Concannon**  
Elementary: St. Stephens  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Sarah Penny**  
Elementary: St. Stephens  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Gavin Larkin**  
Elementary: BIS  
High School Class of 2024:  
Burlingame High School



**Mikey Nash**  
Elementary: BIS  
High School Class of 2024:  
Burlingame High School



**Andrew Cudden**  
Elementary: St. Phillips  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**James Keenan**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Anne Modole**  
Elementary: A.P. Giannini  
High School Class of 2024:  
George Washington



**Brooke Gavney**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Maggie Clare**  
Elementary: A.P. Giannini  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Aisling Murphy**  
Elementary: Charles Armstrong  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Mateo Murphy**  
Elementary: Crystal Springs Uplands  
High School Class of 2024:  
Crystal Springs Uplands



**James McFadden**  
Elementary: St. Brendans  
High School Class of 2024:  
St. Ignatius



**Martin Quirke**  
Elementary: St. Cecilia  
High School Class of 2024:  
Bonanza High School



**Daniel O'Donovan**  
Elementary: Our Lady of Angel's School  
High School Class of 2024:  
Serra High School



**Niamh Fullerton**  
Elementary: St. Stephens  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Ava Mac Namara**  
Elementary: SVDP  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Aine Mullan**  
Elementary: St. Stephens  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sacred Heart Cathedral



**Madelyn Mergenthaler**  
Elementary: White Hill MS  
High School Class of 2024:  
Sir Francis Drake



The San Francisco Youth GAA would like to congratulate our 2020 high school graduates!

**CONGRATS GRADUATES  
Class of 2020  
YOU DID IT!**



Dylan Rogers  
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral  
College Attending: City College of SF



Finn Malchow  
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral  
College Attending: City College of SF



Jack O'Keefe  
High School: St. Ignatius  
College Attending: University of Florida



Michael Harrison  
High School: St. Ignatius  
College Attending: Chapman



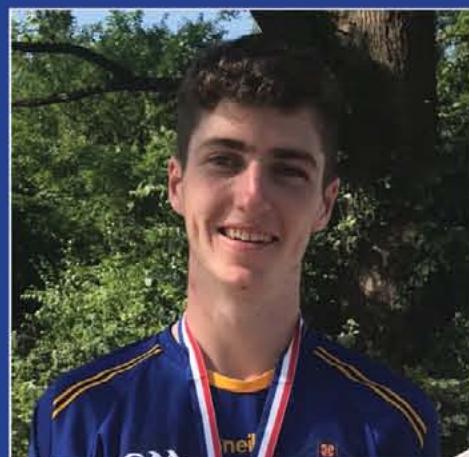
Noel Casey  
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral  
College Attending: CSU San Francisco



Stephen McCarthy  
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral  
College Attending: University of Nevada, Reno



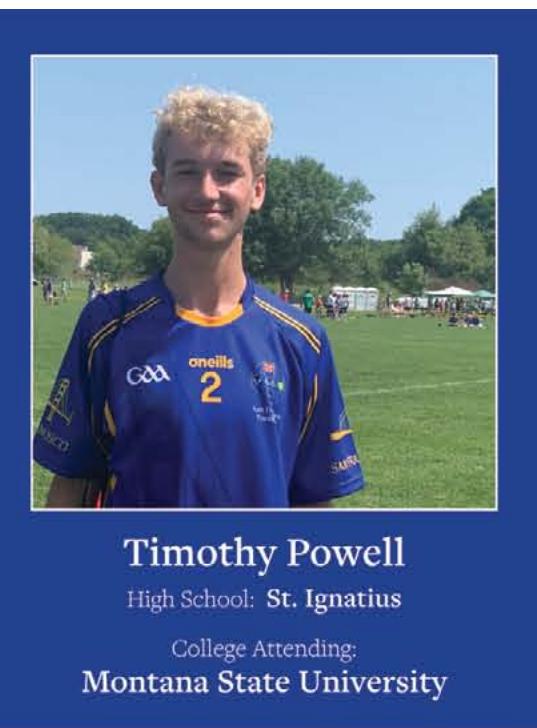
Conor Coyle  
High School: Sacred Heart Cathedral  
College Attending: City College of SF



Cormac Lyons  
High School: St. Ignatius  
College Attending: Loyola Marymount University



Daniel Gaffney  
High School: St. Ignatius  
College Attending: UC Santa Barbara



Timothy Powell  
High School: St. Ignatius  
College Attending: Montana State University

• IRISH AMERICA •

## My Covid Creatures

by Colman Ryan, MD – Seton Medical Center

*Sequestered in my place and  
Reading in my yard  
My creatures come to comfort me  
My threats they disregard.*

*They peck at breadcrumbs  
at my feet,  
I wonder for them at their stealth,  
And fear I may contaminate  
And rob them of their health.*

*I contemplate as joyously their feet  
Around me bound.  
Do birds and animals have souls like ours  
As well as pleasant sounds?*

*My rabbits cute and full of glee  
Until my grass turns yellow  
From their abundant pee.  
My finches bounce around the place  
With never ending grace,  
Pecking at my brown bread  
Crumbs  
With elegance and grace.*

*And lastly we have vermin, ants and aphids too  
They eat our plants, infect the rest,  
They are our COVID2  
But all of this distraction  
Is God's way to renew*

*The blue jays are so bold  
They take the bread in pouches,  
As much as they can hold.  
The hummingbirds are wonderful  
And whir their wings with grace  
And hover over nectar abounding in my place.*

*The furtive little monsters  
The lizards in the yard,  
But gone so fast at movements  
Even shadows make them scared.*

*The little mouse appears so brief  
And darts back in the bush,  
While circling hawks are wondering  
Where is their future lunch?*

*The spiders spread their endless webs  
The little flies to catch  
And stupidly, their little wings  
On silken threads they latch.  
The flies, themselves, are numerous  
And far too hard to catch,  
They're gone in seconds from my hands  
To join their other hatch.*



## SF Rose Of Tralee To Return In 2022

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS 61-year history, The Rose of Tralee International Festival has been canceled amid safety concerns due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Festival had recently overhauled its selection process, introduced in 2019, which changed Rose Centers' annual participation to bi-annual, with exceptions for larger Centers, including San Francisco, who are to participate twice out of every three years. Due to the Festival's new format, San Francisco was not slated to send a representative this year, regardless of the recent cancellation.

However, following the news of the 2020 Festival not moving forward, all Rose Centers who were intended to participate this year will instead take part in 2021. This, unfortunately, means that the San Francisco Rose Center will not be eligible to send a Rose representative until the years 2022 and 2023.

"We are very saddened that our 2021 Rose Selection night will have to be pushed so far into the future" said Rosie Keehan, a coordinator for the San Francisco Rose Center, "but we support the Festival's decision to keep our communities safe."

our cherished cultural spaces to hold our events and look forward to when we can enter its doors again. We hope to host a smaller event in support of our Rose Center in 2021; more details to come in the future.

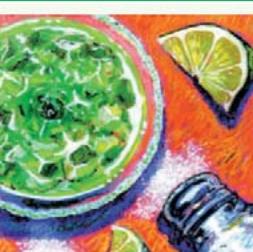
"We are so grateful to our partners, sponsors, and our supporters. Many thanks and congratulations go out to our wonderful 2019 Rose Brooklyn Quinn, who was an exceptional ambassador for our city and our community at the Festival last August."

For those young women who were looking to apply for the 2021 San Francisco Rose Selection, there is good news. Anyone who would have been applying to enter in 2021 and will now be over the age limit for Festival 2022, will still be eligible to take part. This will be a one-off exception, and rules will return to normal thereafter. All other eligibility criteria will remain the same.

Ideal candidates for the 2022 San Francisco Rose are women of Irish birth or Irish descent living in the Bay Area and Northern California. For more criteria and information, please visit the San Francisco Rose Center's website [sroftralee.com](http://sroftralee.com) and the International Festival's website as [roseoftralee.ie](http://roseoftralee.ie).



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L-R: Matt, Bill, Dan and Joey Duggan  
The Bud Duggan Family of Duggan's Serra Mortuary, Daly City

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## • FILM &amp; TV •

**Alana Kerr Collins—Busy In The Lockdown**

by James Bartlett in Los Angeles

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS shuttered movie sets and silenced television studios, but Belfast-born actress Alana Kerr Collins has never been busier.

She can't go to auditions, but thanks to the current surge in popularity for audiobooks she finds herself fully-booked as a voice artist, a specialized job she found just a few months after arriving in Los Angeles, when she booked the role narrating the audio book of *The Bone Season* by Samantha Shannon.

"At the moment my sessions are up around 20 percent," said Alana, who had already been working from home for years and recently invested in a Tardis-like Studiobricks digital home studio.

"It's fantastic. It's a stand-alone booth that can be broken down and moved locations if need be and provides the perfect studio quality sound. It's in the spare room now."

Alana has recorded over 70 audiobooks since she came to America in 2013, and has snagged some awards along the way too. Last year she won an Audiobook magazine Earphones award for her work on Irish famine-era tale *A Slip of a Girl* by Patricia Reilly Giff, and she already has an "Audie," the Oscar of the audio recording world, from 2017.



She was nominated for another Audie a few months ago for *Beasts of the Frozen Sun*, a historical fantasy by Jill Crisswell.

"I went to the ceremony in New York and though I didn't win, we had a great time. I am really lucky that I got to go to such a great city before it closed because of the pandemic."

Her Belfast accent hasn't

changed at all in that time either, and she credits the "sing-song" nature of North of Ireland accents as part of the secret of her narrator success.

"I imitate the sounds and the intonation as I would a piece of music," she explains, and though she has acted in many Irish audio books including James Joyce classics *The Dubliners* and *Ulysses*,

The Girls of Ennismore by Patricia Falvey, *Grounded Hearts* by Jeanne M Dickson, and *The Unkillable Kitty O'Kane* by Colin Falconer, she's also tackled horror and science fiction and performed Northern English, Scottish and Mexican accents.

Acting and performing has been a life-long love for Alana, 36, who began her career aged just 10 when she joined the Youth Lyric, a Saturday drama group. She followed her passion by winning places at the National Youth Theatre and National Youth Music Theatre in London, then took a degree in Drama/English at Trinity College, Dublin.

Her first big break was playing Cinderella at the Waterfront Hall, and then after several years of musicals and theatre—and a spell as a puppeteer and the voices of Goliath, Maisie and Clarabelle on "Sesame Tree"—she moved across the Atlantic.

She had also spent time training in the noted Meisner Technique in London, and in Los Angeles she has continued to attend several local acting studios—all while enjoying the famous sunshine.

Even if she's in a commercial studio she'll often do double duty as her own engineer, and she says that every hour of a book takes around two hours to record. She prepares by making notes, highlighting lines, giving characters different colors and even including sound clips on the scripts, which are on a special iPad app.

"No more worries about rustling sounds as I turn the pages on a script," she laughs, "though if I'm not at home and I need to send something quickly, a closet has to do."

At the moment California is in stay-home-safe mode, and that means that Alana's husband Matt, who works for BMW North America is at home—and that can make things tricky to juggle since they also have one-year old Noah too.

"I'm used to recording during his naps, but even with



Above: Alana Kerr Collins.  
Left: Alana and son Noah in Griffith Park, LA (before the lockdown).

Matt at home and no access to childcare due to Covid-19, it's even more exhausting than usual! But I'm very lucky to have the opportunity to work at all, and safely, I'm very much aware of that," she adds.

The couple were married in 2016 back in the north of Ireland "in the snow!" she laughs, and Matt gave her her lucky mascot, a small stuffed toy mouse called Mario, who she takes everywhere—and often appears on her Instagram feed. In recent years they have visited New Zealand and Japan, and the travel continued.

"We were lucky enough to go to the Galapagos Islands last year. (My parents babysat.)"

The hiking trails and parks have tentatively been reopened, and that means that the family can spend time in the 4,300 acres of Griffith Park, place that she often says reminds her of the North Antrim coast, where she spent lots of time as a child.

"We also went fruit and vegetable picking at a family farm last weekend and it was so fun! With so much space and wearing masks, it was easy to stay within social distancing guidelines. It was such a literal breath of fresh air to do something different and my son had a ball!"

Alana and her family live in Culver City, a noted location for film studios (most famously MGM) and while she is in high demand behind the microphone at the moment, her first love is still the theatre, and she says she still dreams of "treading the boards" in a big Broadway or West End production.

She still returns home to Finaghy regularly—most recently for Noah's 1st birthday last year—and she jokes that she's lucky to be able to see so much family when she is there because "they virtually all live in the same street."

Her next audio projects include Lindsay Jayne Ashford's WWII mystery *The House at Mermaid's Cove* and Irish coming-of-age drama *The Island Child* by Molly Aitken, but there's a bigger production coming later this year. Her birthday is in October, and one day later their second child is due to be born—and Mario has another fan to try and keep happy.

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## • FEATURE •

**The Sounds of Borris—  
Melodious & Otherwise**

by Colman Ryan, MD, Seton Medical Center



Photo by Cian Ryan of his Dad's hand and an Irish Robin.

JUST LIKE AIRPLANES IN BURLINGAME kept the sounds in Borris sharp and aware. We took them for granted, but they became part of our lives without us knowing.

The first sounds I remember before dawn were the birds—finches, robins, crows, tom-tits and the ever-cooing doves were a pleasant cacophony as the sun rose. I was and am today convinced that this was a symphony with every bird talking to each other with nature—trees, fields, rivers and the sky as conditions—no baton needed, just the harmony of the great outdoors. The larks were the maestros—rising high in the sky and chirping their hearts out to our delight.

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**Sounds of Doubtful Pleasure: The Crowing Cock and the Screaming Hawks and Gobbling Turkeys**

While still quite dark the cocks in our yard heralded the rising sun. I've no idea why they do it so early except to annoy us and lord it over the household. "Get to work and lay your eggs and make some more chickens," they seemed to say. Mating was such a short frantic affair it hardly seemed worth it.

We had turkeys too who would gobble gobble in the yard and sometimes threaten us with fanned out feathers and running towards us. We used to imitate them to annoy them from a safe distance. There was a pair of Muscovy ducks also nearby. They would hiss at us and chase us as young children, with their big red combs. We never annoyed them.

Donkeys braying was another noxious sound. I never found out why donkeys bray. Maybe they needed attention or feedings. Mostly I felt they needed a mate. We kids were always amazed at their display of masculinity in the fields. Giggling wasn't just for girls when that happened.

The most intriguing for us was the screaming of the hawks—a very distinctive warning. The mother rabbits would stand on their hind legs and look to the sky to protect their young from these "dive bombers." They were large and beautiful and always travelled in pairs. They were more deadly when they glided silently and hovered over their prey with deadly talons extended for the kill. The only thing not beautiful about them was their cruel eyes—yellow orange in color and always meaning business. They always succeeded in their mission. I greatly admired their persistence and accuracy. God's way of getting rid of vermin.



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## • IRISH AMERICA •

# Minimizing Immigration Separation By Maximizing Social Distancing

by Fiona McEntee

ORDINARY TRAVEL AND SOCIAL gatherings are on hold due to the Coronavirus, but true love knows no borders. Recently engaged couples around the world may be reassessing their wedding plans, but for US citizens who hope to marry their foreign national (FN) fiancé(e) in the US, now is a great time to discuss and begin your immigration journey.

The US immigration process for the K-1 fiancé(e) visa requires couples to provide detailed documentation to multiple agencies over many months. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is still accepting applications as usual, so applicants can still file new cases, but this could change as the COVID-19 situation unfolds.

At McEntee Law Group, we are seeing couples use this time to gather evidence and documentation needed for their applications in order to minimize separation. If you're already separated from your fiancé(e) due to travel restrictions and you're spending a lot of time at home, now is a great time to get started.

Here are some things you can do now:

### 1. Find a qualified US immigration attorney.

The K-1 visa process can look simple on its face, but we would never recommend going it alone. US immigration is

very complex and constantly changing. Small oversights can have big consequences, from delays to denials. Some consequences may not be evident until it is too late. A licensed attorney who regularly files K-1 visa cases can spot the issues, address them proactively, and help you navigate the process more efficiently. Immigration counsel is a worthwhile investment in your future as a couple.

### 2. Get on the same page.

The US immigration process requires both fiancé(e)s to disclose personal information that you may not normally be comfortable discussing, from prior arrests to financial and health challenges. When you hire an immigration attorney, the same attorney can represent both fiancé(e)s as long as interests are aligned and there are no secrets. If secrets come to light or a conflict develops, your attorney may have to terminate representation.

To successfully navigate this process, you will have to be completely honest with your fiancé(e) and your attorney so they can properly advise and represent you. If you and your fiancé(e) have not discussed personal finances yet, you should have that conversation soon. It's not advisable to wait until you're in front of a USCIS or Consular Officer.

3. Gather your personal documentation.

If the quarantine has you both spending more time at home, now is a great time to organize the documents you'll need for the K-1 application. Dig through your attics and basements to find your original personal documents. Get clear copies of your passport, prior visas, birth certificates, and divorce decrees, if applicable. Keep the originals somewhere safe. You will need them for interviews down the line.

### 4. Document your personal history.

The K-1 visa and green card process requires detailed personal information from both fiancé(e)s. You will each need a complete employment, education, and address history for the last five years before the date of filing. This means every job, school, and address, even the sever job you quit after two weeks and the college you transferred out of after a semester. Double-check your address history online. It goes further back than you think.

Later on, the FN fiancé(e) will need to list their group affiliations. This means listing every "organization, association, fund, foundation, party, club, society, or similar group" you

have ever been a part of inside and outside the US. You will need to provide the name(s) and your dates of involvement. Organizing this proactively will save you and your attorney time in the long run.

### 5. Gather your financial documentation.

The K-1 visa is intended for US citizens who want to bring their FN fiancé(e) to the US to get married within 90 days of entry. The end goal is to get married and gain permanent resident status by getting a "green card." In late February 2020, USCIS implemented a new rule that substantially increased the work and documentation required to get a green card.

The Public Charge Rule (PCR) requires green card applicants to show that they will not become dependent on state assistance in the US by providing extensive documentation about their household's finances. The FN will not receive work authorization for 4-5 months after applying for the green card, and the PCR is primarily focused on the US citizen's finances. The US citizen fiancé(e) will need IRS tax transcripts for at least the most recent tax year, and ideally for the last 3-5 years. If you were not required to file taxes in a specific year, or you have yet to file, you may want to reach out to an accountant to get written confirmation. The documentation requirements vary based on your individual situation, especially if it changed due to COVID-19. A qualified immigration attorney is in the best position to help you meet these onerous requirements.

### 6. Order outstanding documentation.

If you are missing essential documents like tax transcripts, court records, or original birth certificates, order them sooner rather than later. Different agencies are operating on different timelines due to COVID-19, so leave some room for delay.

The K-1 visa process can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. An experienced US immigration attorney can help you through this newlycharted territory in unprecedented times.

Fiona McEntee is the Founding and Managing Attorney of McEntee Law Group, an immigration law firm located in Chicago with a national client base. Fiona has over 12 years of experience practicing immigration law. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, and now a naturalized US citizen, she is in a unique position to provide sensitive, compassionate, and comprehensive advice to all her clients.



## JUNE UPDATES

### IMMIGRATION ADVICE CLINIC

Immigration attorney, Jim Byrne is continuing his monthly immigration clinic remotely.

Telephone/FaceTime appointments are available for Saturday, June 6, 2020 between 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Register with Katie at 415.752.6006 or email [admin@sfiipc.org](mailto:admin@sfiipc.org)

## SF ★2020 census COUNTS

### Irish America needs to be counted!

IIPC is delighted to be a member of the San Francisco Complete Count Committee with particular focus on making sure that all Irish and Irish American residents of the Bay Area are counted in Census 2020.

Census 2020 is an online application with just 9 questions, including the option to further define your identity as Irish. We are hoping that you will join us to make sure that all of our community is counted!

If you are undocumented, on a visa, a US citizen and are resident in the US, you should complete your Census form. Filling out your Census form helps San Francisco get Federal funds for local transportation, infrastructure, health care, schools, affordable housing, and higher education for our community and is completely confidential.

More information at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov), or call us at 415.752.6006 if you have questions.

## TRAVEL IN COVID

At the time of writing of this article, we remain in an almost global state of inertia when it comes to international travel.

A number of Presidential Proclamations are currently in effect. The initial proclamation limits the entry of aliens recently present in certain foreign jurisdictions including the People's Republic of China (excluding the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau), the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Schengen Area, the United Kingdom (excluding overseas territories outside of Europe), and the Republic of Ireland. On May 24, Brazil was added to this list.

The Presidential Proclamation Suspending

### Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

5340 Geary Boulevard, #206, San Francisco, CA 94121  
Tel: 415.752.6006 Fax: 415.752.6910 Email: [info@sfiipc.org](mailto:info@sfiipc.org) [www.sfiipc.org](http://www.sfiipc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/Irish.Immigration.Pastoral.Center](http://www.facebook.com/Irish.Immigration.Pastoral.Center)

## JUNE VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

While our shelter in place restrictions are slowly lifting, it will be a little while longer before we go back to something more akin to our normal lives, and that is ok. We all need to continue to be patient, to see how the easing of restrictions affects the spread of the virus. Above all, we need to keep each other safe.

For as long as we find ourselves in this position, we will continue to develop our Virtual Programming and we hope that you will join us for some, or all of our events.



### GOLDEN GATE MEN'S SHED

Mondays from 6.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.

Join by Zoom at <https://linktr.ee/sfiipc>

Our Golden Gate Men's Shed is back! Join the men of the shed each Monday evening from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. for a very interesting guest speaker series! June speakers include Larry Doyle (Parkside Tavern), Consul General Robert O'Driscoll and Larry McCarthy, incoming President of the GAA. This one is for the men, so step on in!



### YOU, ME & A CUP OF TEA

Tuesdays from 10.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Join by Zoom at <https://bit.ly/2Z79nEn> or call Joan at 415.432.2551 for phone in details. On Tuesday mornings, put the kettle on, make a cup of tea, sit down and relax in the company of friends as we chat, share stories, and generally have a bit of craic to get the week off to a good start. Hosted by Joan, we are excited to share this novel way to stay 'connected' until we all can get together again in person.



### VIRTUAL BINGO

Thursdays from 10.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Call Joan at 415.432.2551 to register and receive your BINGO sheets



If you have never played BINGO, now's your chance! Join Janette and her wily players and see if you are quick enough to spot your winning line or box! It's all a bit of fun, but oh, so competitive! Check it out!

### PASTORAL PROVISIONS

Saturdays and Tuesdays from 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon

Donation dropoff: 1612 Noriega Street, San Francisco (between 23rd & 24th Avenues)

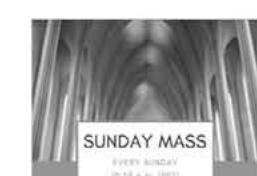
Pantry Box Registration at <https://linktr.ee/sfiipc>

A pantry to support our Irish community through this crisis, we will be collecting food and non-food items for distribution to those who need a helping hand during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Food donations or gift cards can be dropped off at Whelan's School of Irish Dance, 1612 Noriega Street, San Francisco on Saturdays and Tuesdays between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.

If you or someone you know may need some supplies to get through this period of time, please register at <https://linktr.ee/sfi ipc>

This program is discrete and confidential. All are welcome. Call Celine at 415.432.2550 for information



### SUNDAY MASS

Sundays at 10.30 a.m.

IIPC YouTube page at <https://bit.ly/2R3qOki>

Join Fr. Brendan each Sunday morning for celebration of Mass. Take some time out for a little peace, quiet & reflection.

### Travel to Ireland

Travel to Ireland is still open for all nationalities but is obviously dependent on available flight options. Upon arrival in Ireland, all travelers are expected to self isolate for 14 days in a named address which has to be given to the authorities. This means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people.

### It does not apply to the following groups:

- Current Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders)
- Spouses and Minor Children (under 21) of U.S. Citizens
- Healthcare Professionals entering on an immigrant visa to work on the COVID-19 pandemic
- EB-5 Immigrant Investors
- Anyone already in the United States applying for a green card (Adjustment of Status applicants)

It is unclear when either of these proclamations will be lifted. If you have any questions please email Celine at [celine@sfiipc.org](mailto:celine@sfiipc.org).

The

Presidential Proclamation Suspending

### Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

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Processing of non-emergency Irish passport applications and renewals has been suspended and Passport Service staff have been redeployed to assist public service delivery during this public health emergency. Applications will be processed once service resumes.

**Passports for travel in a genuine emergency** (death or serious illness of a family member or for emergency medical treatment of the applicant) are being processed. Contact the Consulate General of Ireland, San Francisco on their emergency number: +1 415 823 7150 for assistance.



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## • SPORTS •

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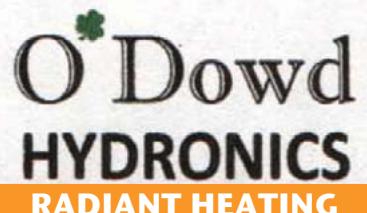
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## • SPORTS •

# GAA Says Allianz League Action Probably Done & No All-Ireland Action Till October At Least

THE GAEIL ATHLACHT Association in Ireland have said fans will have to wait till at least October before the start of the 2020 All-Ireland Championships. The announcement was made after a meeting of the GAA's management committee on May 6. Counties and clubs have been asked to stop training for the time being.

The Association is open to playing games with no fans in attendance later in the year but acknowledged that there was no real appetite within its ranks for doing that.

All GAA facilities will remain closed for now and clubs have been asked to refrain from any on-field activity in line with current government social distancing restrictions, which are expected to remain in place until July 20.

The Association said it welcomed the government's roadmap to gradually open up the country, but will seek clarity around "the challenge of social distancing in contact sport."

GAA President John Horan gave a lengthy interview to Des Cahill on RTÉ's The Sunday Game on May 10 during which he said he can't see Gaelic games being played at any level while social distancing in its current form remains in place.

Horan stressed the the GAA's top priority was the safety of its members and their families. He also said the Association could lose up to €50 million if the All-Ireland Championships and other competitions are delayed further.

"Our concern has to be the players on the pitch, their families and their work colleagues. They are all amateurs and it's a hobby to them all, and I know they take it to a very serious level and they have a very professional approach to it, but we can't risk anything. I would hate to think as an organisation that we would have made a decision that would have cost any family a member of their family."

Horan confirmed that if the GAA does resume this year, the club season is likely to do so before its inter-county equivalent due to the fact that it pertains to far more GAA members. He added that in such an instance, there will likely be no club championships at juvenile age grades up as far as Minor, with leagues and other non-competitive fixtures being prioritised for young players.

"We're quite comfortable to say that we are going to go with the club game first because it impacts on the greater number of people," Horan said. "98 percent of our games are club games so if we play club games, it's inclusive of everybody because the county players would get the opportunity to play with their clubs and that would have an important impact across the whole of Irish society.

"Then we can actually make the decision to return to the inter-county game. It's a contact sport decision that is going to influence it so whether at county or club level I don't see a major distinction between the two of them but the impact throughout the organisation would be far greater if we actually got the clubs back."

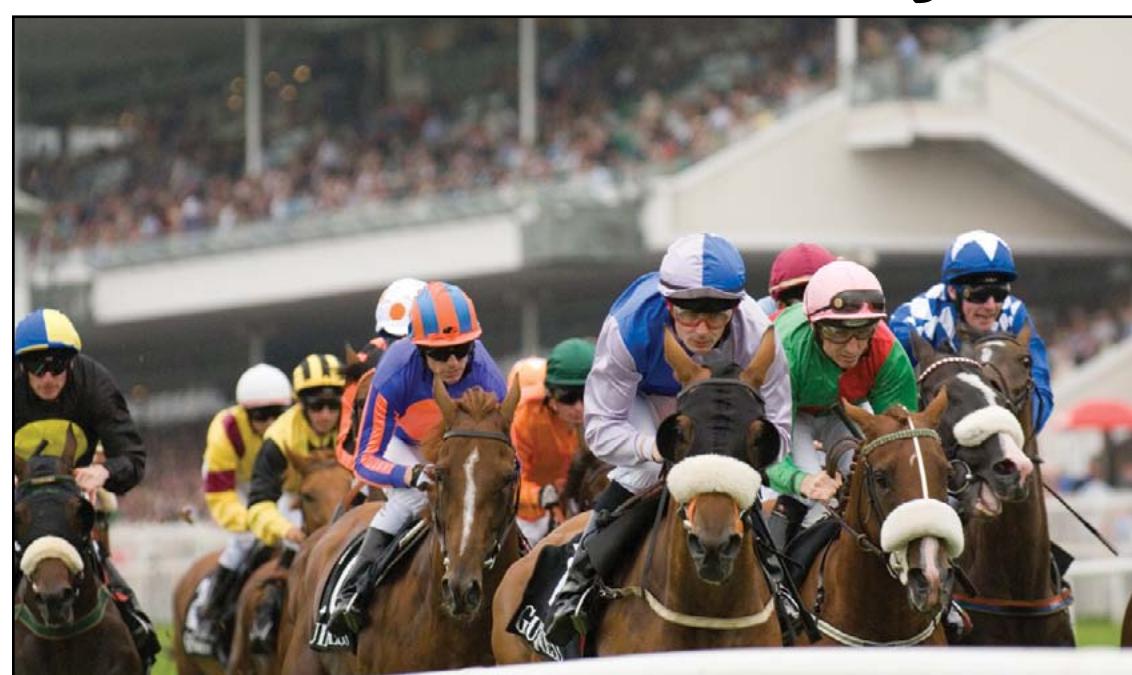
Horan also poured cold water on the idea of Championship games being played behind closed doors.

"I have an issue about the 'closed-doors' concept because if it is safe enough for the players to be in close contact on the pitch, it's going to be safe enough to have a certain number of people in a gathering at the ground itself. We're fortunate as an organisation to have such fantastic stadia."

"We'll be taking our information from the health authorities to see if it is safe, and it's only if and when it's safe that we will actually allow training and our games to recommence."

"Taking that information on board, then, we'll make that decision—and we won't bring it up to the line. We'll be making that decision on a constant; we're on executive calls every day and we'll keep reviewing and updating so we'll be staying on top of things in the next period of weeks."

"Ultimately there is a huge responsibility to get this right and if one club, be it a playing area or whatever, developed



Galway Races at Ballybrit Racecourse

THE RETURN OF HORSE RACING in Ireland has been brought forward by three weeks following talks between the government and Horse Racing Ireland, the sport's governing body. The resumption of racing was originally slated for June 29 under phase three of the re-opening roadmap, but races can now take place "behind closed doors" from June 8.

A number of strict coronavirus protocols have been agreed to allow the sport to resume. The only people allowed at tracks will be the essential personnel needed to run the events. Everyone involved will be subject to health screening beforehand and will have their temperature taken on the way into the venue.

Face masks will be mandatory and social distancing will be strictly controlled by a dedicated Covid-19 protocol officer at each race meeting.

"We are grateful to be one of the sectors permitted to go back to work and acknowledge the responsibility on everybody in racing to ensure the events are run in a safe way," said Chief Executive of Horse Racing Ireland, Brian Kavanagh.

"We know from our own experience in March when we safely ran ten meetings behind closed doors—and from what is happening in other countries like France, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and America—that racing can be staged safely within the requirements of social distancing."

"With significant input from the IHRB's chief medical officer Dr Jennifer Pugh, we have strengthened the HRI Covid-19 protocols and so, while race fixtures will return in Ireland on 8 June, they will be very different from what people will have experienced before."

Kavanagh added:

"We will publish our full protocols tomorrow and will require any key personnel necessary to run a race fixture to read the document in full."

"There must be full compliance with these protocols and to assist the industry in becoming familiar with the changed workplace, a series of webinars on the Covid 19 Protocols will be announced."

"We will release a revised fixture list up to the end of

June, including confirmation on when the Classics, traditionally scheduled for this time of year, will be run."

Caretaker Taoiseach Leo Varadkar defended the decision to allow horse racing to reopen saying that the industry was worth almost half a billion euro a year to the Irish economy. Varadkar also pointed out that the horse racing industry in Ireland needed to be aligned with what was happening in the industry abroad.

"Horse racing was never specifically mentioned in the plan that we agreed back in April, so now it is, and horse racing behind close doors will be allowed to resume from the 8 June, and that's taking into account what's happening in the UK and what's happening in France," Varadkar said.

"This is a big economic sector, a lot of people employed in it, worth nearly €500 million euro to the economy each year and because people won't be able to travel to meetings, the amount of movement will be limited—it's people travelling to and from their workplace, essentially, but won't be open to spectators, not for the foreseeable future."

"We need to be aligned, or more or less aligned, with what's happening in the UK and France in that regard," he added.

In the month of July there will be 47 race meetings in total including the seven-day Galway Racing Festival, slated to begin in the last week of July.

Horse racing has had its share of critics in Ireland in recent months because of the decision of thousands of Irish race fans to travel to this year's Cheltenham Festival which took place between March 10 and March 13. The Irish government began its national shutdown on March 12, while up to 20,000 Irish people were mingling with more than 100,000 British spectators at Cheltenham.

Kavanagh acknowledged that Cheltenham should have been cancelled but claimed that social distancing was not really understood at the time.

"It's very interesting, that was the very week where the whole thing ramped up with coronavirus," Kavanagh said. "We will release a revised fixture list up to the end of



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tagann an tráthnóna.*

*No matter how long the  
day, the evening comes.*

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To all those working in our hospitals  
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defeat the coronavirus,  
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