



Irish American Unity Conference National Newsletter

PO Box 55573 Washington, DC 20040 Web: www.iauc.org

Working for Justice and Peace in a United Ireland

October 2010

Please join the IAUC National Board in welcoming Thomas J. Burke as Interim Acting President of the IAUC. The Board received the resignation of President Kate McCabe in early August and Tom, who was currently serving as Vice President, has stepped in to fill Kate's unexpired term. The IAUC is lucky to have Tom at the helm while it undertakes a review of its organizational structure and mission statement. Tom is from Denver, Colorado and has practiced law for over forty years. You may recognize his name from his involvement in the Lawyer's Alliance for Justice and his role in the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry where he provided testimony at the Belfast inquiry in May of 2008. Tom's Irish activism has made him a frequent visitor to the north of Ireland where he has been a parade observer in Portadown and other parade flash-points over the years. There's more information about Tom's involvement in the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry later on in this issue.

Annual Convention

October 22 and 23rd - Days Inn
Newark, New Jersey

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President's Column: Greetings from Denver, Colorado and welcome to what will be the first of quarterly issues of the Irish American Unity Conference National Newsletter. The peace process in the north of Ireland is in place, the Stormont Assembly is functioning with Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness in their leadership roles and the summer season has been relatively quiet on the parades front. However, there is still a need for commitment and action from all Americans who are concerned with peace and justice.

These following areas still require your involvement:

- Former political prisoners from both sides in the north of Ireland are not reaping the benefits of the Good Friday Agreement. They cannot obtain jobs; they cannot obtain insurance or participate fully in their communities in spite of their resolution to put down weapons.
- Many families still do not know how or why their loved ones were murdered. The rights of victims in the north should include the establishment of a commission to allow testimony to bring closure and healing.
- The British government put into place a law called the Inquiries Act that would permit it to decide what evidence could and could not be produced in an independent inquiry.
- Several former political prisoners living in the United States have been given the opportunity to apply for citizenship and permanent resident status, yet some still face obstacles as they engage with Homeland Security.
- Finally. A reunited Ireland is still a goal for those of us who have worked so long and wish to see partition permanently removed. Resolutions for a Re-United Ireland have been passed in many cities, municipalities and two states (Massachusetts and New Jersey) to date. In Pennsylvania a resolution is currently pending in the House Legislature. Please contact your Local and State Legislators to help sponsor a resolution in your community and follow up with them frequently to make sure it is passed. For more information contact George Trainor who is heading this effort on behalf of the IAUC. E-mail George at steeler059@aol.com. We need as well to have a thorough and open discussion on the direction of additional efforts in advancing reunification, including identifying IAUC's current strengths and new opportunities to that end. Included in this discussion is identifying sources of revenue for IAUC's ongoing activities and bolstering IAUC's traditionally strong relationships in the United States Congress. Thank you for the confidence the Board has reposed in me to fill out Kate McCabe's illustrious terms as President. I will do my best to carry on the tradition.

Annual Convention

The Irish American Unity Conference will have its Annual Meeting on **October 22 and 23rd** at the Days Inn in Newark, New Jersey.

Matt Morrison, former Irish Republican POW and President of TharSaile a former prisoner's rights organization is scheduled to address the attendees.

The IAUC National Board will be welcoming Thomas Burke, Jr. as its Interim National President that weekend. Tom is an attorney living in Denver, Colorado and a member of the Lawyer's Alliance for Justice. He was a witness at the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry and called to testify on the circumstances of Rosemary Nelson's murder in 2008. All IAUC members and those interested in Irish issues are urged to attend this meeting. Additional speakers and agenda items will be announced shortly.

The Newark Days Inn is located at 450 US 1 & 9, Newark, NJ 07114 and has a free 24 hour/day shuttle service to and from Newark Airport, free fitness center, all you can eat breakfast, and a restaurant on the premises.

Room rates are \$63.96 per night plus tax.

TO RECEIVE THE \$63.96 RATE, ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE THROUGH KEVIN BARRY, IAUC TREASURER. YOU MAY CONTACT KEVIN BY EMAIL AT: kevinbnj@aol.com OR BY PHONE AT (973) 812-8915.

THE HOTEL WILL NOT HONOR THIS SPECIAL RATE IF RESERVATIONS ARE MADE THROUGH THE FRONT DESK OR ONLINE. THIS SPECIAL RATE WILL EXPIRE ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2010. SO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!



IN MEMORIAM:

BOB LINNON THE QUIET MAN

By Michael Cummings, Political Education
Chair
IAUC National Board

If memory serves me correctly Bob Linnon was the third National President of the Irish American Unity Conference following founder Jim Delaney of Chicago, Illinois and San Antonio, Texas and the irrepressible Dan Kennedy, a native son of Ireland and Detroit, Michigan. The IAUC was a newcomer on the activist Irish American scene after the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Irish Northern Aid Committee but quickly established itself as a player by appealing to civil rights and human rights activists and professionals from every religious and political persuasion.

A Seton Hall Professor, Bob Linnon seemed perfectly suited to lead such an organization and he did so skillfully at one of the most critical times in the history of the Anglo-Irish conflict. The AOH and INA had long records of fundraising and in giving voice to the victims of British oppression in the North of Ireland. But the IAUC under Bob's leadership expanded the limited lobbying efforts in Washington and established a base which continues today in efforts to highlight British abuses of law and justice and most recently their discrimination against the Gaelic language.

He traveled the length and breadth of this nation to testify on behalf of laws linking the use of the MacBride Fair Employment Principles in investing and purchasing with public funds. He was a catalyst in the Council of Presidents of Irish-American Organizations which streng-

thened the voice of all in the corridors of power on Capitol Hill and in State capitols like Boston, Albany, Columbus and Sacramento. His cool command of facts and issues and quiet demeanor became a trademark of all those he called to Washington for Lobby Day.

However, perhaps his finest hour came when he called for an investigation into how International Fund for Ireland monies was being used. The brainchild of Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, the IFI was quickly crafted by the British to disburse the funds only to loyalist groups east of the Bann River thus reinforcing decades old discrimination against Catholic/Nationalist groups. The Irish government played its usual supporting role in this and few in America were ready to make waves against Speaker O'Neill's project. Faced with the research conducted by IAUC member Professor Gerry Coleman with the insight of the late Oliver Kearney, President Linnon arranged for an appearance before the Foreign Affairs sub-Committee of Lee Hamilton. The scathing IAUC testimony prompted a St Patrick's Day Op-Ed piece in the Wall Street Journal exposing the waste and abuse and oversight was improved at once. Bob's courage in standing up to powerful interests defined the man, the issue and proved the IAUC as a group to be reckoned with in advocating on all issues.

Apart from his leadership and fierce pride in IAUC initiatives, Bob Linnon was a man of sincerity and compassion that was easily felt by all those he worked with in America and more importantly, by those long victimized by British troops and their treachery. He was a credit to his profession as he patiently worked to educate the media, legislators, citizens and educators on the finer points of extradition, deportation and why the term famine was appropriated by the British to describe An Gorta Mor.

We extend our sincere condolences to Bob's family and friends and thank God for his example of commitment and courage in the fight to end the partition of Ireland.



In Memory Of John P. Fogarty

SAN FRANCISCO - John Fogarty, long-time Irish American activist died Wednesday July 7, 2010 in Stockton, California, after fighting a long battle with cancer.

Fogarty was born in Bronx, New York, 1946 to William and Helen Fogarty. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Carol. He is survived by his sons John Lynch, Sean Fogarty and Keith Phillips and his daughters Shana Fogarty, Meghan, Heather (Tony) and Whitney MacKenzie. Two brothers Kenneth and William Fogarty and one sister Rita Angelopoulos.

A staunch union supporter, John was a member of Local 510 Sign & Display for over twenty years.

Fogarty moved to San Francisco in 1968. He had been a long time activist for peace and reconciliation in Ireland. John had served locally, regionally and nationally in the Irish American Unity Conference, but it was his work on behalf of the H-Block Four that made him a well known figure within the San Francisco Irish community as well as Irish American communities across the country.

John's longtime friend Geordy Austin remembers. "John spent a lifetime in pursuit of fairness and many injustices were overturned because of his efforts. I don't know of one major problem in the North that John was not aware of and worked to change. To say that John was the cutting edge in the many challenges to the Irish is putting it mildly, razor edge would be more appropriate."

John assumed the role as National President for the Irish American Unity Conference in 2007, but had to resign in 2008 due to health reasons.

Former Sinn Féin Belfast City Council Member and personal friend Bobby Lavery stated "John's death has left the Republican family very sad and he will be sorely missed."

A true friend to everyone, a caring father, a loving grandfather, John was very respected and now will be mourned and missed by all who knew him.

IAUC Cultural Chair Report

Marie Smith, Cultural Chair of the IAUC, met with Minister Pat Carey, Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs and his staff, this past July in Dublin. She spoke of the need of the Irish government and the Tourist Board to preserve and mark existing workhouses and mass grave sites and to incorporate this preservation with the global efforts of the Irish Diaspora. Mrs. Smith was invited by the Minister to present her recommendations to a committee meeting scheduled for the end of September.

After her Dublin meeting she then visited the remaining mass grave sites and workhouses on the island. Her recommendation has been submitted to the Minister and she will be providing additional reports on efforts to recognize the victims of the Great Hunger.



Denver Attorney, Tom Burke Summoned to Testify in Rosemary Nelson Murder Inquiry in Belfast

by Pat McCullough (article written April 2008)

Rosemary Nelson, mother of 3 young children, drove from her home in Lurgan a town in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, on March 15, 1999. A hundred yards from her home and down the street from her children's school, a bomb that had been placed under her car detonated. Friends and family rushed to the wreckage to find her dying of mortal wounds which included loss of both legs and severe abdominal injuries. They tried to aid and comfort her but little else could have been done. Nelson died a few hours later after unsuccessful surgery to save her life at the age of 40. Shortly after the murder, the Red Hand Defenders, a Protestant loyalist/unionist paramilitary group not in support of the Good Friday peace accord and the cease-fire agreement, placed a call to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and claimed responsibility for the killing.

Rosemary Nelson was the sole solicitor in her small legal practice in Lurgan (less than 20 miles southwest of Belfast). In her practice she crossed over the sectarian lines that divided her town and represented clients from all backgrounds in routine legal business. As a part of her local practice, she came to public prominence for representing Catholic residents of nearby Portadown in the volatile dispute over the routing of Protestant Orange Drumcree parades. She also took on a small number of other controversial cases in which she represented high profile Catholic clients including the family of Robert Hamill – a Catholic kicked to death by a loyalist mob while Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers were nearby, and also defended leading republican Colin Duffy and overturned his conviction for murdering a soldier after it emerged that a crucial police witness was a loyalist paramilitary.

It was this small percentage of Nelson's work that led her to be target of vilification by factions of the Protestant loyalist community, and to receive threats to her clients and to herself from that Nelson's murder was one of more than

three thousand during the modern day Troubles that began in 1969. In the eyes of many who followed the plight of Northern Ireland, aspects of Nelson's killing were immediately recognized as similar to those surrounding the murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane in 1989 (Three masked men shot him in front of his horrified family in 1989), a killing widely recognized as a result of British security force collusion. What sets Nelson's murder case apart and adds further controversy is the refusal of the British state to protect her after her repeated reports of RUC death threats aimed at her and specific requests for protection from these threats were made known to RUC by various people and agencies, including international human rights lawyers – and even to the US Congress and the United Nations!

Denver attorney Tom Burke and others met with Nelson in 1998 and were told directly by her of threats made against her life, and at her request went to the RUC and requested protection for her. Thomas (Tom) J. Burke Jr. lives with his family in Denver, Colorado where he practices civil law for Jones & Keller, P.C. He was born and raised in Minnesota. His ancestors are immigrants from Ireland who came to Minnesota to live and raise families in the State's first Irish settlement, Shieldsville. Influenced by his family's Irish background the subject of Ireland became increasingly dear as he grew. While an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota he studied the history of the British Isles, with emphasis on the history of Ireland. During the late 1960's distressing events that later became known as "The Troubles" remerged in Northern Ireland. Burke developed a life-long interest in Northern Ireland and that would eventually involve him as a witness in one of the most intriguing murder cases of The Troubles.

In the early to mid-1990's Burke became a member of a couple of internet discussion groups having to do with Northern Ireland issues. Through these he learned of Ed Lynch and his New Jersey non-profit group, Lawyers Alliance for Justice in Ireland.

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"It was a group of lawyers who were interfacing with judicial and political authorities in Northern Ireland," Burke said, "At that time we had about a hundred members, and it was a very active organization – they were appearing in all of the court cases where people were being deported (Irish republican/nationalists activists), but the big thrust of the organization was going over there (Northern Ireland) and engaging and convincing them (both sides) that you would never get any peace in the form of a new government without everybody being allowed to participate" Lynch invited Burke to join the Alliance delegation to Belfast in February, 1998. Burke and the delegation arrived in Belfast mid-February. The first days the delegation, in whole or in part, met with members of both sides of the divide, particularly, but not exclusively with those of legal, political, and policing-related groups and professions in Belfast.

On the evening of February 17th Burke and all of the members of his delegation met in a secluded separate dining room in the Beresford Arms in Lurgan for a private dinner with a few members of the community. One of the guests was Rosemary Nelson, and it became obvious to Burke that she was the featured person on that particular evening. During the meal Nelson stood up and introduced herself and recounted the nature of her law practice in Lurgan, which seemed for the most part a standard small-town practice. She went on to mention that she also represented people accused of offenses such as being a member of the IRA and also those allegedly involved in IRA actions. At this point there was a pregnant pause – Nelson went on to say that she wanted the delegation to know that she had been receiving death threats from the RUC. In Burke's estimation she recounted the fact that 4 or 5 of her clients were independently taken to Gough RUC Barracks outside of Lurgan and typically held for several days and were bruised and battered before being released, normally for a lack of evidence. When her clients were released they went to Nelson with instruction from the RUC officers to inform her that she was going to die.

Looking back on the meeting with Nelson and his N.I. experiences in general, Burke offered his opinion of the climate that surrounded Nelson at the time. "It all started when she (Nelson)

had a client by the name of Colin Duffy, who was supposed to have been responsible for some sort of homicide, and she represented him, took it to trial and he was acquitted. Then – all the RUC police just went nuts – that's when they started picking people up and bringing them up to the RUC barracks outside of Lurgan and pounding them around for a couple of days and never bring them to charge." Adding a perspective as an American attorney he continued, "Under American law you have to arraign after you pick them up – up there they have a week – and a lot of stuff can get done in a week. People were given damage awards right and left – 30,000 pounds, one of them – they didn't care, they would just pay it and keep on going."

As Nelson continued to stand before the delegates at the 1998 dinner, she told Burke and the delegates that she was concerned for her safety and also for that of her husband and three school-age children. She also directly asked the members of the delegation to meet with the local RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan in regards to her safety concerns and specifically requested to get on the Protected Persons Programme. Burke and other members of the delegation told Nelson that they already had a scheduled meeting with Flanagan in a couple of days and assured her that they would raise her safety concerns and request to be on the Protected Persons Programme. After Nelson sat down and the meal continued Burke, who sat one or two seats away from Nelson, had further conversation with her. She told him one particular story which took place just a couple of weeks previously that frightened her terribly. Nelson had been pushing her cart through a grocery market store in Lurgan when she noticed a large man that she believed was following her. When they got to an area where there were only two of them, he approached her and said that if she continued representing "IRA scum" she would be killed. Having grown up in Lurgan she knew many people by sight, but Nelson said that she had never seen this man before.

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Two days after their dinner with Nelson, Burke and some members of his delegation met with Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan at RUC Head Quarters.

As promised to Nelson, members of the delegation succinctly relayed her concerns of death threats which came from RUC officers via her clients, and her concerns for her safety and her request to be placed in the Protected Persons Programme. Flanagan initially responded by moving to the topic of how difficult it was to investigate matters involving his officers, but eventually said that he would look into matters of Nelson. Almost a year later, in February 1999, Burke and a smaller LAJI delegation which including Ed Lynch returned to Belfast. They had arranged a meeting at RUC Head Quarters again with Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan to follow-up on the previous year's conversation about the protection of Rosemary Nelson. According to Burke, Flanagan's response, in essence was that Nelson was not entitled to any protection under the law. "He was very well aware of what was going on, but seemed resolved that he wasn't going to do anything to protect her."

Within weeks Rosemary Nelson was murdered.

By then, Burke was back in the United States. He was working in his Denver office when he heard the report on the news, followed by a call from Ed Lynch who also relayed the news. That evening at home, Burke turned on one of the American network news programs and caught a BBC report on the murder. He recalled seeing RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan commenting on camera with words essentially saying "I am only sorry we had no notice that protection was necessary." Having been in two meetings with Flanagan in a year's time, and having knowledge to the contrary of Flanagan's comments, Burke was completely shocked. In reflection Burke commented, "We all took oaths as lawyers to resolve disputes not by violence but by the law – and we didn't advocate violence. But it's quite another thing to say that you understand why the violence was occurring – because basically what they (unionists) were doing was trying to squeeze any nationalist out

of the new government, they just wanted to organize it so that the Catholic portion of the population wasn't going to be a part of it – most particularly the republicans who wanted pretty much an immediate unification with the South." In 2001 a retired Canadian Supreme Court Judge, Peter Cory was appointed by the British and Irish governments to undertake a thorough investigation of allegations of collusion between British and Irish security forces and paramilitaries in six particular cases involving "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland which were so controversial they stood in the way of a peace agreement. One of those cases was that of Rosemary Nelson's murder. One of the witnesses asked and who subsequently gave a statement was Tom Burke. The Cory Collusion Inquiry report was delivered by Judge Cory in October of 2003. Cory recommended inquiries including Nelson's case. The British government agreed to set up an inquiry into Rosemary Nelson's death following the recommendations – and pressures – from Judge Cory. The inquiry's scope was, "To inquire into the death of Rosemary Nelson with a view to determining whether any wrongful act or omission by or within the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Northern Ireland Office, Army or other state agency facilitated her death or obstructed the investigation of it, or whether any such act or omission was intentional or negligent; whether the investigation of her death was carried out with due diligence; and to make recommendations."

The official opening of the Inquiry in Craigavon, Co. Armagh was in April 2005. Burke, Lynch, and Ned McGinley, then National President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, attended the official opening. Burke, Lynch and others at the two meetings with Flanagan were summoned to New York City to give the Inquiry's solicitors further statements in May, 2006.

– However, the actual public hearing where British intelligence officers, police chiefs and top civil servants will be questioned to determine if authorities had a role in the murder of Nelson just opened April 15, 2008 in Belfast at the Interpointe Center in Belfast. Tom Burke has been summoned to Belfast for the Inquiry and as of this writing he is scheduled to give testimony on May 22nd.

The Ghost of St Stephens Green, Dublin

A large old house used to stand at St Stephens Green, with high windows and a massive nail-studded door. It stood empty for a number of years after the death of a foreign lady who is said to have lived a rather secluded life there.

Colonel and Mrs Launey and their family moved into the house in the 1840s after taking a three year lease. It was several weeks before anything was to happen. One November evening, Colonel Launey being away in London on a business trip and the servants all being out for the evening, Mrs Launey was sitting alone in the drawing room when she heard her children screaming in their bedroom. She stood up at once to go to their aid. As she got into the hallway she saw a dark figure walking up the staircase.

She wondered which of the servants had arrived home early or who had changed their minds and not gone out. She called out, but to her horror, when the figure turned round it was headless.

After a moment the dark figure started walking upstairs again, disappearing round a bend in the stairs. Pulling herself together, Mrs Launey, concerned for her children, raced upstairs. The children had seen nothing but had heard a strange noise in their room.

Mrs Launey pacified the children and went downstairs again, returning to the drawing room. Much to her relief the servants returned home early that night and Colonel Launey arrived home the following day from his visit to London.

Mrs Launey told her husband about the headless apparition that she had seen but he did not take the matter seriously. However, a few nights later the couple were at dinner when they

both heard the sound of a spinet being played in the drawing room. Colonel Launey rushed to investigate but quickly returned. He, too, had seen the ghost.

Several weeks later, Guy Lorrimer, Mrs Launeys brother, came to spend Christmas with them. He scoffed at the idea of ghosts but the day after his arrival he was in his bedroom getting ready for dinner when he saw a dark figure emerge from under his bed, crawl on all fours towards a cupboard built into the walls and disappear with a loud chuckling laugh. Whilst the figure was crawling along the floor Guy Lorrimer had thrown his boots at it, only to see the boots sail straight through the apparition and hit the wall on the far side. A look inside the cupboard revealed that there was nobody there.

On Christmas Eve the Launeys gave their children, Moira and Molly, a party. After tea they crossed the hall from the dining room to put a few more presents under the tree in the drawing room. On opening the door they were startled to see that the room was illuminated by a weird light and lying on the floor was the body of a woman. The head had been cut off. A tall, swarthy-looking man stood over it, a horn-handled knife in his hand. Standing close to him was a slender foreign-looking girl, dressed in the early 18th century style, with expensive jewellery around her neck.

All the presents that had already been put on the tree by Mrs Launey were scattered on the floor and some were broken. Hanging from the centre of the tree was the decapitated head of a woman, with long black hair and wide-open glassy eyes. There was a scream of laughter and then the vision faded away, leaving the room in pitch darkness.

The Launeys left the house the following day.

Membership in the IAUC

To renew or become a member of the IAUC, please fill out the following and mail to:

Irish American Unity Conference

PO Box 55573

Washington, DC 20040

Dues

Regular Member: \$30.00

Family Membership: \$40.00

Senior Citizen/Student: \$20.00

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Checks or money orders should be made payable to "IAUC"

You may also join online at: www.iauc.org click on the tab for membership

The IAUC has some chapters in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan and Washington, DC. If you would like chapter information please let us know.

Colcannon

Recipe submitted by George Trainor

A traditional dish served on Halloween. Halloween was a fasting day, no meat was eaten. Old customs were to add a coin, a button or thimble, and a gold ring to this dish. The individual who finds the coin is bound for wealth and riches. The unlucky or lucky (depending on your point of view) is destined of an eternal bachelorhood (button) or spinsterhood (thimble). The finder of the ring, next for marriage.
serves 6

3 pounds potatoes
1/2 pound white cabbage or kale, shredded
1 bunch spring onions
1/2 cup milk
salt & pepper to taste
butter

Boil the potatoes until tender; mash.
While potatoes are cooking, cook the cabbage until tender.
Bring the milk to a boil in a small saucepan, then add the scallions, cook until tender
Combine the milk/scallions with the potatoes.
Stir in the cabbage
Season to taste.
Top with a butter.

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