Update on the United Ireland Campaign

By Rita O’Hare, General Secretary of Sinn Féin and Sinn Fein Representative to the United States

In June 2009, Sinn Fein held two forums in America, in New York and San Francisco, calling on Irish America to raise the issue of Irish Unity and garner support for its achievement. Later that year in November a forum was organized by Friends of Sinn Fein Canada in Toronto. All three were well attended with 800 people at the Sheraton Hotel in New York and 500 in San Francisco.

Gerry Adams was the host at the meetings and speakers included Pete Hamill, the author and journalist who was emcee in New York. He introduced LIUNA president Terry O'Sullivan, Brendan O'Leary, Professor of History at Penn State University and Brian Keenan, a former hostage in Beirut and author. Representatives of Irish American organizations also spoke committing their organizations to actively work to raise the issue and make it a priority. In San Francisco, speakers included actress Fionuala Flanagan, artist Robert Ballagh and historian Ruan O'Donnell. John Burton head of the California Democratic Party also spoke and pledged his support. Since then, resolutions have been passed in the following legislative bodies:

The Massachusetts State Senate and Assembly, the New Jersey State Assembly and New Jersey State Senate, the New York State Senate, the California State Senate and the Rhode Island State Senate.

Resolutions have also been passed by the City Councils of: Albany, New York, Buffalo, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Cleveland, Ohio, Chicago, Illinois, Lawrence, Massachusetts, New Bedford, Massachusetts, Fall River, Massachusetts, Lynn, Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts, San Francisco, California, St. Louis, Missouri, Portland, Oregon, and finally by the municipalities of:

Rockland County, New York, Dayton Township, New Jersey, Shamong Township, New Jersey, Hamilton Township, New Jersey, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania and St Louis County Missouri.

The work done by Irish American organizations, including the IAUC, in promoting Irish Unity and getting such prominent support for its achievement is important and valued. Sinn Fein have held two conferences in Ireland this year, in Dublin and Cork which invited speakers on issues from the economics of a United Ireland to children’s rights. Two more conferences are planned for Galway and Belfast.

In Canada, the Forum on Irish Unity has activated interest and FOSF Canada has circulated a Pledge for Irish Unity which has attracted support from MPs, organizations, labour federations and celebrities. The Pledge reads:

WHEREAS, Irish reunification would address the root causes of conflict in Ireland and establish the basis for a permanent peace settlement;

AND WHEREAS, the Good Friday Agreement created a political framework in which Irish reunification can occur;

AND WHEREAS the Good Friday Agreement has already facilitated the establishment of all-Ireland governing institutions;

WE THE UNDERSIGNED pledge our support for the peaceful and democratic reunification of Ireland.

Websites [www.unitingireland.ie](http://www.unitingireland.ie), [www.irishunitypledge.com](http://www.irishunitypledge.com), [www.aunitedireland.org](http://www.aunitedireland.org)
Dear Reader:

I hope the Summer edition of this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the final days of a season that has been for many parts of the country, hot and dry. Perhaps you are longing, just a bit for some cooler temperatures. I know my Irish blood doesn’t appreciate 90° temperatures.

If you’ve been fortunate enough to travel to Ireland this summer to participate in one of the wreath laying ceremonies commemorating the deaths of the 1981 Hunger Strikers and have some pictures to share, please send them to me at sarahm1916@comcast.net and we’ll get them into the next issue. All contributions, written or pictorial, are welcome and most appreciated.

Some internal housekeeping notes: A reminder that ALL chapters must file their 990 E-Z IRS forms no later than December 31, 2011. These filings may be transmitted to the IRS via email. For questions, please contact IAUC National Treasurer Kevin Barry at kevinbnj@aol.com or by telephone: 973-812-8915. All non-profit organizations (and the IAUC is a 501c4 non-profit) must file tax returns regardless of income and all chapters are responsible for filing yearly returns regardless of income or activity.

Have you paid your annual dues yet? There’s a page at the end of this newsletter to complete and send in to keep your membership up-to-date. We hope to have the IAUC website able to take dues and donations electronically very soon but in the meantime – consider snail mail and renew or donate today!

Action Items: Contact your State and Local legislatures and find a sponsor for a United Ireland Resolution for passage. Rita O’Hare’s article in this newsletter highlights efforts in the U.S. to date. We need more cities, municipalities and states on the list. There is Resolution language already available so no need to create something on your own. For more information, please contact George Trainor steeler059@aol.com or me at sarahm1916@comcast.net.

Thank you!

Sarah McAuliffe-Bellin
The President’s Column

By Tom Burke, National President

In May of 2008 I was called as a witness at the Northpointe Centre in Belfast in the British Government’s official inquiry into the shooting and later death from the effects of a car bomb of Rosemary Nelson, a Lurgan, County Armagh-based lawyer, while driving to her law office on the morning of March 15, 1999. This official inquiry was one of a series the British Government assumed as part of the Belfast, or Good Friday, Agreement of 1998 entered into to establish an end to the Troubles in the north of Ireland. The evidentiary phase of the Inquiry began on April 15, 2008 and ended over a year later on June 24, 2009.

In February, 1998 and again nearly a year later in February, 1999 members of the Lawyers Alliance for Justice in Ireland, an organization of American and Canadian lawyers and judges, most with Irish backgrounds including my own, made trips to the north of Ireland seeking to survey the British government’s adherence to the rule of law in dealing with the nationalist and republican communities there. We met and had dinner with a distraught Rosemary Nelson soon after we arrived.

The ultimate focus for these two trips quickly became how to inquire into and to obtain, if possible, official protection for Rosemary Nelson. Ms. Nelson had been the recipient of numerous anonymous threats, some consisting of bullets sent to her in envelopes and, more than once, photographs of her with a target drawn around her face. These were well known and even traditional methods of making death threats to Northern Ireland nationalists, and Ms. Nelson knew exactly what they predicted for her.

Ms. Nelson had been reluctant to request police protection because of her belief that the death threats she had received emanated from the same source that would have been charged with protecting her: members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and associated death gangs operated by Loyalist groups allied with the RUC.

Ms. Nelson had had a successful civil law practice in Lurgan that she had built from scratch, dealing with family law issues, auto accident claims, and real estate work for both the Catholic and Protestant communities in Lurgan. An additional area of her practice developed later displayed remarkable success in the courts in obtaining reversals of convictions of Irish republicans there. As a result, Ms. Nelson had progressively become more unpopular with the RUC because of what to them seemed her all too successful representation in the courts of persons accused or terrorist offenses or membership in the Provisional Irish Republican Army, or both.

Particularly irksome to the RUC were Ms. Nelson's successfully obtaining two reversals of murder-related convictions of Colin Duffy, a well-known republican figure in Lurgan. Ms. Nelson's success in these appeals resulted in allegations that Rosemary Nelson herself was a member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, which was demonstrably untrue, but that members of the Lurgan-based RUC nonetheless doggedly pursued.

As a member of the Lawyers Alliance, I attended two meetings on the subject with RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan. The first of these was in February, 1998. A reasonably large group had assembled and after the exchange of pleasantries, the meeting soon became an exercise in Mr. Flanagan’s statements of claimed reasons why the RUC had not pursued officers suspected of making the threats either individually or through compatriots in loyalist death gangs.

Flanagan maintained that these were highly difficult to accomplish because of the governing evidentiary standard requiring proof of such offenses beyond a reasonable doubt, the same heavy standard of proof required for conviction of a crime. There ensued at least an hour of pointed questions including what could best be called incisive and searching cross-examination. Flanagan was unused to having his statements of fact questioned, and the meeting ended tensely, but with his promise to look into the matter further in the interest of serving the law. Nothing happened after that. The group specifically demanded that police protection be afforded Ms. Nelson.

Once again in February, 1999, the Lawyers Alliance members, including me, travelled to Belfast to ask Flanagan what he had done since we had met the prior year. The answer was simple: nothing. Flanagan maintained Ms. Nelson was not entitled to legal protection under a law known as the Key Persons Protection Scheme and that there was nothing further he could do. We left RUC headquarters incredulous and returned to the United States the next day.

(Continued on next page)
Vice President's Column

By Joe Farrell

Yogi Berra: It ain't over till it's over. Kathleen Ni Houlihan: It ain’t over till Ireland is United, Gaelic, and Free

The Queen of England’s June visit to Ireland may in fact mark a passage in Britain’s relations with Ireland, as Irish Central and others have gushed. Indeed, her visit to the Garden of Remembrance was touching, all the more so considering that her family, the Mountbattens, is among those who have suffered loss in the long struggle. David Cameron’s previous acknowledgement of what really happened on Bloody Sunday, after two generations of lies and obscene misinformation, lent some substance to the symbolism. But underneath, there is a lot of business as usual.

The British government, Queen or not, continues to block any serious inquiry into the most violent day of the Troubles, the Dublin-Monaghan bombings, in so doing reneging on its obligations under the Good Friday Agreement. The Ballymurphy Massacre, the British Army’s first large-scale exercise in gunning down civilian protesters, is not even on the British Government’s radar screen. The inquiry into the murder of Patrick Finucane effectively sidesteps the issue, saying, as Al Capone would put it, “you can’t prove nothing.” And no justice is anywhere in sight for Rosemary Nelson. As RUC officers repeatedly promised she would be, Rosemary Nelson was murdered and somehow no case can be made, changes in the north of Ireland police service notwithstanding. Prosecutions are not even mentioned for the Bloody Sunday Paratroopers, though it is often enough emphasized elsewhere that there is no statute of limitations for murder and these are only the very highest profile cases.

The business as usual goes on for a reason. As long as Britain is committed to keeping at least a piece of Ireland, it has to justify its place there. To do so it has to justify its past actions, and the motivations behind them and go on smearing the actions of those who have opposed them, and their cause. So British officialdom will go on lying and as it goes with lies, the more you lie the more you must cover up the lies.

A truly new relationship between Britain and Ireland will need to be based on the truth – and on respect for Ireland’s culture, sovereignty, its integrity as a nation. When that comes, relations between Britain and Ireland, and among the Irish, will fall into place. We’re not there yet; that is why we, the IAUC, are here.

President's Column (continued from page 3)

Three weeks later Rosemary Nelson was blown up as a mercury switch made contact with a battery that in turn activated a professionally constructed car bomb. The bomb removed Rosemary Nelson's torso from the waist down, and while she lived for about an hour and a half, she inevitably died of her wounds on account of blood loss and shock.

I testified, as did many others, as we were identified and called during the course of the Inquiry proceedings. I believe everyone testified faithfully and consistently with fact. Importantly, testimony of everyone who had with firsthand contact with Ms. Nelson and the British Government was largely undisputed.

The Inquiry's report, in my judgment suffers from the constraints the British Government insisted on in the Good Friday Agreement in agreeing to the various Inquiries it conducted and the sheer length of time that passed between Rosemary Nelson's murder and the taking of testimony and production of documents. Under the rules of the Inquiry, no convictions could be supported with evidence adduced during the course of the Inquiry. The Inquiry panel could and did suppress the names and circumstances of principal actors in a murder conspiracy, all according to agreement. The Inquiry was also convened so long after the fact that memories of important evidence have long since faded, witnesses have died, and others have moved away or decided, since there were no subpoenas served, they simply didn't want to be involved.

Against these factors, the Inquiry found that during the pertinent periods of time, the RUC (that no longer exists) had engaged in dereliction of duty in Lurgan, that action, and inaction, of the RUC and the Northern Ireland Office had put Rosemary Nelson’s life explicitly at risk, and the Inquiry noted that defense lawyers could now be covered under the British Key Persons Protection Scheme. These things may be something more than nothing but it is difficult to conclude, in justice terms, that it was enough.

A number of IAUC members also figured in the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry and were invariably important in helping to establish facts on the ground. What struck me, and may have struck them, in reviewing the Inquiry report is that an admirable number of Irish Americans, including IAUC members and officers, chose unselfishly to involve themselves in the dangerous run-up to Rosemary Nelson's murder, and tried to help. Few of us knew what the others’ involvement was, but our collective experiences bear uncanny resemblances to one another. Like experience is the stuff of real truth. Amid sadness that full justice has not and may never be done, IAUC and Irish America have reason to be proud of what they have done in Rosemary Nelson’s memory.
On April 24, 2011 San Francisco Irish remembered the Easter Rising of 1916. The Pearse and Connolly Band led the march from main gates of Colma, Cemetery to the grave of Fenian organizer and ex-San Francisco Sheriff Thomas Desmond. We were reminded by Ciaran Scally of the opposition the men and women of 1916 were up against, and the self-sacrifices that they were prepared to make. Those in attendance were also reminded of the brutality and dehumanization the Hunger Strikers endured before and during the hunger strike and the difficult time visited upon the families and relatives. The crowd also listened as it was pointed out that in both 1916 and the Hunger Strikes of 1981, that the men and women who made the sacrifices did so, not for self-gain, but so that others might have an Ireland free from occupation and an Ireland where all its citizens could be treated equally.

The audience had an opportunity to listen to Sinn Fein representative, MEP Bairbre De Brún as she thanked people here in the U.S. for their hard work on having resolutions passed calling for a United Ireland. She spoke of the failures of the partitioned island and the work that still needs to be done, and that all the people who inhabit the Island of Ireland have the right to live in a society based on the guiding principles of the Proclamation of 1916 which has the basis of Irish Freedom, Independence, Justice and Equality enshrined in it.

De Brún also reminded us that in 1976 while people in San Francisco were recognizing the centenary of the rescue of the Fenian prisoners from Australia by Thomas Desmond, that the British Government was withdrawing special category status from prisoners, stating that from that date onward they would not be treated as political prisoners but as common criminals and forced to wear a prison uniform. In doing so would be to accept that the desire for Irish freedom was criminal and this the prisoners would not accept.

There was a recitation of the poem “I Hate This Place” by Mandy Corry written by Bobby Sands, which very clearly spelled out the suffering that was inflicted on the prisoners at that time.
Anne Marie Burns sang “Joe McDonnell ” and” Mary Fallon sang “Down By The Glenside”
The commemoration concluded with the Pearse and Connolly fife and drum band playing Amhrán na bhFiann.
Washington, DC Chapter Activities
By Peter Kissel

Members of the DC Chapter traveled to Belfast in May to tour the site of the infamous Ballymurphy Massacre of 1971. The Ballymurphy Families, led by Breige Voyle and John Teggart, hosted Sharon and Peter Kissel on a personal tour of the sites of the murders. After a visit to the Ballymurphy Committee’s humble headquarters in the center of the Ballymurphy area, the adult children of the victims personally recounted the events leading to their parent’s deaths at each of the sites. The tour was sobering and exhilarating – sobering because of the barbaric acts committed by the Crown’s forces, and exhilarating because of the dedication, without rancor, of the families of the victims in their determination to fully expose the criminal British actions. The extent of factual details that have been reconstructed and gathered by the families on their own, without the help of investigators, is truly impressive and could be readily provided to an impartial inquiry for consideration. The family members again expressed their deep gratitude for all the support they have received from the IAUC, as well as our friends in Irish Northern Aid, Ancient Order of Hibernians as well as Father Sean McManus.

The tour also included a visit to the Irish Republican History Museum in West Belfast. The Museum traces the history of the civil rights struggle from the 1798 Rising to the present, with fascinating artifacts, photographs, and craft items created by various political prisoners. It features a cell from Armagh prison and includes an interactive research center which is open to the public. The Museum is arranged and organized expertly but is entirely self-supporting. It welcomes (and needs) donations of money as well as written and audio-visual materials. They do not presently have a website but information can be found on: [http://iskra1916.hubpages.com/hub/Irish-Republican-History-Museum-Iarsmalann-na-Staire-Poblachtach-Eireannach](http://iskra1916.hubpages.com/hub/Irish-Republican-History-Museum-Iarsmalann-na-Staire-Poblachtach-Eireannach).

Additionally, the IAUC turned out in force at the Washington, DC launch of Father Sean McManus’ memoirs, “My American Struggle for Justice in Northern Ireland,” on May 1 at the Phoenix Park Hotel. IAUC National President Tom Burke traveled to DC for the event and joined a large contingent of our members from the Washington and Baltimore areas. Sean’s insights offer compelling lessons in matters of justice, human rights, religious duty, and personal conscience. His first-hand experience starkly exposes the array of vested interests - from the media to governments to institutions - who are “more devoted to order than to justice” in Northern Ireland. After the event, the IAUC members gathered at the nearby Dubliner Pub to have a pint and discuss upcoming activities. Joining us were several of our friends from the AOH.
Members of the DC Chapter of the IAUC rally at the McManus book launch on May 1, 2011.

IAUC National President Tom Burke with DC Chapter President Pete Kissel and Sharon Kissel at the Dubliner Pub
The Pittsburgh Chapter of the IAUC commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strikes with a Mass and Program on Saturday, May 7, 2011. Father Thomas O’Donnell, AOH National Chaplain and solid supporter of Irish causes, celebrated Mass at old St. Patrick’s Church in Pittsburgh. The Mass began with police officer and piper, Sgt. Chuck Handerhan, piping ten leaders of the Irish-American community holding a picture of one of the ten men who died on hunger strike between May and August, 1981 into Church. Their pictures were placed along the communion railing during Mass. Father gave a powerful homily on the sacrifices of the men and our duties to uphold that sacrifice and to carry their message along. Jim Lamb, honorary Irish consul to Pittsburgh and President of the Ireland Institute sang and played guitar during Mass

After Mass, all participants gathered in the courtyard of St. Patrick’s, where AOH Division 32 Carnegie President Dennis Maher, handed out flags of all the counties and provinces of Ireland. All were proudly held while marching to Mullaney’s Harp & Fiddle for the program. The IAUC and other Irish organizations carried their banners as the piper marched us to the pub. The portraits of the Hunger Strikers led the way.

Matt Morrison, of St. Louis, Missouri and President of Thar Saile, was the keynote speaker. He spoke of his memories of Long Kesh during the Hunger Strikes and of his close friendships with some of the men from childhood. The IAUC is grateful to Matt and Thar Saile for traveling to Pittsburgh and for sharing his knowledge of that time to everyone present.

Both the Mass and Mullaney’s were packed to capacity. The following organizations and their members contributed both financially and by their presence to the event: the AOH, LAOH, Echoes of Erin Radio Show, Year of Remembrance Committee, Conway Mill Trust, Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, and Knights of Equity. A special mention of thanks to IAUC member Carmen DiGiacomo who donated several framed prints of Hunger Strike-related images for a raffle.

“Time has not dimmed the memory or healed the wounds caused by the death of the 10 young men who suffered the ultimate sacrifice rather than submit to tyranny. Our sons hungered for the sake of justice, and they will be remembered when the power that held and persecuted them will have vanished from this Earth. Many people in America shared in our grief, supported us in our hour of need and to this day held memory of the Hunger Strikers dear. To all of these we give our heartfelt thanks and may God hold you in the hollow of his hand until the sacrifice of the Hunger Strikers can be honored in a free and united Ireland” – A Statement from the Mothers of the Hunger Strikers

The Pittsburgh chapter has commemorated the 1981 hunger strikes since prior to Bobby Sands death and its members all share a strong commitment to upholding the ideals for which these men sacrificed their lives.
IAUC members Jim Caldwell & Mary Mannion during the procession to the Harp & Fiddle on May 7, 2011

Pittsburgh IAUC members Ed McManus, Jr., Ed McManus Senior Sandy Haas with Matt Morrison

Matt Morrison speaking for the 1981 Hunger Strike Commemoration in Pittsburgh, PA
News from the Livonia Redford Chapter
By Jack Cahill

The Livonia Redford Chapter undertook a new initiative in 2010 in hopes of developing the interest and commitment in young people to carry on our work in the future. In association with Detroit Catholic Central High School the Livonia Redford Chapter started an Irish Studies Scholarship Program at the high school. Although in its infancy right now, the program has awarded a $1,000 scholarship in both 2010 and 2011. We hope to be expanding the program in 2012 to include the teaching of a class on the MacBride Principles in the government and religion classes and other similar initiatives.

How did this all come about? A majority of our members have strong connections to Catholic Central ("CC") as alumni, parents of alumni, and siblings of alumni. The school itself has had a strong Irish identity since its founding in 1929 as many of the priests were of Irish descent. The school teams are known as the "Shamrocks" and the uniforms and school coat of arms include shamrocks. The school administration was very receptive to the idea as a way of honoring the school's roots. From our point of view, this also allowed us to maximize our impact in the area because we have an ability to tap into funding and other sources of support from Irish alumni of CC who would not necessarily otherwise be involved with the IAUC, as well as the support of the school itself.

The Livonia-Redford Chapter supplied the idea for the Irish Studies Program and the initial financial contribution which has since grown significantly from other contributions from individuals associated with Catholic Central. We have now endowed a permanent annual scholarship of $1,000 per year that will continue long after we are gone. We will be continuing efforts to raise more money to fund Irish Studies programs at the school and to increase the amount of the annual scholarship or to create additional scholarships.

Here is how the scholarship program works: The Livonia-Redford chapter drafts an essay question and the students write essays of no more than three pages. We then review the submissions and choose the winner. We have tried to have the assignments encompass more than just straight Irish history so that they also cover some Irish culture. In 2010 the winner wrote about the Irish Famine after listening to "The Fields of Athenry." The assignment was as follows.

For the 2010 Irish Studies Scholarship the applicant is directed to listen to the Irish song “The Fields of Athenry” which is about the Irish Famine. This song was recorded by the famous Irish artist Paddy Reilly in 1983 and stayed on the Irish charts for 72 weeks. Today it is often sung spontaneously by Irish fans at sporting events - especially soccer. The applicant should listen to the song and research the history of the Irish Famine.

The applicant shall submit an essay of no more than three double-spaced, typewritten pages that discusses the causes and effects of the Irish Famine and specifically includes discussion of the following:

a. The reasons why the potato blight caused such devastation in Ireland;

b. The role of Lord Charles Trevalyn (sometimes "Trevelyn") in the famine;

c. The reference to a "prison ship" and "Botany Bay" in the song and the roles of both in Irish history; and

d. The lessons learned from the Irish famine and how they apply to you personally or to the world in which we live.

In 2011 we had some really excellent submissions and we chose co-winners. The assignment this year was as follows.

The U2 song “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” a John Lennon song of the same name and a 2002 movie called “Bloody Sunday” are about an event that took place in Derry in the north of Ireland on January 30, 1972. In no more than three double-spaced pages, describe what happened on that day and include the following in your discussion:

a. The reasons that a demonstration was taking place (What were the marchers protesting?);

b. Describe who Ivan Cooper was and his role in the demonstration (What about his background might surprise people who view the troubles in the north of Ireland as simply a problem between Catholics and Protestants?);

c. Describe what happened during the demonstration;

d. Describe what the British government initially said had happened; and

e. Describe what the British government now admits happened.

One of the essays submitted actually compared Bloody Sunday to other British massacres in Amritsar and Peterloo. That sent me to Google to find out what he was talking about -- and perhaps you are headed there now yourself. Another essay appropriately quoted a line from the Bloody Sunday movie while making a point. Others quoted from the songs.

The most rewarding thing from our viewpoint was that we knew we had stimulated these young students (freshmen, sophomores and juniors) to actually watch the Bloody Sunday movie, listen to songs that they might have heard before and not known what they were about, and to do their own research about these events. We hope that perhaps we are planting some seeds for the future to continue our work if that future -- and we fervently hope it does not -- still requires more work to be done to achieve peace and unity in Ireland.
South Florida IAUC Chapter News  
By Marie Smith

The IAUC hosted the South Florida Gaelic Famine Commemorative Mass on Sunday, March 29, 2011. It received media coverage and added to the hype of March as Irish heritage month. We also received word from former Cultural Minister, Pat Carey that a new committee on the Famine Commemoration had been formed, and some of my suggestions had been channeled to the various committees. We waited in anticipation for the naming of the National Day of Commemoration—this was procrastinated, until recently, and the fact that the Queen of England and President Barack Obama would visit put our request on hold. Once Ireland got over the visit of these two super stars, attention was concentrated on the naming of a National Day of Commemoration. This has been set for September 10, 2011 in Clones, County Monaghan. It will be a week-long event with Mary McAleese participating, so if you will be in Ireland at this time, try to attend.

I have written the American Ambassador if he will attend in behalf of the Irish American Diaspora. If your chapter has not held a Famine memorial Mass this year, this is an excellent time to arrange one in your parish. The great-great-granddaughter of Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist, who travelled to Ireland during the Great Hunger, and who was an admirer of the oratory and pacifist skills of Daniel O’Connell, visited Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin. We requested of Don Mullan (author Dublin/Monaghan Bombing) to have her place a wreath at the famine grave site.

As the Diaspora keeps hacking away at the cover-up by the Irish government and British media on this watershed in Irish history, perhaps, we will succeed in the future in having the workhouses and mass grave sites in Ireland marked and commemorated. Recently Rosie O’Donnell in conjunction with an Oprah Winfrey genealogy feature show travelled to Ireland and experienced a workhouse visit in Birr, County Offaly. Through a genealogy search her great-great-grandparents had been transported from the Naas workhouse during the time of the Great Hunger, on a coffin ship to Canada.

Stories told to our members by their grandparents and other relations should be documented by each chapter. The fragile peace in the North of Ireland was achieved by Irish America, the commemoration and honoring of the victims of An Gorta Mór who are buried in mass graves in Ireland and around the world, will also be brought into the sunlight of truth and commemoration. The workhouse at Portumna, outside Galway, is in the process of being opened by their local heritage society—if you will be in the area go by and give them your words of support.

New Jersey 5th & 9th Great Hunger Commemoration

Many members of the IAUC 5th & 9th Chapter (Ridgewood, NJ) attended a Great Hunger Commemoration held on May 14th at the Hackensack Court House. An annual event sponsored by the Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, it is a fitting tribute to all those who lost their lives during The Great Hunger. Former Bergen County Executive, William "Pat" Schuber was the guest speaker, step dancers from the Ridgewood Irish Dance School provided entertainment, and bagpipers inspired us with their heart-warming music. After the commemoration all proceeded to the Great Hunger Memorial at the base of the Hackensack Court House for a concluding ceremony where the priest in attendance offered prayers for the victims of the Great Hunger and promised that they would never be forgotten.
IRISH MEMOIRS
By Judy Kenney

Note: Judy Kenney was the speaker at the May meeting of the 5th & 9th chapter and this was her topic

Reading the biographies of well-known Irish people can be very interesting. But the memoirs of ordinary Irish men and women may give you fascinating insights in the lives your Irish ancestors lived.

The books listed here were all written by ordinary Irish people; most of them had Irish as their first language. These authors were born anywhere between 1861 and 1953 and their observations of everyday life bring the past alive.

1. The Last of the Name by Charles McGlinchey
2. Peig by Peig Sayers
3. A Woman of Aran by Bridget Dirrane
4. The Wild Rover by Tomas O Cinneide
5. To School Through the Fields by Alice Taylor
6. The Speckled People by Hugo Hamilton

Charles McGlinchey was born in 1861 in Clonmany, Co. Donegal. During his lifetime, he saw enormous changes in the rural way of life. He was trained as a weaver, but watched his occupation disappear. He had a storyteller’s ear and preserved stories told by his father and grandfather of even more distant times.

Peig Sayers was from Co. Kerry, where she was born in 1873. In an arranged match, she married a man from Great Blasket Island and spent most of her adult life there. She writes of life on the island and the hardships that shaped all the residents.

Bridget Dirrane came from Inishmore in the Aran Islands. Born in 1894, she lived an adventurous life. She participated in the Irish War of Independence and was briefly jailed in Mountjoy Prison. After her immigration to Boston, her involvement in politics introduced her to the Kennedy family, who kept in contact through the rest of her long life. She returned to Inishmore in her old age and died in Galway in 2003 at the age of 109.

Tomas O Cinneide, was another adventurous character, although many called him a rogue. Born in 1914, he spent much of his life avoiding work and getting fired from the jobs he did acquire. After many years in the US, he returned to his former home on the Dingle Peninsula, where he became known as a seanachai and Irish teacher.

Alice Taylor has written a series of books on her childhood in Innishannon in Co. Cork, where she was born in 1938. She writes of the rural farm life, before electricity and modern conveniences; a way of life that is now almost gone.

Hugo Hamilton is the most recent of these writers, born in 1953 to an Irish father and German mother. His father refused to let the family speak English, only Irish or German was allowed. Hugo and his siblings struggled with their father’s rules about living in the “new Ireland” while trying to fit in with their neighbors and schoolmates.

What these six writers have in common is their clear view of their lives and the ability to present those lives to the modern reader. These books can give us a look into the past and into circumstances that may be difficult for us to imagine.
At Large Members Helping in Ireland

Jerry Lally, a long-time IAUC member from New Jersey took some time out this past Spring to help Sinn Fein candidate Daithi McKay who was running for reelection to the Assembly for his North Antrim Constituency.

Good news for Sinn Fein and Daithi: He was reelected to the Assembly and according to Jerry, results for the local council elections which were held the same day showed the voters electing eight Sinn Fein candidates throughout the North Antrim constituency. Thanks for the personal update Jerry on what was no doubt an exciting election season in the north.

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National Famine Commemoration
Contributed by Michael Walshe

The National Famine Commemoration will be held 10th September 2011 in Clones County Monaghan. Michael and Olivia Blanch in Dublin have informed me that there will be a week-long series of events leading up to the Commemoration Day.

To learn more about the Great Hunger, go to [http://irishhungercomm.wordpress.com/](http://irishhungercomm.wordpress.com/) this is where you can read the Irish Hunger Committee Blog. There are lots of new articles to read.
San Francisco News: in July, 2011, members of “Campaign for a United Ireland” meeting with state Senator Leland Yee at the San Francisco Mayoral Debate to thank him for authoring and steering a resolution through the California State Senate calling for the re-unification of Ireland. Left to right: Ciaran Scally, IAUC Board Member George Trainor, State Senator and Mayoral candidate Leland Yee, Patrick O’Malley Daly, Pat Uniack, Mike Carty and Sean Murphy

Fundraising News and Notes
By George Trainor, Fundraising Chair

DVDs of the 1988 IAUC Convention are available for purchase. The 5th IAUC Convention was held in New Jersey the weekend of October 21st, 1988 and what a convention it was. The two principal speakers were Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and Jo Thomas former reporter for the New York Times, London Bureau.

This DVD is a must for anyone seriously interested in the "Troubles" of the six counties. Bernadette Devlin McAliskey explains in great detail the early years of the "Troubles" up to 1988. Jo Thomas gives an articulate and precise account on why the news media did not properly report to the world what was happening in the North of Ireland.

To order your DVD, just contact Steeler059@aol.com or call 209-858-8124. The DVD is $10.00 plus $2.00 shipping.

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Checks or money orders should be made payable to “IAUC”

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