



Irish American Unity Conference National Newsletter

Working for Justice and Peace in a United Ireland

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SPRING & SUMMER 2018

YOU ARE INVITED TO A SPECIAL EVENT BY SARAH MCAULIFFE-BELLIN, NATIONAL SECRETARY

Mark your calendars for Monday, October 1st and Tuesday October 2nd
The IAUC is hosting a board meeting and seminar to help members become more comfortable in approaching their Member of Congress to discuss Irish issues such as the status of the Good Friday Agreement, unification and the impact of Brexit on Ireland. Legislative contact and follow up is a key component to the IAUC's mission. We hope this seminar will enlighten and take the mystery out of getting a legislator's attention. Here are the details:

WHEN: MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2018

**WHERE: FEDERAL CITY ROOM
PHOENIX PARK HOTEL,
520 NORTH CAPITOL ST, NW**

WASHINGTON, DC 20001
www.PhoenixParkHotel.com

**TIME: 12:00 TO 5:00PM
LUNCH AT NOON
BOARD MEETING BEGINS AT 1 PM**

SEMINAR TO BEGIN AFTER THE BOARD MEETING There is no cost to attend and a complimentary luncheon is included but you must RSVP to be registered.

RSVP to Sarah by email at sarah1916@comcast.net or by phone at 412-512-9388 by September 25, 2018 For more information about the Phoenix Park Hotel contact me at 412-512-9388.

The board meeting will discuss the IAUC's mission and goals, the important issues facing Ireland today, and is open to all IAUC members. Our seminar speakers will provide useful

and practical information about the ins and outs of Congress and most importantly, reinforce the power of the constituent (YOU) and getting your message across.

On Tuesday, October 2nd, attendees will descend on Capitol Hill to visit members of Congress. We welcome every member to join us in this important effort. We will be visiting a number of key congressional offices. If you would like us to schedule a meeting with your elected representative, please email National President Peter Kissel at peterkissel@kisselaw.com or by phone at (201) 262-4785.

Traveling from out of town? The Phoenix Park Hotel is conveniently close to Union Station in Washington DC which has rail service to the major airports (including Baltimore) in the DC area. Other hotels nearby include: Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave., NW Washington DC 20001 and the Hyatt Regency, 400 New Jersey Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001

NATIONAL BOARD

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SPECIAL INVITATION

**AN EVENING WITH JUDE COLLINS
MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 1ST
NORTHERN IRELAND BUREAU
601 13TH STREET, NW, #570
WASHINGTON DC 20005**

Following the IAUC Board Meeting and Seminar on Monday, October 1st, we are pleased and honored to help present an evening with Jude Collins at the Northern Ireland Bureau 60 13th St NW #570, Washington, DC 20005 where he will discuss a wide range of issues of interest to attendees including Brexit, Irish unification and his latest book: **“Martin McGuinness the Man I Knew”**

Jude is an Irish writer, broadcaster and formerly taught high school in Derry, Dublin and Canada as well as a lecturer at the University of Ulster. Jude writes a weekly column for The Andersonstown News and its satellite papers, the North Belfast News, and South Belfast News. His

daily blog can be found at: www.judecollins.com and he frequently contributes to BBC Radio Ulster and to BBC Television NI and RTE.

In Jude's words: I'm an Irish writer and broadcaster. I was a high school teacher in Derry and Dublin and then for some eight years in Canada. In 1979 I came back to Ireland and worked as a lecturer in the Ulster Polytechnic, which in the 1980s morphed into the University of Ulster. They kicked me out when I hit 65. Fortunately, I've been writing and broadcasting for several decades, so I continue with that. Life, all things considered, is good.

Quotes from some of Jude's "fans" in the Unionist community

- "One of the most sectarian journalists I have ever come across" and "That nasty little man Jude Collins" - Nelson McCausland, Democratic Unionist Party*
- "I was struggling to find a term suitable for Jude Collins but I couldn't, so prat will have to do" - Willie Frazer, Ulster loyalist
- "You are a rebel, you are the most distasteful person I have ever met, you are not a member of the Orange Order...you are a nonentity." - David McNarry, former leader of UKIP

* I am, of course, deeply offended by Nelson referring to me as a 'journalist'.

In 'Martin McGuinness, The Man I Knew', Mercier Press, publisher, Jude offers the reader a range of perspectives on a man who helped shape Ireland's recent history. Those who knew Martin McGuinness during his life talk frankly about him, what he did and said; what sort of man he was. Eileen Paisley speaks of the influence she believes her husband, Ian, had on him; former Assistant Chief Constable Peter Sheridan recounts how the Derry IRA targeted him as a Catholic RUC policeman; peace talks chairman Senator George Mitchell comments on the role he played in talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement; and past Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams remembers the man who for so many years was his closest colleague. Other contributors include; Ulster Unionist MLA Michael McGimpsey, prominent Irish-American Niall ÓDowd, former Senator George Mitchell, 54th Comptroller of the State of New York Thomas P. Di Napoli and Presbyterian minister David Lattimer.

Jude will have books available to sign Monday evening.

President's Column

IAUC DONATIONS TO HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

By Peter Kissel, National President

During the last week in May, Kevin Barry, Sharon Murphy Kissel, and I traveled to the north of Ireland to present IAUC donations to the following groups: Relatives for Justice, the East Belfast Mission's Irish language school, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and Border Communities Against Brexit. Our contributions were very much appreciated. As important as our financial support is to the four entities, our meetings were equally important for further strengthening the IAUC's ties and mutual respect with each of them.

While I have always enjoyed the bus ride north from Dublin to Belfast as a quiet time to appreciate the beauty of Eire and reflect on the still-partitioned country, the journey on May 22, 2018 had a special feel to it, both exciting and sobering. In the wake of Brexit and so much concern over the possible return of a border in Ireland, the roads, land, farms, and towns seemed more vivid than on previous journeys, almost pulsing with anticipation – and concern.

“Welcome to ~~Northern~~ Ireland” proclaimed a large official sign as we crossed the invisible border, on which “Northern” had been satisfactorily blacked out. I smiled at the implication. It struck me that the sign still stood as corrected and not been replaced. Then, a short distance after entering that strange wee land, a small homemade memorial stood on the left side of the road. A sign stating simply “1981” overlooked ten small wooden crosses set on a little grassy hillside. The emotional impact of this humble tribute was powerful, and it was encouraging that this memorial to the hunger strikers had not been defaced.

As we rounded the small rotary entering the town of Newry several miles later, a colorful sign informed us that “Newry Supports prisoners in Maghaberry and Port Laois.” As with the 1981 memorial, this one also had not been vandalized. These three signs – the first one properly defaced and the other two notably undisturbed - seemed to signify the changing dynamic in the north.

On the remaining route from Newry to Belfast, however, I noted the many place names that harkened to the brutal English colonial rulers of this beautiful land – Craigavon, Hillsborough, Bronte Homeland – and was reminded of Louis MacNeice’s withering description of his home land: “and each rich family boasts a sagging tennis-net/on a spongy lawn beside a dripping shrubbery...Free speech nipped in the bud/the minority always guilty.”

Our first meeting, over dinner the night we arrived, was with Mark Thompson and Andree Murphy of Relatives for Justice. (pictured here) We were honored to present Mark and Andree with the IAUC’s donation of \$1,000 to further RFJ’s work, and they were equally thankful for our support. Mark has an encyclopedic knowledge of the details of England’s murders and other atrocities in the North. He and Andree are tireless advocates for the release of funding for legacy inquiries, and request that Irish-Americans stress this issue every opportunity we have. They also strongly advised that the IAUC submit comments on the consultative process on the Stormont House Agreement announced by SOSNI Karen Bradley in May. I was initially skeptical of the process as it struck me as simply another of England’s long litany of stalling techniques. While recognizing the delay inherent in the process, Mark and Andree convinced us that comments should be prepared as it offers an opportunity to advocate for inquests.



The next morning Kevin and I met Linda Ervine and Gordon McCoy of the Irish language school (*Cairde Turas*) at the East Belfast Mission to deliver our donation. Linda, the director, is a Protestant and proud life-long resident of East Belfast who comes from a mixed family. Her brother-in-law David Ervine, now deceased, was the head of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) in Stormont. Linda's and Gordon's enthusiasm for the Irish language is infectious. Despite challenging financials and unglamorous



accommodations, *Cairde Turas* now has 14 classes teaching Irish to 200 students, mainly Protestants from the surrounding area. Linda told us in detail the history behind the Irish language in Protestant East Belfast. Gordon has been researching the Irish language's long tradition there and has produced a full-color map designating the areas with the highest historical concentration of Irish speakers. They are both very appreciative of the IAUC's gesture of support and interest in their work.

We found it particularly heartening when Linda told us that, while she receives some abuse on social media, she has not been threatened physically or otherwise harassed. We could not help reflecting that only 3 or 4 years ago, she likely would have been subject to far worse treatment and possibly threatened with physical violence.

Sean Murray, the film producer of *Unquiet Graves*, then drove us to Stormont for a tour by Sinn Fein representatives arranged by Sean. Our host at Stormont, a dedicated Sinn Fein staff member, made no secret of her dislike for the Stormont building – built to intimidate the nationalist population from the outside and from the inside. She told us that she believes there cannot be a comfort level for Nationalists until Stormont is abandoned and a new parliament building built in the center of town, among the people. The highlight was visiting Martin McGuinness' office and seeing his desk and personal items still in place.

After Stormont, we met with journalist Jude Collins and labor union activist Dessie Donnelly in the Linenhall Library café. Jude is the editor of a new book on Martin McGuinness, which features recollections of Martin from many who knew him. Jude has agreed to speak to the IAUC Board and members on October 1 in Washington. The IAUC.

On Thursday we met with a senior Unionist politician for a discussion of the direction of the North. While he did not directly state that he foresees unification, he indicated that there are discussions occurring among leading Unionists regarding such a scenario. We also had an interesting "hypothetical" discussion regarding what role Unionist parties could play in a united Ireland. His approach is pragmatic. He believes that moderate Unionist parties could offer an effective and constructive voice to the Dail. As with our

meeting with Linda Ervine, it was revealing to hear unionists talk so openly with us about the evolving situation in the North.



We met with Brian Gormally, Executive Director of the Committee on the Administration of Justice, at CAJ's headquarters, (pictured here) where he gratefully accepted the IAUC's donation. Brian told us that CAJ currently is fighting against impunity for human rights violations in the past, and to promote a rights-based framework for the exercise of the freedoms of expression and assembly, and to defend human rights and the Good Friday Agreement. IAUC's donation will help support these efforts. Like RFJ, CAJ is preparing a response to the consultation on legacy inquests pursuant to the Stormont House Agreement, and Brian offered to assist IAUC in its submittal.

Our final meeting, Thursday evening at An Culturallann on the Falls Road, was with representatives of Border Communities Against Brexit - - Damian McEnity, Declan Fearon, and Bernard Boyle. As with RFJ, *Caird Turas*, and CAJ, BCAB is very appreciative of the IAUC's support financially and publicity-wise. Damian, Sean and Bernard described the threat posed to the livelihoods of people and communities on both sides of the invisible border in the



event of any kind of border returning. As an example, they told us of three sisters who started up a catering business after the Good Friday Agreement, and have grown the business to 284 employees. They have now been informed by Applegreen, a major retailer of delicatessens in Ireland, that they will no longer be able to accept their goods if a border is imposed.

We ended our visit to Belfast at an Irish language fundraising event at An Culturallann on the Falls Road at the invitation of Martin O'Muelloir. It was a grand evening altogether with much delightful entertainment from Irish dancers and fiddlers, trad music groups, vocalists and others from diverse cultures and nationalities.

The IAUC's involvement with human rights organizations and peace communities in the North, including our financial support, is hugely important to those communities and to our

mission. Over the past three years, we have contributed to the Pat Finucane Centre, the Ballymurphy Families Campaign, Springhouse Community Centre, Portumna Workhouse, Relatives for Justice, the East Belfast Mission's Irish language school, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and Border Communities Against Brexit. Significantly, we have increased our donations and involvement each of the past three years. We can all be proud of that, but most importantly, these exchanges have contributed to real progress in the work these various groups perform to protect equal rights and peace. The IAUC's role in advocating for a (re)united Ireland through its support for such organizations is highly regarded on both sides of the Atlantic. We can all look forward to our active involvement until the IAUC's ultimate mission – peace and justice in a reunited Ireland – is achieved. That day is coming.

BREXIT SURPRISE TO END IRELAND'S PARTITION?

By Mike Cummings

Since the 2016 British referendum in favor of leaving the European Union, revelations as to how that is to be achieved and its implications have been sparing and couched in propaganda. What was promoted by the 'Brexiters' as the dawning of a new era of prosperity is looking more like a sunset on the United Kingdom. It is widely believed that the Irish Republic (26 counties) will be most directly and negatively affected. The remaining 6 counties of Ireland---variously referred to as statelet, colony, territory, province or garrison---will retain its title as the economic basket case of Britain. The one possible unintended consequence of the Brexit folly is the re-unification of Ireland; divided by England along strictly sectarian lines in 1920. Optimism for this view requires two flawed political leaders----Theresa May and Donald Trump---to step out of character. However, an assist from Members of Congress could change hearts and minds.

First, a Brexit status report. Ireland's Simon Coveny, Tánaiste since November 2017, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Deputy Leader of Fine Gael states the goal "...is to have a set of negotiating parameters by the end of October and the draft text of a withdrawal agreement." British Prime Minister, Theresa May bemoans her divided party and Parliament to any EU leader who will listen. It is a carefully scripted sympathy scenario to cover her backing away from the Irish border 'back-stop' agreement and her support for amnesty for British security forces involved in killing civilians in the north of Ireland. The latter undermines the US-backed Good Friday Agreement. U.S. President Trump, a Brexit supporter, added some comedy by publicly berating May's Brexit "White Paper" stating that she should have listened to him. Two separate studies by economists Paul Gosling and Dr. Gunther Thumann supporting Ireland's re-unification have been recently released and in Washington, D. C. Members of Congress have been briefed on Brexit by Irish Ambassador to the United States, Dan Mulhall.

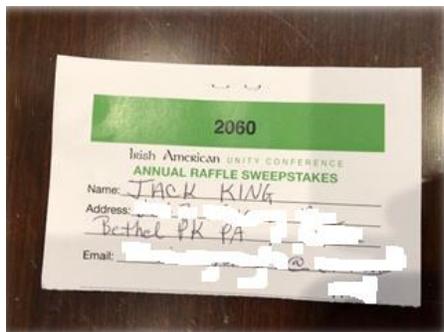
Let's recap the purpose of Brexit as explained by British MEP Daniel Hannan in the Wall Street Journal. Britain's hope for Brexit lies in "... a comprehensive trade deal between the world's largest, (the US) and 5th largest (UK) economies." In other words, the richest countries want more. Hannan added that the UK was seeking greater freedom from EU regulators, standards, financial oversight and for greater 'trust' by the US. This from the

nation that gave us Mad Cow Disease, the Thalidomide tragedy, and British banks that have been fined for laundering drug cartel, Russian oligarch and terrorist money. As for trust? The EU is in the process of punishing the UK for purposely undervaluing a Chinese commodity depriving the EU of duties. What about Ireland caught in the cross-hairs of Brexit? Hannan says nothing and apparently could care less. The British did put a former Irish Ambassador to Canada on the payroll of politia.co.uk to spout the cause of Ireland leaving the EU!

What the UK post-Brexit bailout will consist of is anybody's guess. It will include trade proposals, contracts, investments and purchases which, because they involve a foreign nation, will require Congressional approval. Here Rep. Richie Neal (MA-D), the Ranking Minority member of the House Ways and Means Committee and Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-R), Chairman of the Committee for the Security and Cooperation in Europe will be key. Of course, questions must be answered about the benefit to the US taxpayer and the justification for rushing a bilateral deal with a trade surplus nation, the UK, when more importantly, NAFTA and EU pacts have been waiting. But addressing the economic harm to both parts of Ireland by Brexit, particularly in light of the north's vote to remain in the EU, will be difficult to justify. Support from Members of Congress could spur Britain's full compliance with the Good Friday Agreement obligations such as cooperation with the Dublin/Monaghan bombings, the murder of Pat Finucane and the killings of hundreds of innocent Catholics by British security forces. But why stop there? Given the compelling evidence of the Hubner, Thumann and Gosling reports, why should Americans support a UK Brexit rescue when Brexit harms all of Ireland and the British economy by ignoring the costs of partition. Theresa May and Donald Trump might show some leadership here but only if they have the cover of Members of Congress.

IAUC NATIONAL RAFFLE RESULTS **By Kevin Barry, National Treasurer**

On Wednesday, April 11th, the IAUC's New Jersey 5th & 9th Chapter once again hosted National President Peter Kissel and our national raffle.



The winning ticket was drawn by long time member Peter Quinn, whose father was a founding chapter member. The winner was IAUC member, Jack King of Bethel Park, PA.

This year's raffle and membership drive netted our national organization \$4,535, approximately 8% more than last year's drive.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in our annual fundraiser and a special thank you to Tom Carney, 5th & 9th Chapter President and to the entire chapter, for their hospitality.

Californian Irish Remember Victims of The Great Hunger By George Trainor, National Vice President

On Saturday, May 19th, California Irish communities and organizations remembered the victims of the Great Irish Hunger at the California Irish Hunger Memorial. This year's Second Annual Commemoration paid tribute to all those who suffered, those who died, those who survived but who lost family members, those who were forced to emigrate and those who remained in Ireland but suffered other forms of loss because of the Great Hunger.

Ireland's Great Hunger of 1845-1851 (also known as the Irish Famine or *An Gorta Mór*) is one of the most catastrophic famines in modern history. The given cause of *An Gorta Mór* was the failure of the potato crop, on which most Irish were solely reliant for food. However, there was enough food produced in Ireland during the years of 1845-1851, to keep most of the victims alive; but that food was taken from the Irish by (mainly English) landlords as rent. Keeping it for themselves meant sure eviction from their land and therefore sure starvation.

The memorial, located in Saint Joseph's Cemetery was the concept of the Irish Cultural Society of Stanislaus County, San Francisco Chapter of the Irish American Unity Conference and the Campaign for a United Ireland. The Campaign for a United Ireland not only built the memorial, but also, along with the Brennan family, installed it.

Saint Joseph's Cemetery is on the Stockton-Sonora Road. Twenty-Six Mile House was the name of the tiny community. The first settlers there were two Irishman named Dillon and Dooley. The two built a barn and maintained a change station for horses for the Kelly and Reynolds stage line. Later Dooley operated a four-horse stage line from Stockton to Knights Ferry.

By 1870 the little settlement reached its peak. It was granted a post office on May 2, 1870. Saint Joseph's Catholic Church was built in 1886 on land donated by James Nolan.

The settlement at Twenty-Six Mile House lasted until the 1890's. The church was the last remaining building until it was torn down in the 1960's. The little cemetery that filled up around the church is all that remains today. This lonely little burial ground is the final resting place for many of the Irish pioneers of that region. Brennan, Hennessy, Fitzgerald, Nolan and Kelly are just a few of the family names throughout the cemetery. The Brennan family are the current caretakers of the cemetery.

IAUC Member and Modesto resident Sonny Clifford commented "The Irish Cultural Society of Stanislaus County, should be commended for their tremendous effort and support for today's commemoration."



Irish Cultural Society of Stanislaus County piper, Phil McGill plays during the commemoration ceremony.



5th & 9th Chapter Report By Tom Carney, Chapter President

June 24, 2017 was the annual Bergen County Irish Festival held in Ridgely Park, NJ and was sponsored by the Council of Irish Organization of Greater Bergen County. The festival included live music, games such as a foot race and Gaelic football, as well as Irish-themed gifts and representatives from various organizations including our own. Special thanks to all those who helped at the IAUC table by selling books on Irish history and culture and our famous "England Get Out of Ireland" buttons. We also informed visitors at our table about the aims of our organization and how one could join.



The October meeting hosted newly-minted (and soon-to-be famous) Irish American writer Mary Coogan who enthralled us with her literary work about her own immigrant family's experiences. All the members in attendance enjoyed this narration tremendously, with a vibrant and enthusiastic question and answer period that followed. The November meeting offered the opportunity for Irish Americans and anyone interested in Ireland's past to exchange ideas on what might be the most interesting places to see in Ireland. Hank McNally, who has spoken many times on issues relating to the Emerald Isle, had a winning topic: Visiting Ireland for Its History.

Our December meeting afforded us all a delightful evening featuring an eclectic display of internet-accessed Irish music. We thank Brian Norton, who is a professional full-time music radio host on WFDU, the radio station of Fairleigh Dickinson University (Teaneck, NJ). The January meeting started the year in the best possible way: Bob Burke, who teaches the Irish language, used his knowledge to explain in a clear and concise fashion the story of Finn McCool. Now we know that the title of Prime Minister in Ireland, which is "Taoiseach", originally means "Leader of the Fenians". In February we presented the award-winning film "Dancing at Lughnasa". Although not the happiest of stories, its universal themes certainly touched the hearts of everyone.

At the March meeting Mary Coogan and chapter member, Diane Danielle, read from Frank McCourt's book "Angela's Ashes". This presentation was thoroughly enjoyed, and the audience certainly delighted in hearing the unmistakable Limerick accents of the readers. Mary and Diane truly brought this book to life! (The accents were no doubt quickly acquired).

April 11th was the date of a very important meeting for the IAUC. Not only was it the venue of the annual national raffle drawing, but Peter Kissel, the National President came to address our meeting. National Treasurer Kevin Barry selected the winner (the lucky



person lives in Pennsylvania). The following day we had also scheduled a visit to a local congressional office. We had a very productive conference with Chris Tully who works for Representative Josh Gottheimer as District Director, 5th Congressional District, Glen Rock, NJ. Issues discussed included: the possible ramifications of Brexit, Rep. Chris Smith's Resolution to Support the Good Friday Agreement and the MacBride Principles.)

Our chapter commemorated on May 5th the annual remembrance to the Victims of An Gorta Mor in front of the Hackensack Courthouse. In attendance were members of the NJ IAUC: Ann Thompson, Diane Winters, Diane Danielle, Bill Fahey and Tom Carney.

Lastly on May 9th our chapter meeting featured a literary reading from former Ridgewood, NJ High School teacher, Joan Larkin. Her selection was one of Frank O'Connor's famous short stories. Her retelling of the story made everyone both laugh and sympathize with the characters just as the author intended.



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Irish American Unity Conference
PO Box 55573
Washington, DC 20040
Attention: Sarah McAuliffe-Bellin

Dues:
General Member: \$30.00
Family: \$40.00
Senior Citizen or Student: \$20.00

YES! I SUPPORT THE IAUC AND IRISH UNITY. ENCLOSED IS MY MEMBERSHIP/DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF: \$ _____

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

Questions or Comments? Call Sarah McAuliffe-Bellin at 888-295-5077 or 412-512-9388. Leave a message and the best time to call. Or email her at sarahm1916@comcast.net

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