



QUARANTINE BRINGS OUT THE BEST



Emergency nurses at the Children's, L-R: Nathalie Setian, Katherine Gibeau, Caroline Binette
Photo: Caroline Binette

The pandemic has certainly changed the way we live. We have had to work, learn, even play differently while adjusting to new social norms. Although we are dealing with uncertainty, we are also finding a purpose in all of this chaos.

A few weeks into the pandemic I felt the discombobulated feelings of helplessness. Years ago I organized and taught a group of women the art of quilting. Our small group known as the 'Mothers for Others' sew over a hundred baby quilts a year for the Pediatric ICU at the Montreal Children's Hospital. Taking that knowledge of sewing and finding a constructive need, we applied it to making headbands with buttons for nurses and other health care workers. Elastic from medical face masks wrap around the buttons instead of the ears, a simple but much appreciated item that provided relief from the constant irritation on the ears while wearing a mask for eight hours.

Fabric wasn't a problem for us, it was the supply of buttons and elastic. I put out a request on social media looking for buttons and elastic and the response was overwhelming! So many people also feeling the discombobulation of helplessness and a need to do something to help. I had a couple that made awesome wooden buttons out of shovel handles in their garage!

To date we have made and donated over four hundred headbands to the Montreal area hospitals, even shipping some as far as Newfoundland. Through this crisis I have met new people, kind and generous people and I have experienced how this unpleasant quarantine has brought out the best in society. Hopefully it will continue long after this is over.

"Stay safe!" says Laurie McKeown.

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT, CHRISTIE BROWN, JUNE 2020

When I look back at my last edition's words in February, I wonder how it was possible that I was so unaware that Covid-19 would shut-down Montreal in just a few days. Like watching a suspense movie and you scream at the television (is there really any other way to watch movies these days?) "don't go in that room!", I think back to the days before the start of the Green Season and think "be careful – stop shaking everyone's hand and by those Lysol wipes before it's too late!" Don't get me wrong, I knew that Covid had spread through Italy, and was moving into Spain, but somehow, I thought "we're fine here in Montreal for now, because we don't have any cases yet." Then, like a tsunami, Covid-19 hit Montreal swiftly, and literally from one day to the next, everything changed. The days between the Annual Charitable Ball and the Luncheon were the most stressful few days of my Presidency. There was one distinct moment, three days following the Annual Ball, and just a few days before the Annual Luncheon, when I realized "we have a serious problem." A friend texted me to say "have you thought about cancelling the Luncheon yet?" I remember thinking to myself "but we still have no cases in Montreal... and the luncheon is a just a week away... how can I justify cancelling?" Two nerve-wrecking days later, and after several more people expressed their anxiety about being in large crowds, Premier Legault announced that events with over 250 people were banned across Quebec. As a result, the decision was made for us, as well as for our Sister Societies – the rest of the 2020 Green Season was to be postponed indefinitely.

This Pandemic Presidency did not come with an instruction manual... Covid has dealt us many challenges at SPS, although we feel quite fortunate overall. The Board of Directors meetings have continued to be held, although virtually through ZOOM (see picture below). I was very impressed with how quickly our Board was able to adapt to the platform, and we made progress despite the restrictions in place. It was so successful, that I think some of our future meetings will continue to use a virtual platform, in particular during the winter months with icy driving.

SPS definitely felt the impact of Covid on a number of fronts. SPS is an organization that depends on our large-scale events to raise money for the many causes that we support during the year. Between the stock market collapse in March, and the significant loss in revenue from having to cancel not only the Luncheon, but also the Golf Tournament, SPS has fortunately been able to weather a financial storm. Despite these uncertain times, SPS made the decision to provide 10,000\$ to support food banks in Montreal. Manna Verdun, and St. Columba House received 5,000\$ each, in order to help support Montrealers in need during this pandemic. We are grateful that these grass roots organizations have been so generous with their time and energy to help those in need. We are very proud to support them, particularly during this crisis.

Covid-19 has also prevented us from mourning the passing of several cherished members of the Irish Community. Two in particular stand out for their significant contributions over many decades. First, Mrs. Margaret Healy, a Montreal legend, passed away on May 24 2020. Her impact on our community is

undeniable and SPS named her the Community Award Winner in 2010. She was involved in so many organizations, including St. Patrick's Society, and dedicated so much of her life to charitable causes. Second, the formidable Mr. Leo Delaney, SPS Community Award Winner in 2014. His passion for sharing knowledge about the Irish in Montreal was second to none. His beloved Jeanie Johnston has facilitated the production of many educational resources used in History Classes across Quebec.

We were also very saddened to learn that former Deputy Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Michael Hurley passed away suddenly in China. We enjoyed Michael's company at many events, and it was particularly shocking news as he was just 50 years old. In addition, our condolences are extended to the Most Reverend, Thomas Dowd, on the passing of his dear brother as well as to Bill Hurley, SPS Board Member, on the passing of his cherished mother. When we add Mr. Andrew Fogarty, who passed on February 14th, to the list of those who have recently passed, 2020 has truly been a crushing year for our community. May they, and the many departed, all rest in peace. There has been other news during the past few months... In the last Nuacht, we reported on a meeting that took place between the Mayor of Montreal, Mme. Valérie Plante, and some members of the Irish Community back in January. Though there were many worthy items to discuss, we were all aware that the main focus of discussion was the naming of the REM station located in Montreal's historic Griffintown. At the time of our last publication, I was hoping that the Mayor would accept one of the many Irish Season invitations that she had received for events which were to take place in March. I hoped that we would have an opportunity to expose her to the very vibrant Irish community that continues to thrive today. Sadly, we never had that opportunity, and the Mayor did not continue discussions with us. Instead, she went through with her REM-station naming plan of "Griffintown – Bernard Landry". The way that Mme

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Deadline for submissions for the Fall issue: **Sept. 15, 2020**

Plante carried this out this decision is difficult to accept. Citing Covid as the reason we could not get together, she invited us to a virtual meeting to inform us of the decision, mere hours before the formal announcement. Furthermore, she made the announcement accompanied by the widow of Bernard Landry, yet not one member of the Irish community was present during the Press Conference. The entire process left us feeling unheard and



undervalued. Despite having a large amount of support that this naming neither honours the Irish character of the area, nor does it celebrate Bernard-Landry's contributions to Montreal, it does not seem that the City will be moved to change its position. We will continue to oppose this decision, but must also focus on other issues. The Montreal Memorial Park, and GAA access to fields are but two other outstanding issues we have with the City. With an election a little over a year away, many of us will have a lot of think about at the ballot box.

We have recently had news that Ambassador Jim Kelly will soon be leaving Canada as his term as Ireland's Ambassador to Canada is coming to an end in a few weeks. It has truly been an honour to have Jim and his wife, Ann, often in Montreal since his appointment. St. Patrick's Society wishes them both continued success at their next posting. Replacing Ambassador Kelly will be Mr. Eamonn McKee. We look forward to meeting Mr. McKee (and hopefully not just through Zoom!).

In this edition of Nuacht you will read about the days before

the Covid lockdown, as well as what we've all been up to since. One of my favourite Green Season moments was the Annual Ball. It was an event to remember – and everyone had a wonderful time! Thanks to Brian Marcil and his committee for organizing such a wonderful event. Thanks also to Pamela McGovern, Chair of the Luncheon Committee, and Dave Dubeau, Chair of the Golf Committee, as well as their committee members, who all worked so hard

to organize events that we have had to postpone to 2021. We are disappointed to have cancelled the events, but it will make the next ones that much more special. For your information, the Board has decided to wait until October 31st before making any decisions about next year's events. We truly hope that we will not be hit with a second wave that would surely impact next season as well. We are brainstorming alternatives in case the limits on large scale events continue. Any ideas are welcome.

Finally, I would like to thank [Martina Branagan](#), [Dave Dubeau](#), [Geoff Kelley](#), [Maureen McCormick](#), and [Ken Quinn](#) for taking the time to produce this PANDEMIC EDITION of Nuacht. These last few months have made me appreciate this group even more as they continue to make time for the Irish Community despite the challenges that we all face with "social distancing".

I hope that I will see all of you in person someday soon, but for now, stay safe and best wishes for good health.

Sláinte!

SPS Committee and Event Chairs

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Charity Ball | Brian Marcil |
| Charity Luncheon | Pamela McGovern |
| Governance and protocol | Christopher Deehy |
| Investment Committee | Paul Doyle |
| Golf Committee | Dave Dubeau |
| Charitable Giving & Sponsorship Committee | Andrea Bobkowicz |
| Membership Committee | Ken Quinn |
| Nominating Committee | Scott Phelan |
| Strategic Planning | Vacant |
| Youth Wing | Caitlin Moynan |

Thank you to our committee chairs for all your hard work and dedication to the society.

Advertising Rates for Nuacht

| Size | One issue | Four issues | Saving |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Card size | \$75 | \$200 | \$100 |
| 1/4 page | \$150 | \$350 | \$250 |
| 1/3 page | \$200 | \$500 | \$300 |
| 1/2 page | \$250 | \$700 | \$300 |

All submissions are to be forwarded directly to our editor, Martina Branagan at nuacht@spsmtl.com

The deadlines for submissions are usually: September 15th, November 15th, January 15th and May 15th.

Rates do not include layout or art. Please submit all art work in JPEG/PDF, sized accordingly. Rates do not include GST and PST, if applicable.

WOW! WHAT A GREAT SPS BALL!

By Brian Marcil

As tradition would have it, this year's Ball was once again organized by St. Patrick Society of Montreal. For the first time in a number of years, the Ball was held at the very elegant "Le Windsor" with over 250 participants. A welcome note was sent by the Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau Prime Minister of Canada. The Patron's chair was Mr. Jim Barriere C.M. President of B.G.L. Brokerage, a 40 year member of Montreal's Irish community. Having previously been honoured as Irishman of the year, Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade and Chief Reviewing Officer, it was happy news to the SPS that Mr. Barriere accepted to be this year's Patron and assist with the raising of funds. In addition to winning numerous handball championships both nationally and internationally, he was awarded the Order of Canada (2000). Mr. Barriere was accompanied by his beautiful wife, Carol. The guest of Honour was Professor Graham Carr President and Vice Chancellor of Concordia University, a Quebec native with a PHD from the University of Maine. He is a great supporter of Concordia University's School of Irish Studies.



This year's Annual Charity Ball Committee was chaired by Brian Marcil and members included St. Patrick Society past president, Scott Phelan, who along with current President, Christie Brown, were instrumental in organizing this most successful Ball. The other hard working members of the Committee included, Laurie Bennett, Robin Broderick, Dave Dubeau, Louise Guimond, Carol McCormick, Brian Payne, Ken Quinn and Patrick Short.

Those who attended the Ball were treated to a Chef's meal including towers of smoked salmon, with the main course being filet mignon. During the meal and throughout the evening, music was provided by the Montreal-based eleven piece The **DIRECTORS** Showband and by the traditional Irish band, **SOLSTICE**, sponsored by Hurley's Irish pub. Dancing continued throughout the evening

under the Master of Ceremonies, Ms. Kim Sullivan from Global T.V.

An outstanding, yearly event at the Ball is welcoming a dozen young dancers aged 7-15 from the Bernadette Short School of Irish Dancers, who performed a wide variety of inspirational Irish dances in remarkable coordination and spirit.

Among honoured guests attending this year's Ball were:
Tim Furlong - President of Erin Sports Association
Danny Doyle - Past President of the United Irish Societies
Shawn O'Donnell - Grand Marshall of the 2020 St. Patrick's Parade and hopefully the 2021 Parade

Jim Boylan - Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ireland to Canada

Sterling Downey - Deputy Mayor of Montreal — sporting a distinctive white beard

Sean Finn - Vice-President of CN Rail

Thomas Dowd - The Most Reverend Bishop, who said the opening grace

Orla Mahon - Parade Queen and her Court

Participants were able to view Museum type SPS photos taken as far back as 1934 and make donations at a very plentiful Silent Auction. The proceeds of over \$30,000 will go towards SPS's charitable, educational and cultural endeavours that benefit numerous worthy groups in the greater Montreal community.

There were a number of highlights to this year's Ball, however, most people attending had a Top Three:

1. The new venue of "Le Windsor" in all of its splendour
2. Friends meeting again to share a lovely evening
3. Couples dancing until the wee hours of the morning

WOW! What a great SPS BALL! Looking for a repeat next



NUACHT



LUNCHEON

By Pamela McGovern

On March 17th, I was supposed to Chair the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal Annual Luncheon. Having attended the luncheon for over 20 years, I was very honored to have been asked to perform this duty and had been working hard with the committee to make it a success. Over 400 tickets had either been sold or reserved. All of the elements were in place for it to be a wonderful event as we had Sean Finn, the executive vice-president of CN as a speaker. He was meant to discuss the history of the Irish community and their connection to the building of the CN railway system.

Peter O'Brien was going to receive the St. Patrick's Society Community award and be recognized for all of his contributions to the Irish as well as the greater Montreal community. A lawyer by profession, Peter is also a leader in volunteer governance positions since the late 1980's. His involvement has spanned education, health care, animal welfare, faith-based and land protection related endeavors. Amongst other positions, Peter was the first Chair of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation and has been involved with St. Patrick's Basilica as a fundraiser and a warden for over 30 years. He was also on the board of governors of Loyola High School. Even though the luncheon did not take place, the Society nonetheless acknowledges his contributions and his generosity in donating his time to so many worthy causes.

The menu had been selected, the table arrangements chosen and the musicians were ready to play when the government issued its prohibition to hold gatherings of more than 250 people on March 12th to avoid spreading the coronavirus. The sad decision was then made to cancel but as we of Irish heritage are aware, we are a sturdy and hopeful lot and there have been certainly worse situations faced by us.

I would like to thank Robin, Andrea, Maureen, Louise, Mary, Pat, Ken, Christie and all other members of the Society who donated their time to assist in the organization of this event.



Go raibh
maith
agaibh!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MEANS...

By Sean Finn

On this somewhat subdued St. Patrick's Day, as we look to the future and better times ahead, I'll also be reflecting upon the remarkable and sometimes tragic history of the Irish in my home province of Quebec.

Like former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, former Quebec Premiers Pierre-Marc Johnson, Daniel Johnson Jr. and Jean Charest, and many thousands of others, I'm a proud Irish-Quebecer.

(Late Prime Minister Louis Saint-Laurent, and late Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson Sr., were Irish-Quebecers as well.)

My mother, Gisèle Laberge, is French-Canadian, from Châteauguay, Quebec. She just turned 90. My father, Terrence Finn, who died in 2014 at age 101, was Irish, born in County Sligo.

I was raised on the South Shore of Montreal in the two cultures, not all that unusual in the 1960s in Quebec, where 16 per cent of the population can still claim Irish roots. There's an old joke: "The French and Irish don't fight – they have large families!"

Certainly, the relationship between the groups wasn't always free of disagreements and conflict, but overall, it's been marked by unusual respect, tolerance, even love. Perhaps it's because for generations in Canada, the French and Irish were considered outsiders, less than equals.

More than 75,000 Irish emigrated to Canada, many settling in Quebec, during and following the Great Irish Famine of 1845-49. Many died of typhus, "ship fever", aboard "coffin ships." Many who survived the crossing were quarantined in "fever sheds" on Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence River, and in Montreal.

Irish orphans arrived in Canada by the hundreds. Often, they were taken to nearby Catholic Parishes, where the Bishops would lock the doors following Sunday Mass and say to their congregations: "No one leaves until each one of these children is spoken for."

Partnerships political, commercial, and personal

As the Irish became established in Quebec, they served as bridge builders between the French and English, sharing religion with the French, and language with the English.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MEANS... CONT.

By Sean Finn (due to the keynote speaker at St. Patrick's Society of Montreal's Annual St. Patrick's Day Luncheon)

Frequently, though, the Irish would join with the French to oppose the English. One of the most dramatic examples occurred early on, during Quebec's 1837 Patriotes Rebellion, when the majority French population revolted against a then stifling Colonial administration.

Leading Irish-Montrealers such as Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan were outspoken supporters of French demands for a more democratic form of government. In fact, Cork-born O'Callaghan believed so passionately in French rights that he became a leading figure in the Rebellion, a decision that forced him to flee to the United States with Louis-Joseph Papineau when the Rebellion failed.

Later, a French-Irish partnership played a crucial role in shaping the responsible government that would lead to Canadian Confederation. Usually, the story is related as a grand alliance between the English and French that created the stepping stones to the formation of Canada in 1867. Robert Baldwin partnered with Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, and later Francis Hincks worked with Augustin-Norbert Morin, to create a system of responsible government that would accommodate both French and English interests.

What isn't so well known is that Baldwin was of Irish heritage, and Hincks was born in Ireland.

There were commercial partnerships as well.

In the 19th century, blue-collar Irish and French workers found it difficult to access banks for loans and credit, because they worked past the early closing "gentlemen's" hours of the banks.

So, Bishop Ignace Bourget led a cooperative effort between the French and Irish to form the Montreal City and District Savings Bank (now the Laurentian Bank), with a Board comprised of high-profile French and Irish, with the Presidency usually alternating between them.

Personal partnerships between the French and Irish also helped shape the modern values and cultures of Quebec and Canada. Prime Minister Louis Saint-Laurent, often considered the embodiment of French political power, had French and Irish roots. Saint-Laurent spoke French to his father, Jean-Baptiste-Moïse, and English to his Irish-

Canadian mother, Mary Ann.

Growing up, Saint-Laurent thought that not unusual. Generations of Quebecers would have agreed.

[The Irish and CN](#)

The Irish were also involved in the development of railways in Quebec and Canada. Francis Hincks, co-Premier of the province of Canada from 1851-54, was a central figure in establishing the Grand Trunk Railway (a predecessor of CN) in 1852.

CN was formed on June 6, 1919, and has been celebrating its 100th anniversary across Canada. Over the years the company has employed hundreds of Irish workers. On St. Patrick's Day in 1930, in the early months of the Depression, my father, Terrence Finn, began to work for CN Cartage. His salary for a six-day week was \$10.

Today, I'm privileged to serve as Executive Vice-President, Corporate Services and Chief Legal Officer at CN in Montreal,

where the Irish are represented on the city flag by a shamrock. I wouldn't be in this position had my dad not sent me to French school in 1963, when I was five. I live and work in both Official Languages, equally proud of my French and Irish heritage.

Last week in Toronto, I announced CN's \$300,000 donation to the Ireland Park Foundation, in recognition of the Irish immigrants who helped build the nation's railways. The donation will go toward the construction of a new arts, culture and heritage hub on Toronto's waterfront, a permanent home to commemorate and celebrate the story of the Irish in Canada.

In Montreal we have the Irish Commemorative Stone, the three-metre high, 30-tonne 'Black Rock'. It was erected in 1859 by Irish workers building the Victoria Bridge. During construction they had discovered a mass grave, and wanted to honour those it held.

The inscription on the memorial reads: To preserve from desecration the remains of 6000 immigrants who died of ship fever A.D. 1847-8.

That's what St. Patrick's Day means to me.



CHARITABLE GIVING AND SPONSORSHIP

By Andrea T. Bobkowicz



Helping our community remain relevant, vibrant and to grow continually are the fundamental reasons your Board of Directors volunteer their time and energy. We are delighted every year to see the success of our fundraising efforts so that we can provide charitable giving and sponsorship to our community.

In order to provide more transparency and efficiency, we have now established a year-long application process, with **two** distinct deadlines.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

November 8

April 1

BOARD APPROVAL

November

April

CHEQUE DISBURSEMENT

December

May

The next deadline is **NOVEMBER 8, 2020**

Organizations must submit their requests through Saint Patrick's Society website: www.spsmtl.com/apply-for-a-grant-or-sponsorship/. Further, we will commit to communicate back to the community organizations after the "Board Approval" month to advise them of the outcome.

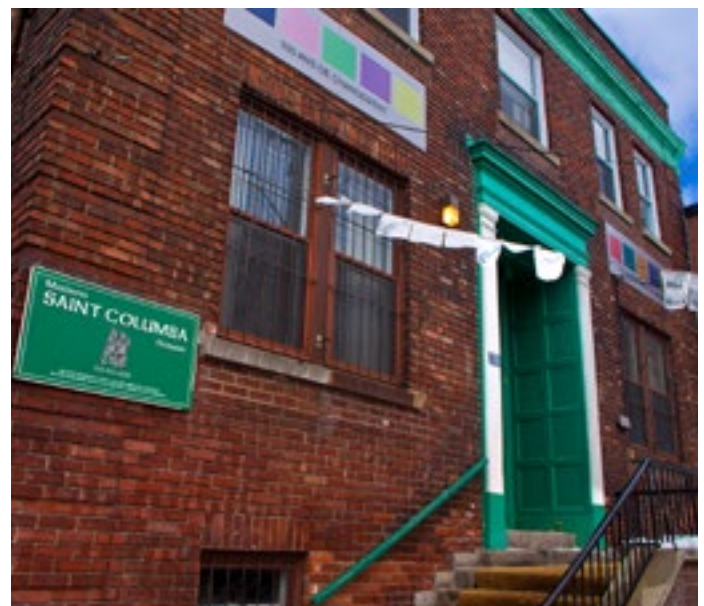
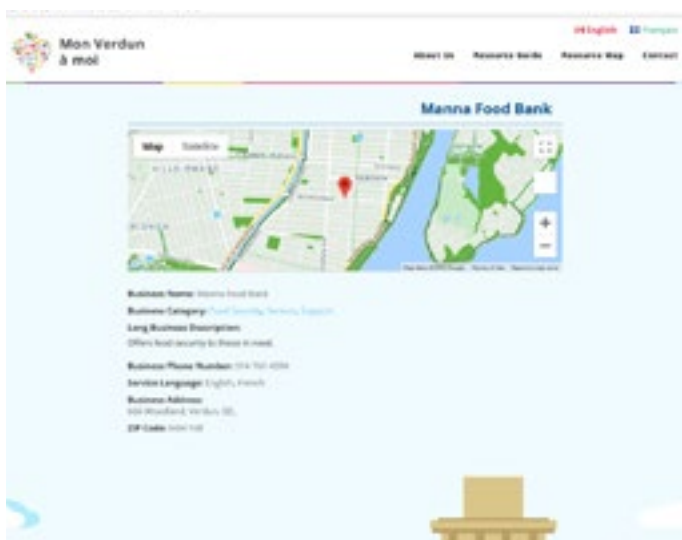
All those approved for charitable giving or sponsorship will be required to share an article about their event or activity which will be published in **NUA^{CH}T**. Photos would be appreciated as well. Our goal is to help demonstrate where the funds are being spent.

For a description of what constitutes a qualified donee, please visit [Qualified donees](#), Government of Canada. For sponsorship requests, please indicate the potential visibility for the Society.

The following documents must be enclosed with your charitable giving or sponsorship submission:

- The financial statements of the applicant (and auditor's reports, if such financial statements are audited) from the preceding two years, immediately prior to your submission.
- The budget of the applicant for the current year.

You must send these documents directly to SPS by mail, or by email: office@spsmtl.com



SO PROUD FOR DAD - IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR

By Ken Quinn Photo: Ken Quinn

Like most other organizations in Montreal's Irish community, the Erin Sports Association was putting the finishing touches on their major annual fundraiser, the Irishman of the Year Breakfast. Things came crashing down three days before the event on March 11th when the provincial government announced some preliminary measures to combat COVID-19, including banning all indoor gatherings with more than 250 people. The Breakfast usually draws roughly 1,000 people.

Every Irishman of the Year Breakfast is special. The Erin Sports Association works diligently to secure big name and interesting head table guests. The club honours three amateur athletes as well as their Irishman of the Year, all in the name of raising funds that ultimately are returned to the community through donations.



L-R: Patrick Quinn, Joseph Quinn, Heather Quinn and Ken Quinn

This year's Breakfast was shaping up to be most special for my family as our father is this year's Irishman of the Year. My sister Shannon was to fly in from Lower Sackville, NS to introduce our dad. My brother Kevin was to come in from Scarborough. Various cousins were scheduled to attend the Breakfast including some from the Toronto area and even one from the North East USA. On such short notice, cancelling flights was not really in the cards. My sister flew in regardless as did our cousin from the North East. Another cousin from Ontario made the trip in anyway and it was great to see them all, even for a brief period.

From the time Dad was named Irishman of the Year his family has been so proud of the unexpected community recognition. Wherever he has gone he has been introduced, invited to speak, or honoured in some way. He was set to attend the Montreal Mayor's Reception at City Hall to sign the golden book on Friday March 13th following the United Irish Societies' press conference. That, of course, was blown out of the water too. Other than the intimate pre sashing social at the Erin Sports Association's clubhouse in mid-February, which almost did not happen thanks to Mother Nature, one of the events that I found touching was the recognition afforded to Dad at Verdun Borough Hall at the beginning of March. Sure, it was very brief and tied to the monthly council meeting. However,

to see him recognized in front of family and friends as well as his fellow citizens after literally a lifetime in the Verdun community was touching. The local MNA also recognized Dad that evening. Because the Borough Council meetings are web streamed, our out of town family and friends were also able to watch.

Yes, the pandemic has affected us. I say, "So what!". Globally, so many people have been affected in one

way or another. Others have lost loved ones such as spouses, mothers, or fathers. Still others contracted the virus and are recovering. In the grand scheme of things, we lost an opportunity to celebrate and raise some funds. We will gather again to celebrate, and the fine folks of the Erin Sports Association will have opportunities to raise funds again.

Like St. Patrick's Society, despite COVID-19, the Erin Sports Association is making donations to some of its favourite community organizations. That is what they do.

In speaking with Erin Sports' President Tim Furlong, who is sounding good as he goes through some health challenges, he assures us that at some point Joseph Quinn will be fêted as Irishman of the Year. It could be sometime in the Fall. It could be next March. Or, it could be somewhere in between. Regardless, the next Irishman of the Year Breakfast will be special and memorable, and I am already looking forward to it.

Editor's Note:

Joseph Quinn has served in many volunteer roles in the Irish community and his local Verdun community including: UIS President 1996 and 1997, Dawson Community Centre, St. Lawrence Optimist Club and Manna Food Bank where he still serves today. His many awards include Grand Verdunois (2001) for community service, Centraide's Antoinette Robidoux Award for community service (2001), the Simon McDonaugh Humanitarian Award (2005) and the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award (now "Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers") in 2008. Our congratulations to Joseph for being named Erin Sports Association's Irishman of the Year 2020!

2020 IS ONE FOR THE BOOKS - BLOOMSDAY STORY

By Kevin Wright

Photos: Jordan Gerow

The year 2020 is certainly one which will go down in memory as very special. The word “corona” will be etched into the minds of people across the globe. This virus which now bears the name Corvid-19 has thrown a spanner in the works of many groups which had hoped to carry on their activities as usual. However, this was not to be. Like other groups and associations, Festival Bloomsday Montreal had been hoping to host another iteration of its events this year. This year marks our ninth anniversary. We did manage to celebrate James Joyce’s 138th birthday on February 2. In association with the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), we had hoped to launch our festival with a presentation by Danny Doyle of Parks Canada on the persistence of the Irish language in the province of Quebec. Later we would have continued with music and poetry, the academic panels presented in conjunction with the School of Irish Studies at Concordia University. There was even a plan to have a dramatized version of Brian Merriman’s *The Midnight Court*. Each year we had a walking tour, led by Donovan King, of the Irish areas of interest in Montreal. The culminating activity has always been the dramatized readings of sections from James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and the interpretation of extracts from Molly Bloom’s soliloquy (45 pages without a period, comma or an apostrophe to help) by Kathleen Fee.

All festivals in Montreal have been cancelled until at least July 2. This has meant no Saint Patrick’s Parade in March, no Jazz Festival, and no Just for Laughs ... However, Festival Bloomsday Montreal tried another tack. With the aid of a technician, we put our events online, via Zoom and YouTube.



**FESTIVAL
BLOOMSDAY
MONTRÉAL**

Irish culture
in Montreal
La Culture irlandaise
à Montréal

Its 9th year celebrating Irish Culture and James Joyce in Montreal, Bloomsday is the largest outside of Dublin.

The festivities began on **Friday June 12th**, an Opening Ceremony with Michael Kenneally, Principal of Concordia’s School of Irish Studies to introduce the Bloomsday schedule of events, the festival, its roots and the lasting power of Joyce.

On Saturday, **June 13th** Dennis Trudeau, MC extraordinaire, hosted the Bloomsday Concert featuring talent from home and abroad paying tribute to Joyce in song, music and verse.

A Sunday morning tour and a bit of the history of Irish Montreal via Zoom on **June 14th**, led by Donovan King, founder of Griffin Tours, community advocate, and font of knowledge about our fair city.

And on Sunday afternoon, a reading by local playwright Colleen Curran from her new play, *The Sunset Gals*.

The annual Academic Panel, Monday, **June 15th**, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. was quite a treat this year with John McCourt, author and professor of English at the University of Macerata, co-founder and co-director of the Trieste Joyce School. Also, Marcelo Zabaloy, the translator of *Ulysses* and of *Finnegans Wake* into Spanish. And, teachers and students of Joyce at the Concordia School of Irish Studies.

Tuesday, **June 16th**, Bloomsday itself!!

Bloomsday readings in two sessions: a special cast of readers from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Time for lunch and then from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., the highlight of the Festival was a dramatic presentation of Molly Bloom’s famous nighttime musings.

Please be safe! Be well; stay well!

EXTRAORDINARILY BUSY AT THE OFFICE

By Gregory Kelley MNA

The past few weeks have been difficult for the Irish community of Montreal. We have said goodbye to too many people we cherish. I would like to offer my sincere condolences to all of you who have lost a loved one.

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that we have not seen for generations, and it has pushed our society to its limits. However, in my lifetime I have never seen our country and province so united in a common cause, putting aside political differences for the common good. As our society shut down, we all understood the necessity of our actions, and how imperative it was not to overwhelm our hospitals and health care workers.

At the riding office, we have been extraordinarily busy. The pandemic has created an economic and health care crisis that brings with it a wide variety of urgent challenges. My team and my colleagues have done our best to provide factual information to our constituents about the virus and to help individuals and companies navigate through the new programs that have been announced by various levels of government. The same can be said about the rules of confinement and deconfinement, which at times created some confusion and concern.

We have also been doing our best to assist our local health board in managing the crisis in our seniors' residences. This was by far the most difficult situation for our province and has been devastating for our community. Rest assured that, in the weeks and months to come, I will do what I can to bring your voice to Quebec City to put concrete ideas forward on how we can take better care of our seniors in this province.

I know we are slowly opening our society up. I urge all of you this summer to follow the basic recommendations which work. Wash your hands, cough into your sleeve and stay two meters away from people as best as possible. Together, we will get through this.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, by e-mail at gregory.kelley.JACA@assnat.qc.ca or by telephone at 514-697-7663, if you have any questions or concerns. I am here to help.

Sláinte,

Greg Kelley



CINÉ GAEL MONTRÉAL 28TH SEASON HAS TAKEN AN UNPLANNED HIATUS!

By Ken Wilson

Ciné Gael Montreal reached both its highest highs and lowest lows in an abbreviated season that was abruptly stopped in March by the global pandemic. While having to halt the season was the lowest low, we have renewed hope for next season. Our opening night collaboration with Concordia's School of Irish Studies combined with a superlative promotional effort generated a phenomenal response that resulted in a sold-out presentation of the film, *Lost Children of the Carricks* in the D.B. Clarke Theater at Concordia University.

Truly the unprecedented response was gratifying as an entirely new audience suddenly became aware of how successful we are in bringing Irish cinema to Montreal. This new interest carried over into the subsequent films that were shown right into the month of March.

With *Lost Children of the Carricks*, cinephiles were once again served a tragic view of a sad but familiar story. Similar to last season's opening film, *Black '47*, we were proud to once again present a film on the topic of the infamous Irish Famine. In all, there were approximately 300,000 Irish refugees that landed on the shores of Canada between 1845 and 1852. Several thousand lost their lives though, either in transit or in quarantine upon arrival due to a typhus epidemic and dysentery. We were both honoured and delighted that the director of the film, Dr.

Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, was present and spoke before the film was shown. Dr. Ó hAllmhuráin, Johnson Chair of Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, described in poignant terms what an achievement it was to bring this story to a wide audience and the impact on those descendants directly affected.



The film series had planned to continue two weeks later on February 7 with a presentation of *Rosie*, however in another first for Ciné Gael Montreal, a snow day prevented us from presenting this jarring dramatization of a family suddenly made homeless through no fault of their own. In an attempt to rectify the situation, we rescheduled it for April 22 but as with all other

events, it too was cancelled on account of the pandemic. We plan to reschedule this presentation but have not determined a date.

After an additional two week pause and since there was no snow storm to deter us, Ciné Gael Montreal returned to present its third film of the season, *Sooner or Later*. Film Ireland Magazine wrote, "At the core of the film are Thaddeus and Sally, two strikingly original Irish characters played brilliantly by real-life husband and wife pairing Aeneas and Anna



CINÉ GAEL MONTRÉAL 28TH SEASON HAS BEGUN!

cont. from page 12

O'Donnell." Their conspiracy to escape from the nursing home where they live and to end their lives in unison is woven together with darkly comedic moments. Added to the mix is Thaddeus' daughter whose suspicions of his lady-friend have only increased over the course of their six-month relationship and is the perfect foil in their deception of driving to Kerry for a pleasant holiday. The no-budget film by Luke Morgan was a joy to watch and the evening concluded with a wonderful Q&A session led by Patrick Brodie from Ciné Gael Montreal's committee, with Luke who commented how surreal it was to have a Skype session with an audience in a theater in Montreal while he sat at his kitchen table at 2am in Ireland.



Ciné Gael Montreal kept the two week habit alive and presented, The Man Who Wanted to Fly on March 6. Sometimes truth can be stranger than fiction and this documentary is proof of that concept. Two brothers, Bobby and Ernie Cootes live by themselves but next-door to each other. The down-home vibe of the brothers which carries into the film and is effortlessly captured by the filmmaker, made watching the film seem like we were the chosen few to catch glimpses of life through the keyhole of an old barn door. The subtle engagement of filming while the two brothers go about their daily routines, dutifully answering questions concerning their interests revealed Ernie's love of CB radio and Bobby's addiction to fixing clocks and watches. But Bobby's dream to fly appears on the surface to be the most outlandish absurdity, an octogenarian could think of. This film is a

wonderful statement that it's never too late to learn and act.

After the film, we were treated to a bonus that we are becoming accustomed to: a Skype session with the director, Frank Shouldice. Frank gave enormous credit to Dave Perry, his cinematographer for the entire five-year project. Listening to the director, we came away with the feeling that this film was truly a labour of love.

Within days we learned that Concordia University was closing and our season was, at the very least, being delayed. The films that we had yet to show included our famous evening of short films curated by our own committee members, Heather MacDougall and Kester Dyer. Moreover, three other films, the documentaries, The 34th: The Story of Marriage Equality in Ireland and Making the Grade plus the award-winning feature film, A Bump Along the Way were casualties of the unfortunate circumstances.

Since the situation is still developing and no decisions have been made, we have yet to learn what our options will be concerning the presentation of those films. Fortunately, we have always been able to count on our supporters to help us get the films to the screen and we look forward to their help in the months ahead.

For further information, please see <https://cinegaelmontreal.com/> for details.

YESTERDAY'S BURIED STORIES

By Peter Stockland



In mere weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has gone from media fixation to global obsession as countries around the world struggle to control infections and ward off death. Few are the media reports, or indeed the personal conversations, that don't at least touch on it. In the middle of it, we find it eerily difficult to remember when we talked of other things. And we already share the conviction it's something we'll never forget living through.

Yet part of the paradox of being human is how rapidly yesterday's looming apocalypse slips from unavoidable immediacy to history to the abandoned burial ground of who-knew? The evidence on this snowy St. Patrick's Day in Montreal lies mere kilometres from where I write this in the form of about 6,000 Irish bodies dumped into a mass grave in the mid-19th century.

Forget being forgotten. Their existence was actively denied for decades, even though they had died in the typhus fever sheds of the city's Griffintown neighbourhood when they arrived here fleeing the Irish famine in 1847. It's a common occurrence to speak with lifelong Montrealers who have no idea so many dead lie round in an obscure spot on the north side of the St. Lawrence.

It's not just garden variety ignorance of local history. Controversy erupted late last year, and continues to bubble, over Mayor Valérie Plante's intention to name a new Montreal commuter rail station for former premier Bernard Landry, utterly disregarding the Irish community's request that it honour the place where starving and impoverished sons and daughters of Éire were killed by a horrible plague.

Spirited as the debate has been, it's also fortuitously timely given how the novel coronavirus has hypersensitized us to the destructive path diseases can carve through whole societies. It also comes as a University of Toronto historian

is concluding a lengthy study not just into the social response to the sick and dying but also into the effects on families, and especially orphaned children left behind.

The U of T's Mark McGowan is the academic driver behind an innovative undergraduate credit course to track the identities and lives of those orphans rescued during the Great Famine – An Gorta Mór. In the spring and summer 173 years ago, an estimated 70,000 Irish refugees overwhelmed Montreal, which at the time had a population of about 50,000.

In early November 2019, archeologists began sifting through human remains in a mass grave where their bodies were dumped 172 years ago, and essentially forgotten for decades despite long efforts by Montreal's Irish population to memorialize them. The find fueled controversy when Mayor Valerie Plante announced that a planned light rail commuter station in the heart of Griffintown would be named for the late Bernard Landry, a former sovereigntist premier of Quebec. Irish community leaders have denounced it as yet more insensitive neglect of their history and contribution to Montreal.

On the last Sunday in May each year, the Ancient Order of Hibernians organizes the Walk to the Stone – a procession from St. Gabriel's Church in Point St. Charles to the massive Black Rock that commemorates the site of the mass grave into which bodies of Famine victims were dumped. Two years ago, Mayor Plante and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Michael Mac Donncha were among those who made the trek.

The starting point at St. Gabriel's underscores a key aspect of McGowan's research: the role of both Catholic and Anglican churches in attending to the dying refugees, but also in placing their orphaned children with families who cared for them and, in many cases, enmeshed their

YESTERDAY'S BURIED STORIES CONT.

lives and histories into the fabric of Quebec society. Both of those crucial contributions of the 19th century Church have been curiously understudied by historians inside and outside the province, McGowan says. It's a powerful story, he adds, one that he's in discussions with McGill-Queen's University Press to turn into a book.

During a guest lecture to the School of Irish Studies at Concordia University last fall and in a follow-up interview, McGowan stressed the awareness of the clergy and religious from orders such as the Grey Nuns and the Sisters of Providence in caring for those stricken with typhus during the "Summer of Sorrow," and the fullness of their understanding of it as a call from God.

"Those on the front lines saw the immediate need to help regardless of religious affiliation. For Catholics, knowing many of these refugees would be Catholics was sort of helping their own, but it seemed to be encoded into the religious DNA of the time that you served, and you served by putting your life on the line.

"They knew that with typhus raging in the sheds at Point St. Charles, it could be a death sentence going to work there. But they did it for love of God, and love of neighbour. That's why they took their vows. They were vows to serve. Bishop Bourget said to each of his priests: 'You have to do service there.'"

Service did not end when the epidemic abated. McGowan and his team of eager, talented U of T undergraduates traced, over five years, about 1700 orphans who would have been left alone, bewildered, in many cases unable to speak either French or English when their parents died on the Coffin Ships, the rocks of Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence, or in the fever sheds of 1847 Montreal. Most of those children were brought into the front-line care of the Church – Catholic and primarily Anglican – before being placed with families. Why? Because there was essentially no one else.

"The State didn't have the kind of safety net apparatus as it does now. It scrambled as best it could to solve the crisis but couldn't have done it without the help of the churches, which were the largest and most influential institutions within colonial society."

Contrary to the sepia-inflected Heritage Minute aired in the run-up to Quebec's 1995 sovereignty referendum, the integration of the orphans was not all *bienvenue mes chers enfants*, cozy duvets under slanting roofs, and happy family life. Work done by McGowan and undergraduate sleuths poring through census documents, church records, and official registries of all kinds showed few of the Irish children were formally adopted by French-Canadian families. Many were raised in a kind of indentured labour for farms and businesses. Some, when they came of age, simply disappeared to points west or south.

In fairness, he says, that reflects the attitudes and structures of a society in which there were no real mechanisms for adoption, all children were considered little adults obliged to work for their keep, and record-keeping outside of the Church seemed almost designed to challenge future academic detectives. It was certainly a test for his undergraduate team, who would spend painstaking hours tracking leads on long-ago orphans through the archival maze only to have it turn out a dead end.

"I got a true understanding of what historical and archival research really is and how challenging it can be, because even if you do find a match in a name, the years might not add up or the number of children (in a family) might not add up, so you'd find all your work discounted," says Pamela Smofsky, a Montrealer who undertook the research as part of her studies at U of T in 2016 and ended up presenting findings at a conference in Ireland.



"This virus has had a tremendous impact on our activities this past spring. First off, we had to Postpone our Irishman of the Year dinner and our 11th running of the SIS St Patrick's parade. We have as well planned several Society events these past few weeks that we had to all cancel. We are now meeting monthly on line via Webex. We have had to push our AGM as well coming this end of June. Thanks for reaching out to us and I hope all is well."

Jay de la Durantaye, President, Soulages Irish Society
514.519.0267 www.soulagesirishsociety.ca

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IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of **BRYAN SCOTT** on April 28, 2020, at the age of 84 years. He was the devoted husband of Mildred Scott (nee Graham) and the loving dad of Colleen (Gerry) and Karen (Jay). He was a wonderful grandpa to Kaeli, Valery, James, Aidan and Katie. Bryan was predeceased by his sisters, Veronica and Geraldine (Edward), and by his brother Leonard (May). He is survived by Vincent (Millie). He will be missed by many nieces, nephews and friends.



Bryan enjoyed a long career in his family transportation company. He made many lifelong friends with people he met through his work with Scott Transport and through Calcarene Industrial Supply, the company he co-owned with his wife. Bryan was very proud of his Irish roots and he was a long-time member of the United Irish Societies. He served in many executive capacities and was President of the society in 1998 and 1999. He was an involved member of St. Michael's and All Angels Church. He enjoyed being part of the men's prayer group and he served as head of the maintenance committee. Bryan was an avid member of the Pierrefonds Men's Softball League, enjoying many summers playing ball and building friendships. Befitting his love for animals, he was also a volunteer for Animatch.

He loved his family above all else. He was generous, compassionate and kind. Friends were always welcome. He enjoyed life and loved to have fun. There was always a twinkle in his eye, a reason to be positive. He was loved dearly and he will forever live in us through the memories we have of him.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date, once restrictions on gatherings have been lifted. Donations in Bryan's memory may be made to St. Michaels and All Angels Church (15556 Cabot, Pierrefonds, H9H 1R5) or to Animatch.



The Irish Community lost another ally when **MICHAEL HURLEY**, the Deputy Head of the Embassy in China, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday May 24, 2020. Michael Hurley (50) was originally from Santry in Dublin, Ireland. He joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1988 and served in the Passport Office and in Iveagh House. His first posting was to the Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels in 1998. He also served as Deputy Head of Mission in Ireland's Embassy to the Netherlands in The Hague (2006-2011).

Generous with his time and a great speech writer, the Irish Community in Montreal got to know this quiet, unassuming man during his most recent posting as Deputy Head of Mission at the Irish Embassy in Ottawa (2014-2019). He was a frequent visitor to Montreal, often at major events with his wife, Anne-Marie.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Michael's wife Anne-Marie, his children James, Niamh and Ciara, his entire family and colleagues.

Niall Burgess, Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sums him up beautifully:

"Our work sometimes gives us the opportunity to do big things that change people's lives for the better. Michael did big things, quietly and unassumingly. Never more so than in recent difficult months when he sustained high spirits among our team in Beijing and anchored our efforts to secure essential medical supplies for this country [Ireland] from China. We may never know how many people owe their health and possibly their lives to those efforts. We've lost a very special colleague - one of the best of us."

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam!

IN MEMORIAM

Montreal's Irish community has lost a true pillar with the passing of Margaret Healy on May 24, 2020. Margaret Maud Ann Healy was born July 30, 1931, the eldest daughter of Thomas P. Healy and Lucy Irene McCarthy. Margaret and her two sisters Irene and Sheila grew up in a political family knowing the value of community. Margaret's upbringing resulted in her being a determined, strong willed community minded woman. Margaret's community began in Pointe-Saint-Charles, was based on her faith, centered around her family home, Marguerite Bourgeoy's Park and St. Gabriel's Church. Margaret's life was well lived and included many accomplishments, including being President of the United Irish Societies of Montreal, Board member of Catholic Community Services, Former President of St. Antoine 50 Plus Community Centre, Cedar Cancer Society, Director of St. Patrick's Society, Warden at St. Gabriel's Church, and being inducted into the Pointe-Saint-Charles Hall of Recognition. She was also the recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. The National Assembly recognized her with an award for her involvement in the Irish community and her positive influence on Montreal life.



Two of her greatest joys were her involvement in the St. Patrick's Parade, including being named the first female Grand Marshall in 2005 and the Christmas Food drive run out of her beloved family home in Pointe-Saint-Charles. While Margaret's life was full of community, accomplishments, and well lived, her greatest accomplishment and first true love was her family: Mother to Sheila and Gerry, Michael and Jeanette, Grandmother to Jonathan, Linda, Matthew and Jess, and Great- Grandmother to Christian, Madison, Liam and Benjamin. We are so proud of mom, her life, and accomplishments. She was predeceased by her husband Kenneth O'Donnell and is survived by her two sisters Irene and Sheila, nephews Thom (Sharon) Sean (Janet), great-nephews and cousins, and special dear friends, Elizabeth and Fred.

We were all privileged in one way or another to have known Margaret and many will miss her.

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Montreal's Irish community saw the passing of another true blue on June 23, 2020. Born in Dublin, Ireland, **LEO LIAM DELANEY**, (Nov. 27, 1928-June 23, 2020) came to Canada in 1953.

When he retired from the business world, Leo invested his energies into many aspects of Irish life here in Montreal. He was Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1996, and a former chairman of the St. Patrick's Ball. In 2014, he received St. Patrick's Society "Community Award" and was awarded a Government of Canada "Commemorative Medal" for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in recognition of significant contribution to compatriots, community and Canada.



A hospiliar of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and Chairman of the Jeanie Johnston Foundation which produced The Canada Times educational newsletter, Leo will long be remembered for his interest in deepening historical knowledge among school-going youngsters.

Leo remained very active, up until his last days, including publishing "**The Canada Times**".

He was predeceased by his loving wife Evelyn Fraser Delaney and his sister Nancy Holmes. Leo leaves behind 3 daughters, Aileen (James) of Calgary, Deirdre of Montreal, and Maureen (Brent) of Toronto. He also leaves 7 wonderful grandchildren: David, Erin, Chelsea, Trevor, Connor, Sean and Kelly. Lifelong friend of Harry Lister (Dorothy).

Due to Covid-19, there will be no service at this time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Cystic Fibrosis Canada.



# IRISH DANCING SCENE

By Pat Short

## THE MORAN ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE



We have closed for the time being because of my "real" job in nursing at a "care home". We are not offering any on-line classes, for now.

The St. Patrick's Society of Montreal thanks you for your service as a "front line worker".

## MARIE-CLAUDE ROUSSEAU

We are closed for the duration of Covid-19 emergency and not offering any on-line classes.



## YOUNG ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE



The Young Academy is still offering a dance program during this time. Even though our actual classes are closed for now, our dancers are continuing their training through an online platform. With regular classes, exercise programs and fun activities we have managed to keep our Irish Dance family connected. We are also offering classes to anyone who wants to try Irish Dancing from the comfort of their own home. We are accepting new students ages 4 & up, teenagers and adults. The Young Academy wishes everyone good health and well-being during this difficult time.

## BERNADETTE SHORT SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCING



Our school dancers and alumni were overly excited to give their final performance of the season at the St. Patrick's Society Annual Charity Ball. Coronavirus lockdown came a few days later and put an end to the Irish Season, as it were. Our alumni particularly enjoyed dusting off the "auld" hard shoes for the flash mob!!

Following government rulings on the operation of gyms, halls and studios, we transferred all our classes onto the ZOOM on-line medium and this has been an incredibly positive experience

for all involved. This versatile platform gave an opportunity for our dancers to connect with their instructors, but also to maintain visual contact with their friends in Irish dancing during this time of social isolation. Something that is difficult for younger children to comprehend.

All our Associates are working extremely hard to keep dancers engaged and connected with our Irish dance community, through various themes and events.

For example, during "Nurses Week", some of our beginner classes dressed up as Superheroes to honour those

working on the frontlines of this pandemic.

Our dance company has always shown concern about the development of the "whole person" and that includes their mental health. Our many Worlds qualifiers, who had worked and trained so hard, were devastated with disappointment when that event was cancelled for 2021. Likewise, the North American Championships scheduled for July in Nashville; cancelled. Ville Marie Feis has been postponed to November 22<sup>nd</sup>, a virtual lifetime away! To that end we engaged the services of Dr. Sommer Christie to give a two-hour seminar on Zoom for our dancers. This had an amazing response. Both from dancers and their parents.

On Mother's Day, we had "Bring Your Mom to Dance Day" where moms came to our zoom class and the mom/daughter duos learnt a 2Hand Jig.

We recently completed the edit of the 2019 production of the **IRISH NUTCRACKER**. Downloadable copies are now available at <https://sellfy.com/p/lso72m/>. The cost for each download is \$20 with \$3 going to LE DEPOT, formerly known as the N.D.G. Food Bank. <http://www.ndg.ca/en/ndg-food-depot>

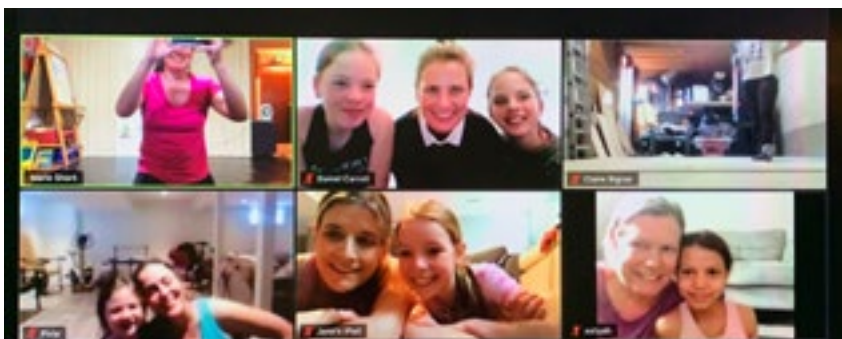
Since the coronavirus pandemic broke out and social distancing was put in place, we transferred all our classes and activities online. The dancers are coping well with it. Everyone has stayed incredibly positive and focused on what they can do given the circumstances. In an effort to keep the



dancers engaged, I've been giving them challenges each week. We did a Virtual Dance-A-Thon Fundraiser. The dancers were asked to raise funds in an effort to support three different COVID-19 related initiatives:

- Montreal Children's Hospital – Centre for COVID-19 patients (Team Red)
- Family Resource Centre – A West Island based organization helping children manage their mental health during this pandemic (Team Yellow)
- Le Pont Bridging – Food Bank in Hudson (Team Blue)

As a school from the Vaudreuil-Soulanges area with dancers ranging in age from 3 to 15 years, we felt all three of these organizations were important to support. The dancers in the school were divided into three teams, each team representing one of the charities. Their team



# TIME TO PAUSE, TO REFLECT, TO PONDER

By Kathleen Duffin cnd      Photos: Marie-Claire Dugas

I live in a communal residence with seven other sisters/nuns in Ville Emard, Quebec. It was built in 2003 to accommodate English speaking cnd's who were still engaged in active ministry. It is a lovely dwelling, ideally located about a five minute walk from the Jolicoeur metro station, so convenient for those of us who take public transportation. Each sister has her own unit; we meet for prayer and meals and time together for relaxation and enjoyment.

On Saturday, March 15, we were all looking forward to hosting our annual St. Patrick's day gathering for our sisters of the General Administration who live at our Mother House on Atwater and Sherbrooke—an event not to be missed! But we received some regrets; a few were concerned about taking the metro because of the virus. How bad was it? Why not the metro? Why not a gathering of friends? And it escalated from there—from that evening—for most of us. The Irish coffee was delicious and the sing-along of our favorite Irish songs lightened our spirits but there was a bit of a pall over the group as one or another recounted a 'story' of someone who had 'the virus'.

The St. Patrick's Day parade was cancelled! That was serious. The feast of St. Joseph was celebrated in my house, of course, we were all home and would continue to be for some time. Little did we know on March 19 how we would live, how so many of our friends would live from that day until this. We were continually being told that

it was not yet a pandemic—certainly not like the Spanish flu! And so we were hopeful but perhaps not too realistic. As women who were accustomed to pushing up our sleeves and getting to work, we found that we could do very little. Our Mother House was closed; the infirmary where our sick sisters were used to having visits from us was in lockdown and we at De Sève Residence, all seniors were continually advised to stay home, wash our hands and keep the distance! Yes, we could go out for walks and most of us did—even twice a day—those of us who could.



Kathleen Duffin singing "O Danny Boy"

This gave us time to pause, to reflect, to ponder what was this all about? The literature which we were receiving from various sources invited us to contemplate the ways of God in this unprecedented moment in history. And we too were feeling that this was the best that we could

do. No front line tasks for us if we wanted to be helpful and stay safe. PRAYER—more than we had time for in an 'earlier life' became our contribution. We had slowed down and calmed down and were conscious of the needs of others who hardly had the time to pray. We followed the Mass on line each day; tuned in to certain programs on YouTube; prayed

the Rosary; became adept (some of us) with Zoom; phoned, e-mailed and texted people with whom we had not been in touch for awhile—and begged our loving God for a cure of this evil. And we continue to hope, knowing that this too will pass without the assurance of knowing when or how different life will be. We hang on to the Faith of our fathers and mothers, knowing that we are all in this together and that when it is over, we will be more together in our Common Home.





## 30-YEAR HISTORY INTERRUPTED

By Kevin Callahan

The 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin was a seminal event in modern Irish history and led to the creation of an independent Irish state in 1922. Since 1989, the Montreal Irish community has held events to mark the Rising and honour the men and women who participated in the struggle for Irish freedom. Speakers have included the late honourable Warren Allmand OC, Montreal author Rana Bose, and present day leader of Sinn Féin, Mary Lou McDonald. In 2016, Friends of Sinn Féin Canada and the Coalition for Peace in Ireland organised a centenary celebration at the Montreal Curling Club featuring guest speakers Dr. Michael Kenneally and Dublin City Councillor Mícheál MacDonncha, who returned to Montreal two years after as Lord Mayor of Dublin to participate in the Walk to the Stone.

Following last year's successful event when 80 people turned up to hear Irish TD Rose Conway-Walsh, the 2020 reception promised to be even more memorable. The Montreal local of the LIUNA trade union was a sponsor and guest speakers were Alexandre Boulerice MP, the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party and Emma

Sheerin, the Sinn Féin member of the Northern Ireland Assembly for Mid-Ulster. There have been historic developments in Ireland and people in the Montreal Irish community were looking forward to hearing a firsthand account. In the North, the Assembly was back up and preparing to face the challenges of Brexit. In the Republic, Sinn Féin won the largest share of the popular vote in the general election and elected 37 TDs.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 interrupted the 30-year history of Montreal 1916 commemorations, not to mention all such events in Ireland itself. Friends of Sinn Féin Canada encouraged supporters to join an international on-line event that featured a reading of the 1916 proclamation by a number of different speakers, a speech by Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald, and the singing of the Irish national anthem "Amhrán na bhFiann". Friends of Sinn Féin Canada are determined to keep up the tradition of 1916 commemorations in Montreal in 2021, but, in the meantime, will be developing a social media campaign to inform Canadians about developments in Ireland in the doubly challenging context of the pandemic and Brexit.

## 104<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GOES AHEAD - UNLIKE ANY OTHER

By Martina McLean

Photos: [Uachtarán na hÉireann](#)



To mark the 104<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, President Higgins led a televised commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising from Áras an Uachtaráin on Sunday, April 12, 2020. The ceremony took place at Áras an Uachtaráin and the GPO (General Post Office), the headquarters of those who led the 1916 Rising.

The President opened the commemoration by ringing the Peace Bell at Áras an Uachtaráin at midday. A prayer was read at the inner courtyard of the GPO by head chaplain to the Defence Forces, Fr Séamus Madigan, who also remembered those who had died due to COVID-19. The Proclamation was read by Captain Darren Reilly of the Defence Forces, outside the GPO in the middle of Dublin's O'Connell Street.

President Higgins laid a wreath among a group of sixteen birth trees that he and his wife, Sabina planted in honour of the leaders executed after the Easter Rising. A minute's silence was observed to commemorate those who died in the Rising as well as those who died as a result of the current pandemic.

The United Nations flag was flown on O'Connell Street as a symbolic gesture to show Ireland's solidarity with the UN and countries around the world fighting Covid-19.





# PRIME MINISTER WELCOMES APPOINTMENT OF NEW AUDITOR GENERAL

Effective June 8, 2020, Karen Hogan is Canada's new Auditor General

On May 13, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced the nomination of Karen Hogan as Canada's new Auditor General. The Auditor General is an independent Agent of Parliament, appointed under the Auditor General Act for a term of ten years. The appointment of the Auditor General is made by the Governor in Council after consultation with the leader of every recognized party in the House of Commons and group in the Senate, and after approval by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada was established in 1878 under the Auditor General Act. The Office audits federal government departments and agencies, most Crown corporations, and many other federal organizations, and reports publicly to Parliament on matters that the Auditor General believes should be brought to its attention.

Fully bilingual, Hogan was chosen as the nominee for this position through the government's open, transparent, and merit-based appointment process. She is the second woman of the 15 permanent Auditors General who have been appointed since 1867.



Hogan holds a bachelor's degree and graduate diploma in accounting from Concordia University in Montréal. With over twenty-five years of professional experience in accounting and auditing, in the public and private sectors, Hogan is a member of the Ordre des comptables professionnels agréés du Québec and the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario.

Hogan began her career in the private sector, working as an auditor at Montréal-based accounting firm Schlesinger Newman Goldman and then as a manager at Ernst & Young LLP offices in Thunder Bay and Ottawa. She joined the Office of the Auditor General of Canada in 2006, and has served as Assistant Auditor General since January 2019. During her time at the Office of the Auditor General, Hogan has helped shape organizational change and strategic direction. Her work has included leading the audit of the consolidated financial statements of the Government of Canada, and contributing to the delivery of a new report to help Parliamentarians and Canadians understand complex financial matters and the importance of financial audits for Canada. She also contributed to the development and delivery of a new talent management strategy for the Office. She supports standard setting in Canada as a member of the Public Sector Accounting Discussion Group.

*"With her accounting and auditing expertise, and decades of experience as a leader and team builder in the public and private sectors, Karen Hogan will be an excellent Auditor General. I trust that her focus will continue to be on promoting open, transparent, and accountable governance, for the benefit of all Canadians."*

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

We wish to thank the following who contributed articles and/or photos to this issue of NUA<sup>CH</sup>T:

|                |                |                |                  |                    |                     |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Christie Brown | Ken Quinn      | Kevin Callahan | Pat Short        | Ken Wilson         | Brian Marcil        |
| Sam Allison    | Jon Bradley    | Gregory Kelley | Peter Stockland  | Marion Mulvenna    | Andrea T. Bobkowicz |
| Donna Kelly    | Victoria Kelly | Laurie McKeown | Caroline Binette | Marie-Claire Dugas | Kathleen Duffin and |
| Sean Finn      | Leo Delaney    | Martina McLean | Kevin Wright     | Jordan Gerow       | Pamela McGovern     |
|                |                |                | Craig Nolan      |                    |                     |

# SWITCH TO ONLINE LEARNING AT CONCORDIA'S SCHOOL OF IRISH STUDIES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

By Marion Mulvenna, Irish Studies

For the first half of Concordia University's winter semester, all seemed to be progressing as usual including spring break and Saint Patrick's Society Ball, thought to be the first of the many anticipated annual Green Season activities for Montreal's Irish community. Our students were looking forward to marching in the St. Patrick's Parade this year. Meanwhile, during the winter, international news of a spreading virus was increasing. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Concordia University announced that it must close its doors physically on the campus but continue with off-site service due to the Covid-19 outbreak and spread.

Within one week, starting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the professors and administration implemented remote learning so that students could complete their semester. This monumental task was carried out amidst many challenges for all concerned. Fortunately, the switch to remote learning permitted the semester to be salvaged, allowing students to continue their academic path within their original timeline.

Currently, Irish Studies is offering an on-line eConcordia summer course, Celtic Christianity, filled at maximum capacity of 300 students.

For the School of Irish Studies day-to-day reality, it has been quite a challenge for faculty and staff to continue with our responsibilities in this context. Not being able to see and interact with our students in person has been the biggest and hardest change. We miss our students!

That being said, the School has been reaching out with emails and Facebook posts to touch base and keep



overall contact with our students. These have included support and ideas to keep busy while maintaining safety measures. These Irish themed suggestions include podcasts, cooking ideas, documentaries and movies, our book recommendations and links to virtual tours in Ireland.

The weekly e-bulletins to the Montreal Irish community and all who have signed up have been adapted to the current situation as events, activities and academic conferences have been postponed or cancelled. Some of the bulletins have included the above mentioned Irish themed suggestions. If you are not already on our list and wish to join our e-bulletin, please provide us your email address at [irishstudies@concordia.ca](mailto:irishstudies@concordia.ca). Also, let us know if you would like the back issues with these suggestions and we will be pleased to forward them to you.

Following the health guidelines from the Government of Quebec, Concordia University has now announced that courses in the fall semester will be delivered almost entirely online and that the vast majority of our faculty and staff will continue to work from home for the foreseeable future. However, the professors and staff in the School of Irish Studies, as with all the Concordia community, remain deeply committed to delivering the highest quality, most personalized education possible under the circumstances.

**Ní gá bhur lámha** (Wash your hands) and **Tugaigí aire daoibh féin** (Give care and attention to yourselves=Take good care) !!



# ADJUSTING TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER: STUDYING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Victoria Kelly, Double Major in Irish Studies and Biology

When the winter semester began in January, I purchased my first ever daily planner. In it, I'd marked not only every assignment I had to hand in for the semester, but every weekly Themed Tea Salon organized by the student coordinators of Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, and every event of Montreal's famous green season. There was a special asterisk next to the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, which, with the support of the School, I'd arranged to have students, faculty and staff of the School march in as a celebration of our tenth anniversary. Then, on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Concordia announced that it was closing its doors due to the growing uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, and with this closure came the loss of a large part of our sense of normalcy.

No lesson plan includes a "global pandemic plan B", and yet, the professors of the School of Irish Studies quickly rose to the challenge of remotely allowing students, not only to complete their semesters, but to do so without missing out on any content. We were offered lesson plans,

extra readings, and a constant means of communicating with our professors. In true superhero fashion, our professors, while also faced with the uncertainty of this pandemic, did their very best to ensure our success.

The administration of the School of Irish Studies was also quick to reach out to students, arming us with resources to complete our semester as well as some to distract ourselves when the gravity of things became heavy.

Students also rallied, keeping in touch daily and reaching out to each other to make sure no one was missing anything.

Nothing could ever replace the interactions that we have in the School of Irish Studies with each other, our professors, and our amazing staff, and although we were sadly deprived of these, the support that we were offered never wavered, and throughout these very uncertain times, I always felt as though my success and well-being were of the utmost importance.

---

## IRELAND-CANADA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION (ICUF) IRISH LANGUAGE SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

For several years over the summer, the School of Irish Studies has partnered with ICUF to send a number of Irish Studies students to Connemara to study the Irish language. Unfortunately, the summer school was cancelled this year due to Covid-19 but we still wanted to recognize the hard work of our students. Therefore, we have still nominally awarded these scholarships and we are delighted to share with you the names of this year's winners:

Alison Maclean (Gus O'Gorman Scholarship)

Chad Hartley (ICUF Summer Scholarship)

Alex Covelli (ICUF Summer Scholarship)

Miles Murphy (ICUF Summer Scholarship)

In lieu of going to Ireland, the students will have a chance to hone their Irish skills through an online course organized by ICUF and National University of Ireland, Galway.

COMHGHAIRDEAS LIBH!



# CANADA HAS AN EPIDEMIC PAST!

By Sam Allison & Jon Bradley

Up until now, popular culture has ignored the numerous destructive epidemics throughout Canada's past. These epidemics have included smallpox, cholera, typhus, malaria, and the missed-named Spanish Flu.

However, the huge media attention to COVID-19 is now gradually bringing the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918-1920 back into public attention. This specific pandemic waned and waxed world-wide for three years and, globally, it is estimated that between fifty and one hundred million people died during its run.

Among the millions of soldiers demobilized in 1918, hundreds of thousands returned home infected with influenza. While Canadians remember Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae's epic lines about the poppy blooming in "no man's land" in World War I, few realize that he was a front-line doctor who died of pneumonia, probably brought on by the Spanish Flu.

Approximately 50,000 to 75,000 Canadians died of this flu which led to the creation of the Federal Department of Health in 1919. Public health became a government responsibility indicating that pandemics change official medical policy after the event.

Military censorship in the warring countries blocked news of the epidemic so that neutral Spain's extensive media coverage of the outbreak led to it being falsely identified/labelled with the disease. Mislabelling is not uncommon. For example, President Trump, has labelled COVID-19 as "Chinese" while in earlier times, the English labelled syphilis the "French disease" while the French labelled it the "Italian disease". We tend to blame "foreigners" not nature for pandemics.

Smallpox migrated from Europe to New France in the 16th century and spread later to the First Nations as well as the Inuit in the Far North. The Jesuit priests introduced smallpox into the Huron-Wendat population which declined by approximately 60% soon after.

The virus reappeared again between 1755 and 1782. American troops besieging Quebec City were stricken with smallpox during the American Revolution, but the British-Canadian defenders had been inoculated, did not succumb to the infliction, and their non-depleted numbers were able to thwart American attacks and forced their retreat.

Vaccination, using cowpox against smallpox, was

developed by the Englishman Edward Jenner in 1796. This method was much more successful than variolation or inoculation that used smallpox itself. Yet, City of Montreal officials had to force vaccination on its population almost a hundred years after these preventive solutions had become well known and readily available.

The Smallpox Epidemic of the 1880s was spread by a Chicago train on the Intercontinental Railway. Montreal was particularly hard hit because so many in the population had resisted vaccination against that disease. From 1876 to 1881, over 2,500 Montrealers, mostly children, died of smallpox. The infected train carrying smallpox in 1886 continued to Boston where vaccination was common. In contrast, only six people contracted it there and only two died.

**DEATHS BY SMALLPOX IN THE CITY FROM 1876 TO 1881**  
(INCLUSIVE.)

|                               | Under 1 year | 5           | 10         | 15        | 20         | 30         | 40         | 50         | 60         | 70         | Total       |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>1876</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 134          | 319         | 67         | 15        | 15         | 15         | 5          | 2          | ...        | 1          | 568         |
| Other origin                  | 25           | 46          | 16         | 10        | 9          | 21         | 6          | 2          | ...        | ...        | 135         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>159</b>   | <b>365</b>  | <b>83</b>  | <b>25</b> | <b>24</b>  | <b>36</b>  | <b>11</b>  | <b>4</b>   | <b>...</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>703</b>  |
| <b>1877</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 78           | 247         | 44         | 13        | 17         | 29         | ...        | ...        | ...        | 3          | 431         |
| Other origin                  | 18           | 25          | 8          | ...       | 4          | 17         | ...        | ...        | ...        | 4          | 75          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>96</b>    | <b>272</b>  | <b>52</b>  | <b>13</b> | <b>21</b>  | <b>46</b>  | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>7</b>   | <b>506</b>  |
| <b>1878</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 134          | 371         | 90         | 9         | 14         | 18         | 2          | ...        | ...        | 1          | 639         |
| Other origin                  | 16           | 32          | 10         | 2         | 7          | 17         | 3          | ...        | ...        | ...        | 89          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>150</b>   | <b>403</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>21</b>  | <b>35</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>728</b>  |
| <b>1879</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 84           | 240         | 67         | 11        | 13         | 5          | 2          | ...        | ...        | ...        | 417         |
| Other origin                  | 7            | 13          | 4          | 3         | 8          | 13         | 3          | 3          | 1          | ...        | 55          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>91</b>    | <b>253</b>  | <b>71</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>21</b>  | <b>18</b>  | <b>5</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>...</b> | <b>472</b>  |
| <b>1880</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 21           | 58          | 22         | 3         | 4          | 3          | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | 111         |
| Other origin                  | 3            | 9           | ...        | 1         | 4          | 8          | 4          | ...        | ...        | ...        | 29          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>24</b>    | <b>67</b>   | <b>22</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>8</b>   | <b>11</b>  | <b>4</b>   | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>140</b>  |
| <b>1881</b>                   |              |             |            |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |             |
| French Canadians              | 1            | 2           | ...        | 1         | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | 4           |
| Other origin                  | ...          | ...         | ...        | 1         | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | ...        | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>1</b>     | <b>2</b>    | <b>...</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>...</b> | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>Total French Canadians</b> | <b>451</b>   | <b>1235</b> | <b>280</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>63</b>  | <b>70</b>  | <b>9</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>4</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>2166</b> |
| <b>Total other origin</b>     | <b>520</b>   | <b>1360</b> | <b>316</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>95</b>  | <b>146</b> | <b>27</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>9</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>383</b>  |
| <b>Grand Total</b>            | <b>521</b>   | <b>1367</b> | <b>316</b> | <b>69</b> | <b>95</b>  | <b>146</b> | <b>27</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>9</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>2554</b> |

Montreal was sealed off into districts and people were vaccinated - literally at gunpoint. Ethical issues involving individual rights always arise during these epidemics. Over 5,000 people died in 1886 but due to vaccination, far fewer English Canadians died than French Canadians. Vaccination was associated with the "English" and roundly condemned by the Roman Catholic Church and

## CANADA HAS AN EPIDEMIC PAST! CONT.

Francophone political classes. Consequently, many 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans looked down on the Canadian health situation in much the same way Canadians tend now to look down on the American health system.

An 1886 New York Times article reads: "Last evening a disgraceful anti-vaccination riot broke out among the French-Canadian population. The first indication of trouble was noted in the afternoon when the city council cut down the appropriation for vaccination from \$5,000 to \$2,000, and three French-Canadian aldermen announced that the city was on the eve of a riot. This proved only too true, for about 7 o'clock a howling mob surrounded the East End branch of the health office..."

The Great Cholera Epidemic of the 1830s, which killed approximately one-third of the inhabitants of Quebec City, created unrest that fundamentally influenced the 1837-1838 rebellions. Ships, packed with immigrants plying the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes, spread the disease and killed thousands of Canadians. In response, a Quarantine Station upriver from Quebec at Grosse Île was established.

In the late 1840s, victims of the Irish Famine brought typhus ("ship fever"), and thousands died at Grosse Île. However, inspection procedures for the immigrants probably increased deaths. Ships were kept offshore for as long as two weeks thereby nurturing more disease. To make matters worse, doctors examined migrants' mouths using the same tongue depressors.

Approximately 8-12% of Irish migrants died on the Atlantic crossings; but 10-15% died in Canada! Immigrants were towed in open barges by steamboats in the searing heat during one of the hottest summers on record. There are numerous moving memorials to these victims right down the St. Lawrence River and across Lake Ontario into the United States.

Besides generating fear at the time and misinterpretation afterwards, outbreaks generate great admiration for doctors, nurses, and volunteers. Yet, Canadian history ignores the fine people who died saving others. How many streets commemorate heroes involving pandemics of the past? Where are the public monuments to Canadians such as Norman Bethune for facilitating mobile blood transfusions during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) or Frederick Banting and Charles Best (1921) for "discovering" insulin? A "typical" Canadian, Banting was furious that Best did not share in the 1923 Nobel Prize for Medicine and, in an incredible act of generosity,

gave the patent for the manufacture of insulin freely to the World such that all might benefit.

Further, British physician John Snow, who used statistics to track down the specific water well in 1854 that infected London with cholera, thus proving that infected water spread cholera, is forgotten in Canada. Yet, statistics and statisticians are central to fighting outbreaks. Even Scottish physician Alexander Fleming and his accidental discovery of "juice" (named penicillin), saving millions every day, is ignored.

Popular culture and school history textbooks overlook epidemics and the medical pioneers of the past; yet society wonders in awe as young people conspicuously ignore danger in the present pandemic.

A cartoon from Montreal's 1886 smallpox epidemic illustrates that many moral dilemmas arise. Does the anxious mother (an early anti-vaxer?) hold to her misgivings about medical procedures or does she comply with official rules? How does society balance individual versus collective rights? Should we have mass health tests for travelers as well as in-place citizens? Is "war" an appropriate linguistic metaphor for describing and discussing a pandemic?



U.S. Senator Hiram Warren Johnson is purported to have stated: "The first casualty when war comes is truth." In times of pandemics, while there will be many fables, falsehoods and outright deceptions, the public must receive the unvarnished truth in a timely manner. Democratically, all individual decisions must be based on accurate data equally available.

It is time to bring the doctors, nurses, and medical researchers of the Canadian and global past into present day discourse to foster a more lasting and genuine appreciation for those tackling COVID-19 today.



# St. Patrick's Society of Montreal

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY OF MONTREAL REACTS TO THE NAMING OF THE REM STATION LOCATED IN HISTORIC GRIFFINTOWN.***

**Montreal, June 23, 2020** – The St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, along with other members of the Irish Community, learned at noon on Monday that the name of the REM station in historic Griffintown will be shared with former Premier Bernard Landry. The Mayor of Montreal, Mme. Valerie Plante, informed the representatives of the Irish Community of this decision via a virtual meeting which was held three hours before the formal announcement was made at a Press Conference. Mayor Plante informed the Irish community members that the REM station located in the Peel Basin of Montreal, will be a hyphenated name "*Griffintown – Bernard Landry*". She made this announcement despite knowledge of opposition to this proposal from within the Irish community. At the Press Conference, Mme Plante made a formal joint announcement with Chantal Renaud, widow of Mr. Landry, without the attendance of any representatives from the Irish Community.

The news is not a complete surprise, given that the Mayor had indicated that this would be her preference as early as November 2019, which sparked debate and controversy. At a meeting with the community in January, she indicated that there would be continued discussion regarding the naming of the REM Station and that ultimately, the decision was up to the REM. Given the pandemic that hit our city a few weeks later, there have been no real opportunities to further explore the important history of the area with the Mayor. The Mayor indicated that the city decided to move forward with the hyphenated REM name following a discussion with the Landry family.

St. Patrick's Society President Christie Brown noted that "The hyphenated REM name does not fully recognize the historical and contemporary importance of the area to the Montreal Irish Community, nor does it fully provide the tribute desired by the City's Administration to the former Premier. By combining both names, neither the Irish community nor Bernard Landry receive appropriate recognition in their own right, and may lead to unnecessary controversy." Brown pointed out that "any other station could have been chosen to recognize the Former Premier's accomplishments." She went on to say that "St. Patrick's Society gives credit to Mr. Landry for his contributions to the recent development of Montreal, and indeed the province; however, we do not feel this decision was the appropriate one. All other REM station names are place-based and this should not be an exception."

Though President Brown said we are disappointed with today's decision, she said the Irish community will continue to collaborate with the City's Administration to ensure that the enormous contribution of the Irish to the development of Montreal over more than two centuries is known and recognized. There are a number of important issues which remain to be addressed, such as the Montreal Irish Monument Park, as well as space for the Gaelic Athletics Association's sporting activities. We also will continue to support the numerous Irish traditions in Montreal, which ultimately allow St. Patrick's Society, and our Sister Societies, through their Cultural, Educational, and Charitable endeavours, to support the larger Montreal community.

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# MONTREAL RUGBY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION DURING COVID-19

By Rugby Soupe

Rugby Soupe is a not-for-profit organization born from the Montreal rugby community during the Covid-19 pandemic which focuses on minimizing food insecurity for the city's homeless population.

I do not know exactly how "Rugby Soupe" started. I believe my friend James Acker saw on CBC that volunteers were needed to make food and, being who he is, said to himself: "we need to find a way to help." As a person of action, James decided that he had to do something – so he started making soup. He went out, bought the ingredients, and then he started cooking. Before long, a veritable army of volunteers, donors, chefs, drivers and well-wishers – all in one way or another associated with the rugby community in Montreal – were lending their support.

According to James Acker, the founder of Rugby Soupe: "I haven't asked a single person for help, yet we're now 30+ people involved in the effort (...) more than the food, we've given a boost to the cooks and front line workers from these organizations; 15\$ produces 50 servings; we're making an impact on food insecurity, and are perhaps seeing a sharing economy of the future where food insecurity simply doesn't exist (...) There are at least 8 local rugby clubs now implicated [in Rugby Soupe] directly: Town of Mount Royal RFC, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue Rugby Club, Parc Olympique Rugby Club, Rugby Club de

Montreal, Westmount Rugby Club, Montreal Wanderers Rugby Club, Beaconsfield RFC and the Montreal Irish Rugby Football Club."

As of May 8<sup>th</sup>, Rugby Soupe has cooked and delivered over 6,000 meals and is averaging over 150 meals per day. Simply put, this is an amazing accomplishment and we salute each volunteer involved in this program. Like in any successful organization, it is impossible to mention everybody that is involved, but the following people from the Montreal rugby community deserve special recognition for all that they have put into this initiative: Dave Keane, Etienne Labrie, Kenny Macintyre, Max Mousset, Sommer Christie, Martin Silverstone, John Lavery, Alain Ouellette, Dion Varvarikos and Tom Smith.

Rugby Soupe's main benefactor is Resilience Montreal. According to their website (<http://www.nwsm.info/resilience-montreal>), Resilience Montreal is a "collaboration between the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal and Nazareth Community. It is a low-barrier service open to everyone, providing food and shelter as well as mental health and medical support services and access to a multitude of other resources."

To learn more about Rugby Soupe, or to get involved or make a donation, please visit: <https://www.rugbysoupe.com/>



# I DIDN'T SEE IT COMING QUITE AS FIERCELY AS IT CAME

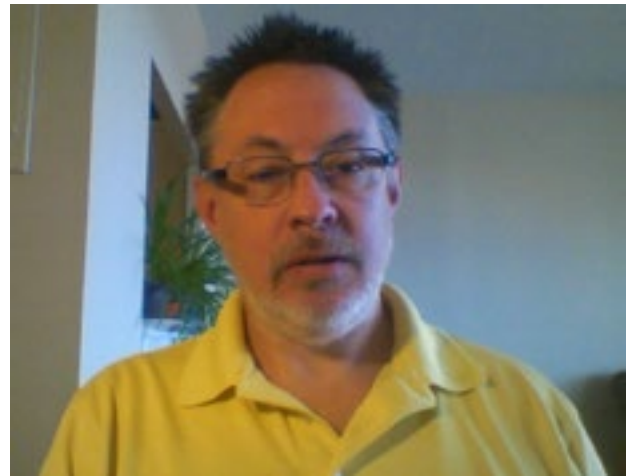
By Ken Quinn

March was beginning with the usual activities. The Annual Charity Ball at Le Windsor was a success. Focus was turned toward final preparations for the Annual Luncheon. On March 8<sup>th</sup> several dozen of my friends and I turned up at McKibbin's West Island to remember Beverly Murphy, taken from us one year ago.

Within the United Irish Societies of Montreal, discussions were beginning regarding the possibility that the longest consecutively held parade in North America might not happen. Outwardly the message was that the parade would not be stopped. Inwardly, we had a feeling that the beast we call COVID-19 was a formidable foe. We weren't wrong in that assessment. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the hammer came down on the community when the provincial government banned large indoor gatherings, affecting the Luncheon in the short term. It was also clear at that time that the iconic parade would be affected. There are many other examples about how this virus has affected organizations in the community, some of which we can read about elsewhere in this edition. It has also affected many individuals, myself included.

I count myself as one of the fortunate ones. Able to work remotely, my home is now my office and my office is now my home since mid March and for the foreseeable future. I have tried as much as possible to mirror my normal work conditions. Admittedly wearing pants is not a regular occurrence nor is wearing shoes. My new normal is to wear track pants or shorts and a t-shirt during my work day, wearing a golf shirt if I know I have a meeting planned and wearing footwear the handful of times I venture out weekly, usually for groceries.

Speaking of meetings, when the COVID-19 avalanche was visible my employer invested in the necessary infrastructure to permit its worldwide workforce to work from home. Now, meetings take place using Microsoft Teams. Most meetings simply use the audio functionality but from time to time we enable video. It's always nice to see the faces of colleagues I have



seen daily in the flesh for a number of decades now.

Work in the community continues. St. Patrick's Society and the United Irish Societies, and no doubt numerous others, conduct their business via ZOOM meetings. If the House of Commons and City Council can do it, why can't we? There is definitely a learning curve for the technology as well as for conducting effective meetings virtually. Overall, I enjoy these meetings. I will be glad when it is safe to begin meeting in person again, though.

I am a recent subscriber to Netflix. There are so many movies and shows, it is difficult to pick. A few that get my "thumbs up" include Derry Girls, The Irishman (though a tad long), Unorthodox, and the ESPN series on Michael Jordan and the 1998 NBA Chicago Bulls titled The Last Dance.

As someone who lives alone and who works from home, this COVID confinement is a very lonely journey. I am grateful to my friends and family who check in with me or who I check in with. Occasional social ZOOM meetings also help make this nightmare seem not so bad. My heart goes out to the thousands of Quebecers affected in one way or another by COVID-19. I am extremely thankful that confinement is the only way I have been impacted and know that some day soon this will all be over and relegated to the history books.

---

## IRISH DANCING SCENE CONT. FROM PAGE 18

colour had to be incorporated in their outfit. Each dancer was timed for how long they danced throughout the 60-minute Dance-A-Thon. We did two different dances: The Light Jig and the Reel (each 30 minutes). While the students were encouraged to dance the whole time, they were also allowed to take water breaks. The team with the highest average dance time would win. All funds raised were pooled together then distributed according to the following percentages: the winning team will have 50% of the funds donated to their charity;

the other two teams will have 25% of the funds raised donated to their charities. In total, we had 44 dancers participate. Our fundraising goal was \$400 but the dancers raised more than ten times that goal: \$4050! Team Yellow was the winning team with an average dancing time of 57 minutes and 22 seconds. This means that we will be donating \$2000 to the Family Resource Centre, \$1000 to the Montreal Children's Hospital, and \$1000 to the Le Pont Bridging Food Bank in Hudson.

SPS member, Craig Nolan, the mailman hopes everyone is staying safe. He says "with everyone staying home, the volumes are massive!!!!"



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