

The Irish Echo

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The USA's most widely read Irish-American newspaper

Celebrating 80 years 1928-2008



Powers chronicles life of martyred diplomat – See Page 22

Murphy gets her just desserts – Page 12



Peakes Quay in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

O'Canada

FOR PEOPLE OF IRISH HERITAGE, the Canadian national anthem could justifiably be titled "O'Canada." Our friendly neighbors to the north boast deep Irish roots, with 740,000 people of Irish descent living in the eastern part of the country: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and inland to Quebec City.

Since arriving in the early part of the 19th century, the Irish, along with the country's other major ethnic groups — French, English, Scottish and Native American — have helped to define what it means to be Canadian. While the Irish and Scottish communities in Canada have largely kept their unique heritage alive, they have joined their similar Gaelic traditions to create a Celtic style of music and dancing that is distinctly Canadian.

The best time for visitors to enjoy Canada's Irish-Scottish flair is in the summer, when festivals, concerts and heritage activities attract visitors from across the world. This year, top Canadian performers like fiddler Natalie MacMaster, and bands Great Big Sea and Leahy will perform, representing a unique musical fusion of Irish, Scottish, American, Canadian folk and even jazz.

For details on Canada's Irish offerings, turn to Page 20.

An epoch ends

Saint's miners church to close in Pa.

By Peter McDermott
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A church that was built by Irish miners in the 1850s at the direction of John Neumann, the first U.S. bishop to be made a saint, is one of 32 that will close this weekend in the Allentown diocese in Pennsylvania.

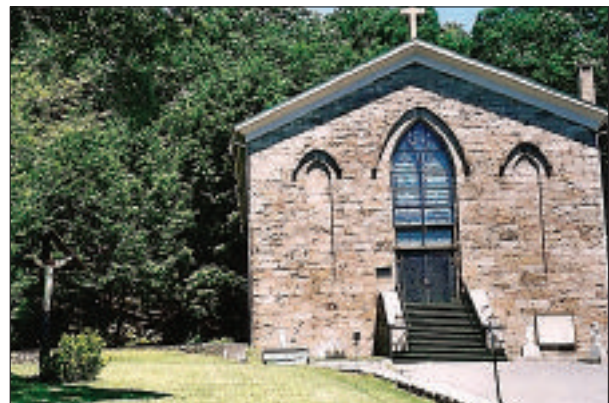
Mass will be said for the last time at St. Kieran's, the parish church of Heckscherville in Schuylkill County, at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday evening.

The surrounding area, known locally as "Irish Valley," is steeped in the history of anthracite coalmining and the railroads. After the Famine, thousands of Irish immigrants settled there, many of them working in the harsh conditions that produced the Molly Maguires episode two decades later.

"We knew it was coming," said parishioner Catherine Clifford. "But people are very upset and angry. The process was very secretive."

Locals want the church to be preserved as a shrine to a canonized saint and to the immigrants who built and paid for the church.

"We filed an appeal with the diocese of Allentown," said Clifford, who traces her family back to ancestors, Callaghans and



Locals say that at least 11 members of the Molly Maguires are buried in the churchyard of St. Kieran's.

Hegarty, who came to Irish Valley in 1850.

"If he [Bishop Edward Cullen] denies the appeal, then we can go to Rome," she said.

So far, there has been no formalized campaign other than collecting signatures after Saturday evening Mass. "But we are setting up a meeting," Clifford said.

Parishioners fear the "reversionary" clause in the deeds, which states that if the building is used for any purpose other than as a Catholic Church it goes go back to the mine company. Locals believe that the company might knock down the church and its ancillary build-

ings — and that it would have little interest in maintaining a churchyard that contains at least 11 members of the Molly Maguires.

In a letter published in this week's Irish Echo (page 13) parishioner Joe Anthony writes: "By the orders of Bishop Neumann, Father Malone, pastor of St. Vincent's parish in Minersville, was to visit all the families in Heckscherville, which was a distance of seven miles from Minersville. His purpose was to solicit from the people to erect a new church in the valley. All families were asked to pledge \$10.00.

See MINERS, Page 4



The Greening of Canada

By Michael P. Quinlin
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It turns out "O Canada" is more than a great national anthem — it also signifies the deep Irish roots running through eastern part of the country.

All across the Canadian Maritimes — New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and inland to Quebec City — there is a robust, year-round Irish heritage that, along with French, English, Scottish and Native American lineage, helps define Canada.

The best time for visitors to enjoy Canada's ethnic flair is in the summer, when festivals, concerts and heritage activities attract visitors from across the world (See Sidebar).

Neil Le Blanc, Consul General of Canada to New England, said that Irish immigrants began arriving in eastern Canada in the early 1800s, and that today, "over 740,000 people of Irish descent live in Eastern Canada."

While the Irish and Scottish communities in Canada have largely kept their unique heritage alive, they have joined their similar Gaelic traditions to create a Celtic style of music and dancing that is distinctly Canadian.

Top Canadian performers like fiddler Natalie MacMaster, and bands Great Big Sea and Leahy perform around the world, representing a unique musical fusion of Irish, Scottish, American, Canadian folk and even jazz.

They're all playing in Canada this summer, along with hundreds of excellent musicians and dancers who exemplify regional styles and traditions.

On a trip to the Celtic Colours Festival in Nova Scotia, Irish flute player and music columnist Susan Lindsay was swayed by the quality of music, and by the people she met.

"Someone in Ireland said to me, 'Cape Breton is everything that people wish that Ireland were.' So true! We visited Cape Breton after a two-week trip to Ireland, and so had a chance to make an immediate comparison. We were completely taken with how welcoming and friendly the people were, everywhere we went," she said. "We never wanted to come home."

"As for the music," Lindsay continued, "it was absolutely inspiring."

Irish step dance champion Shawn Silver of Newfoundland exudes that welcoming demeanor characteristic of so many Irish-Canadians.

"We want Americans to think of Newfoundland as a destination for traditional Irish dance, music, art and cultural enthusiasts," he said.

Silver will have a chance to do just that as he heads up "Magic of Ireland," a music and dance troupe with a Canadian cast and production team. The show is touring North America this fall.

"Magic of Ireland" celebrates "what was going on in the parlors of rural Ireland, minus the short skirts and world champion dancers, for hundreds of years," he said. "It is exactly what an Irish dance show is meant to be — authentic, live and a sheer delight."

In addition to music and dance, there's a Gaelic language revival taking place in Canada too. Nova Scotia has its own Office of Gaelic Affairs, headed by Lewis MacKinnon.

He cites an abundance of "Irish language, dance and song particularly accessible in the Halifax area, and numerous Scottish/Nova Scotia Gaelic language learning opportunities "throughout Nova Scotia and



Irish Festivals/Concerts in Canada in summer and

July 17-20
25th annual
Miramichi Irish Festival
Miramichi, New Brunswick

Long known for its legendary salmon fishing and unspoiled natural beauty, this beautiful city on the shores of the Miramichi River is host to one of the best Irish festivals in North America.

This year's festival, celebrating a quarter of a century, runs from July 17-20 and features a terrific line-up of great talent, including the Comerboys from New Brunswick and other Canadian bands. Special guest is fiddle player and teacher Roisin McGrory from Inishowen, County Donegal.
CanadasIrishFest.com,
Tourismnewbrunswick.ca

August 1-3
Tignish Irish Folk Festival
Tignish, Prince Edward Island

Located on the northern tip of Prince Edward Island, about 90 miles from Charlottetown, Tignish is a small fishing village with strong Irish and Acadian heritage. The 8th annual Irish Festival reflects an Irish presence that date back to 1811, when two Irish families joined eight French families who arrived in 1799, to form the community.

The festival kicks off with an Irish

Ceilidh night at the Tignish Fire Hall, followed on Saturday night at the Tignish Legion Hall featuring Jon Matthews and the Electric Leprechauns. The Sunday outdoor concert on Sunday features the great Irish-born singer Jimmy Sweeney, formerly of Barley Bree, along with fiddle star Shannon Quinn from Halifax, and PEI's champion dancer Cameron Francis.
TignishIrishFolkFestival.com/
Gentleisland.com/celtic

August 9
Natalie MacMaster in Concert
Agora Du Vieux Port, Quebec City, Quebec

One of Cape Breton's most acclaimed fiddlers, Natalie MacMaster (pictured) has become one of Canada's major stars on the international stage. She plays a concert in Quebec City as the city celebrates its 400th anniversary this year. Quebecregion.com/
Nataliemacmaster.com/



August 16-17
Festival of Friends
Logy Bay Cove, Middle Cove, Outer

Cove, Newfoundland
Located on the eastern side of the island near the city of St. John's, this area was settled by Irish immigrants from Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and Cork. Shawn Silver and iDance perform at this annual gathering of islanders who want to preserve their unique Irish-Newfoundland heritage. Silver is also heading up a new Canadian Irish dance troupe, the Magic of Ireland, that goes on tour this fall.
idance.ca

August 29-31
Quebec City Celtic Festival

In the heart of one of the world's most beautiful French cities is a vibrant Irish community that dates back to the 1840s, when Irish immigrants fleeing the famine landed at Grosse Isle and were taken in by French families, who raised them as their own. That affection between the two communities continues today. Together with the city's proud Scottish community, they came together to create the Celtic Festival, which drew over 7,000 people in 2007.
Festivalceltique.morin.org/en/home.php, Quebecregion.com/

September 21
Leahy in Concert
Confederation Center for the Arts,

Cape Breton."

For visitors interested in Irish heritage, there are plenty of landmarks that signify the Irish presence dating back to the Irish Famine decade of the 1840s. Peter Murphy, project executive with the New Brunswick Department of Tourism and Parks, says

the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in St. John's is a testament to the Irish presence here, with a memorial window to Saints Patrick, Bridget and Columba, along with Celtic crosses in Saint Mary's Cemetery and in St. Patrick's Square.

"The Diocesan Archives in Saint John has a fantastic

Prince Edward Island

Another Emerald Isle

By Michael P. Quinlin
letters@irishecho.com

When Liam Dolan from Ballinasloe, Galway, first visited Prince Edward Island, it was so much like Ireland that he decided to stay. That was some 30 years ago.

"I find the people are extremely helpful and make you feel welcome," he said about the islanders. "I was never once homesick."

How Irish is PEI? Town names include Kildare, Shamrock and Coleman. The Canadian Census reported that 29% of the island claimed Irish ancestry.

And don't forget PEI's very own Potato Museum, located in the town of O'Leary. It is billed as the only museum of its kind in the world, an affectionate tribute to the spud, the island's staple crop, which has been harvested by generations of Irish. PEI is the world's largest exporter of frozen French fries.

PEI was nearly named New Ireland back in the 18th century, notes Professor Brendan O'Grady, a local scholar and expert on the island's Irish heritage. The British-run council quickly squelched that idea.

O'Grady writes that between the 1760s and 1850s 10,000 Irish immigrants settled in PEI, including a large contingent from County Monaghan. That would account for the island's strongly Irish cultural traditions, such as the nightly ceilis which take place all summer long in town halls, concert halls and outdoor venues across the island.

In 2001, the local Benevolent Irish Society, established in 1825, unveiled a beautiful Irish Memorial, overlooking the harbor of Charlottetown, the island's main city, in tribute PEI's deep Irish roots.

Dolan himself is now one of Charlottetown's most notable citizens. He owns the Claddagh Oyster House, which just celebrated its 25th anniversary. It features the island's famous shellfish and local seafood. And he runs the Olde Dublin Pub, which has live music every night in the summer.

Dolan also oversees the world-famous PEI International Shellfish Festival, which he founded 13 years ago to celebrate the exquisite varieties of oysters, mussels and clams found off the PEI waters. Today, the event, which will take place the weekend of September 19-21, draws over 12,000 visitors, and was named one of North America's Top 100 events by the American Bus Association.

The festival attracts gourmet chefs, fishermen, fish farmers and seafood lovers. There are competitions for the best potato seafood chowder and a mussel gathering competition. But the big attraction is the World Invitational Oyster Shucking Championship, which features the best

PEI Essentials

Prince Edward Island Tourism

For tourism literature, maps, events, hotels, transportation. 1-800 463-4PEI / GentleIsland.com/coleen

Charlottetown Tourism

Walkandseacharlottetown.com

PEI International Shellfish Festival, Charlottetown Waterfront PEIshellfish.com

PEI Potato Museum, O'Leary, PEI PEIpotatomuseum.com

Claddagh Oyster House, Claddaghhoysterhouse.com

Olde Dublin Pub, Oldedublinpub.com

oyster shuckers in North America.

Last year, the winner was William "Chopper" Young from the Wellfleet Oyster Company in Cape Cod, who's coming back to defend his title.

For theater lovers, a local production of

Stones in his Pockets, by Belfast playwright Marie Jones, will run at the Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, July 15-August 29.

On September 21, Leahy, Canada's Celtic-infused family of musicians will be performing at the Centre of the Arts.

Until recently, a ferry boat was the only way to reach PEI by car. Then in 1997, officials built the magnificent eight-mile Confederation Bridge connecting PEI to New Brunswick, making it possible to drive right to the island.

Last summer, Delta Airlines opened a route from Boston's Logan Airport to Charlottetown Airport, giving New Englanders easy access to PEI. Doug Newsome, CEO of the Charlottetown Airport Authority, said the Boston-Charlottetown route is back again this summer, and there's a new route from New York's JFK International to Charlottetown as well. Both the Boston and New York flights run through September 7, 2008.



Place Royale Luc-Anoine



Shawn Silver



Great Big Sea

fall 2008

Charlottetown, PEI

Raised on a farm in Ontario, the eight brothers and sisters of the Leahy family have become one of Canada's most compelling bands. They mix folk, rock, jazz, and Celtic influences to create a unique sound.

October 10-18 Celtic Colours International Festival

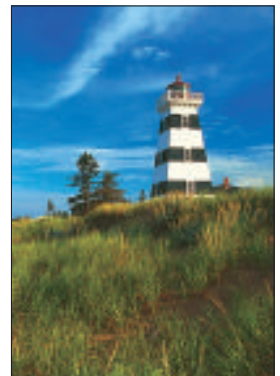
Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia
Each fall an international cast of musicians, dancers, Gaelic speakers and cultural experts from the Celtic nations converge on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia for one of the world's premier festivals.

It's a massive celebration of traditional culture that draws primarily upon Scottish music but also has generous room for music traditions from Ireland, Wales, England, Brittany, Spain, Denmark and Germany as well as from across the United States and Canada. celtic-colours.com/core.php novascotia.com

Photo, opposite page:
The lighthouse at Louisbourg.



Above left: PEI is famous for its seafood and shellfish. **Above right:** West Point Lighthouse on PEI was constructed in 1875. **Below:** Peakes Quay in Charlotteville, PEI.



collection of genealogical resources" Murphy said. "The very able archivist is Mary Kilfoil McDevitt."

Canada's most noteworthy Celtic Cross is the 50 foot Celtic Cross at Grosse Isle, outside of Quebec City. Irish historian Marianna O'Gallagher of Quebec says the cross was erected in 1909 by the Ancient Order of

Hibernians, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Irish famine, when thousands of Irish immigrants sailed up the St. Lawrence River. Grosse Isle was the quarantine station, and thousands of Irish are buried there.

O'Gallagher said that the centenary of the Celtic

Cross takes place in August 2009, and she expects Americans, Canadians and Irish people to participate in official ceremonies taking place at Grosse Isle.

For more details on visiting Canada this summer, visit irishmassachusetts.com/special_features_canada.php