



the freebird

VOLUME II

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The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating Irish culture.

THE IRISH FAIR OF MINNESOTA SUMMER SCHOOL BOOK CLUB

The next book in queue for the Irish Fair of Minnesota book Club will be Bono in Conversation, about Paul Hewson, lead singer for U2, commonly known as 'Bono'. No, this **DOES NOT** mean we have Bono coming to the Summer School! However, it does mean there will be a talk on Bono's life and that of fellow Protestant- born Irishman CS Lewis, given by Patrick O'Donnell of Normandale College, who so vibrantly brought Joyce to life for us last year at the Summer School.

Apart from being an extremely popular and influential musician, Bono is also one of the great humanitarians of our time. His nature passionately curious, his approach restlessly pragmatic, he has increasingly focused on *long-term* results by understanding and addressing underlying causes of the suffering he's trying to improve. Both his views and his activism are controversial among progressive as well as conservative thinkers.



Author Mischka Assayas explores these themes as well as family, friendship, music, God, rage, fear, death & love, grounded in Bono's own contemporary Irish life. "...I will clutch at your ankles and take you back to actual feelings, people, colours, smells, individual stories. Because *that* will anchor everything that you have to say." says Assayas to Bono; that is what makes this book vivid as well as pertinent.

We will offer the book to folks at (\$12); this is ½ regular price, as the readings in the book club are supported by the Fair. We hope to meet on ~March 20th, so we need to hear from you ASAP if you are interested (email slobhandugan@comcast.net) in getting the book and participating in the book club for this round!

Quotes from Bono: *"It's an amazing thing to think that ours is the first generation in history that really can end extreme poverty, the kind that means a child dies for lack of food in its belly. That should be seen as the most incredible, historic opportunity but instead it's become a millstone around our necks. We let our own pathetic excuses about how it's 'difficult' justify our own inaction. Be honest. We have the science, the technology, and the wealth. What we don't have is the will, and that's not a reason that history will accept."*

"Jesus, Jew, Muhammed, it's true; all sons of Abraham"

"I really do not understand the hatred towards gays...it's awful. Some people say they're sinners, and that they don't deserve the right to be married and so on - and they use God's words as an excuse for all of this hate. That's ridiculous; if God is anything, it is love - no matter what race, gender, or sexual orientation. Everyone is created equal in the eyes of the Lord."

IRISH FAIR BOARD WELCOMES MICHAEL RYAN

In their January meeting, the Board voted unanimously to elect Michael Ryan of Murnane, Conlin, White & Brandt, St. Paul, to fill their last vacancy, for a total of 17 members. Ryan brings to the Board a strong passion for Irish culture, particularly Irish music, as well as connections to the St. Paul business community. He looks to helping the Fair amplify its individual contributor campaign, which is a strategic goal.

GRANT PROPOSALS GALORE

Out of the success of 2005 and the consistent growth over the past several years, the Fair Board decided last Fall to give back to the community some of its prosperity in the form of 50,000\$ in grants. The commitment calls for one-third to be given to non-Irish new immigrant groups, and two-thirds to be disbursed to further Irish-oriented activities, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on new or finite projects.

The grant program has been quite successful in stirring up a flurry of ideas! Projects supporting Irish sports, music, theater, dance and cross-cultural activities have all been put forward and as well as supporting psychological assistance here for Irish children of troubled Northern areas. In all, 27 grant proposals have been received in the Irish cultural category and 3 in the new immigrant category. Specific cultural projects include: tune collection, workshops, residencies & performances in schools, development of a cultural trunk for educators, equipment to support genealogical research, guest singers for workshops & performances, an “Irish Voices, Indian Voices” program, social & old style dancing workshops, Irish children’s theatre, support for a visit from a Northern Irish artist, and a showcase of MN Irish arts. New immigrant proposals include a Life Skills Sewing project, an after school tutoring program and also in this category workshops, residencies & performances in schools.

“The Board is delighted with the breadth and richness of the proposals we have received. They speak to the creativity & energy of the Irish and new immigrant communities here in Minnesota.” said Fair Executive Director Steve Cerkenik. “Of course we will have a hard time deciding, but in the best way possible; *so many* good choices.

The Board plans to make some decisions at the February meeting about which of the projects will get funding in this round of disbursements.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Widening Gyre Writers Group—made up of award-winning Minnesota writers Susan Hamre, Erin Hart, Lynda McDonnell, Cheryl Ostrom, Claudia Poser, and Elizabeth Weir—will hold an hour long reading of their works in progress on **Monday, February 13, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. at the Saint Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Avenue in Saint Paul**. This special anniversary reading is sponsored by the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, and is free and open to the public. The hour-long reading will be followed by an informal reception—hors d’oeuvres and beverages will be served. Among the work in various genres those attending can expect to sample what’s in store for Nora Gavin, the protagonist in the third novel of Erin Hart’s Irish mystery series (*Haunted Ground, Lake of Sorrows*).



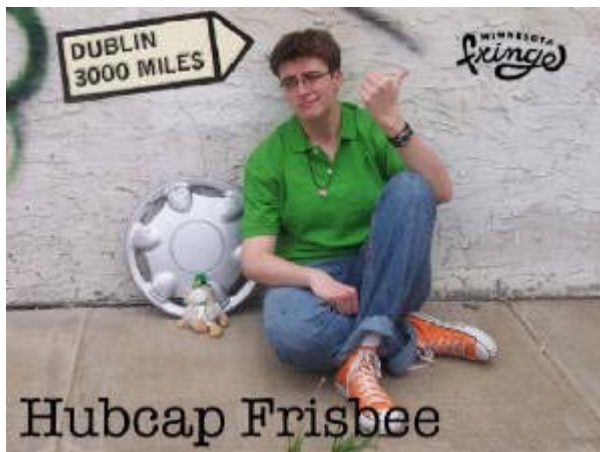
Erin Hart Photo by Paddy O'Brien

On **Saturday, February 18th**, from 10:30am to 4:30pm, **dance master Patrick O’Dea of Roscommon, Ireland**, will be teaching a series of four Irish Dance classes under the auspices of Lóma Mór Irish Dance Club. O’Dea, a master teacher who is currently authoring a manuscript on the history of Irish Old Style Step Dance, will be teaching Old Style Step Dance classes and Set Dance classes. Old style Step Dance is the solo, performance-oriented dance that gave rise to modern step dance, clogging and American tap dancing. Set Dancing is a popular form of Irish social dance that typically features simple footwork, such as that done to polkas, but with intricate patterns, somewhat similar to Square or Contra Dancing. This should be a great class for folks who want to experience genuine traditional dance as it was before its extravaganzification in “Riverdance”. Advance reservations recommended. Contact LomamorIDC@hotmail.com for more information. Discounts for takers of multiple classes. Everyone is welcome - you need not have previous dance experience, and you need not bring a partner.

Local Irish band **Legacy** will host a **St. Patrick’s Day party** at the Rosemount Community Center on the evening of March 17. The event will feature live Irish music in a family-friendly, safe, smoke-free environment. Please call 651-423-7070 or write to info@legacycelticmusic.com for reservations. **Tickets must be ordered by 3/10/06 – NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR.**



100% of the net proceeds from **Legacy’s St. Patrick’s Day Party** will be donated to the **Children’s Program of Northern Ireland (CPNI)**. For those unfamiliar, CPNI was started in 1973 in response to a letter to the editor of the *Fargo Forum* newspaper from a Belfast woman who wanted her child to be away from the violence in Northern Ireland for the summer. The following year the Hibbing Rotary Club sponsored 150 children from Northern Ireland for the summer. In 1975, the program moved to the Twin Cities, where it has remained. Each year since then, 75-100 children have been hosted by families in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Over 4000 children have participated in the program to date. CPNI is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization. In 1994, CPNI began a cross-community program in which Protestant and Catholic children were brought together to work on conflict resolution and reconciliation skills. CPNI believes that by reinforcing these skills both here in Minnesota and in Northern Ireland after the children return, they may foster the belief that Catholics and Protestants can live and work together in an atmosphere of trust and security. The children will be the ones to use these skills to help shape a new Northern Ireland. **HOST FAMILIES FOR 2006 SOUGHT. Interested in hosting an 11-year old Catholic or Protestant girl or boy for 4 weeks this summer? Call (651) 405-1108 or go to www.cpni.org for more information.**



READY FOR A FRINGEY ST. PATRICK’S DAY?

Minnesota Fringe Festival performer Allegra Lingo brings her four- star, sold out 2005 show, Hubcap Frisbee, back to the Bryant Lake Bowl for a special one night engagement on St. Patrick’s Day 2006. Hear the story of a young writer with an acute fear of flying and terrible sea sickness tackle Ireland on her own terms, meeting men who talk to fairies, writing love letters to a pile of rocks, and a whole bunch of other blarney. Mainstays of a good St. Paddy’s Day--good beer, good stories, and a pint glass full of laughs-- will definitely be on offer.

For more information, see <http://allegralingo.tripod.com>.

MINNESOTA SWARM GO IRISH

If you find yourself looking for that extra dose of Irish music and je ne sais quoi after St. Patrick's Day, here's an event for you. The Irish Fair of Minnesota and Minnesota Swarm (lacrosse) are jointly organizing an Irish night at the game at the Xcel Energy Center on March 24. The event will include Irish half-time entertainment and a post-game Irish concert on the club level. Tickets will be discounted ticket to \$12 lower level corner seats (normally \$22). The Irish Fair of Minnesota will also be promoted at the event. It will be a good introduction to the fast-paced sport of lacrosse for those of us new to the game.



Looking Ahead

The National University of Ireland, Galway (photo, left) is presenting a Seminar: **Education in Ireland July 6 – July 29, 2006**. Directed to teachers and administrators, participants will spend three weeks at the National University of Ireland, Galway learning how education is organized and structured in Ireland.

According to Bernard Keenan, coordinator: "This course is designed to study the Irish Education System and concurrently to study the history, literature, and culture of Ireland through lectures, seminars, visits with Irish educators and guided cultural tours". Along with meeting their Irish contemporaries, the participants conduct their own research in areas that represent their professional interests such as curriculum, assessment, special and vocational education, and school administration. The program is scheduled from July 6 – July 29, 2006 and the **enrollment deadline is April 1, 2006**. Six graduate credits will be available. For more information contact: Bernard J. Keenan lilysky@ncia.net



Photo Courtesy of
Tipperary School of Stonemasonry, Ireland!

AN GHAELGE

Courtesy of Gaeltacht Minnesota <http://www.gaelminn.org/index.htm>
This month's Irish proverb honors the creators of many grant proposals the Board has received that seek to build our future by starting today.

De réir a chéile a thógtar na caisleáin.
It takes time to build castles.

*Until Next Time,
Best Regards from the*

**Irish Fair of
Minnesota**