



Tucson-Roscommon
Sister Cities



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COWBOY CRAIC IN IRELAND

- CATHERINE LILBIT DEVINE

“Cowboys, HERE, In Ireland! I don’t believe it!” those few words and the young twenty something Irishman who spoke them created a lasting memory. A quiet walk back to the Gerard Manley Hopkins Institute, after a delicious lunch, turned into a reenactment of a “B” western gunfight, as two of four Whispers of the West members, Jeff Streeby and Catherine Lilbit Devine, walked blithely into and through an ambush. The young man, suddenly realizing that there were four Cowboys in Ireland and not two, exclaimed “I’m out of bullets” and blew on his smoking fingers. Reacting to the shouts from the two Whispers of the West members, Debra Coppinger Hill and G. Casey Allen, bringing up the rear, the young man gamely tried to thwart their imaginary bullets by heaving a sneaker grenade their way. A child’s game of Cowboys & Outlaws played out in the quiet streets of Monasterevin, Co. Kildare.

So, what were four Cowboys doing in Ireland? The four of us were bringing the music back to its beginnings, as well as sharing our Poetry & stories. Many of the songs we know as Cowboy songs today are in fact Irish ballads & songs which were brought over during the Irish migration in the 1800’s. As the Irish moved westward, many turned to the life of a Cowboy. Their sea shanties & traditional ballads came with them and were reworked to reflect their new surroundings. Thus, *Bard of Armagh*, which in itself was taken from an English ballad, *The Unfortunate Rake*, became the much heard Cowboy’s Lament (Streets of Laredo), as well as the *St James Infirmary Blues* and this is just one of many that we brought back full circle.

From Joe Waddie’s on the beautiful Inishmor to the pub in St. Mullins fifteen

nights later, we shared our music & poetry and learned just how beloved our American West is all over Ireland. In the delightful town of Doolin, our guitarist, G. Casey Allen, was invited up on stage to sing with a fine Irishman, Frankie Lane, at the Magnetic Music Café. Casey delighted the audience with *Ghost Chickens*, a parody of *Ghost Riders in the Sky*. In Ennis, we spent a wonderful few evenings with the fine folks who run a Bed and Breakfast in the 300 year old Newpark House. In Roscommon, I renewed acquaintances with Eammon & Mary at their warm and lovely Gleeson Town Home. Roscommon, our Sister City, is a treat for anyone who travels there. From Roscommon Castle to Strokestown, a short drive away, the history and the townsfolk’s reverence for it will leave you feeling awestruck, as well as inspired.

So, how did we come to be on that quiet street in Monasterevin? We were invited to come and teach a workshop during the annual Gerard Manley Hopkins Institute’s Summer Session. The week long session celebrates the life and the writings of Hopkins. The attendees hail from as far away as Korea, Macedonia, Greece, Germany, France and North America. Hopkins’ unique style of writing was never fully appreciated while he was alive. Throughout the week, we were given the chance to explore his works, hear them brought to life by Richard Austin and see them come to life in a photography exhibit showcasing the works of Nikola Duretic of Croatia. Our workshop, which introduces our students to the history and culture of the American West through poetry, song and story, was attended by 37 students from both Maynooth College and Washburn University (Topeka, Kansas).

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THAT'S A WRAP!

-TESHA NAGEL

On December 21st 2005, Tucson-Roscommon Sister Cities wrapped up the Holiday Tamale fundraiser, which supports an upcoming Culture and Heritage event that is planned to take place in Roscommon Co. Ireland in early November 2006.

During the months of November and December 2005, the Tucson-Roscommon



COUNTY ROSCOMMON: HOME OF THE CONNAUGHT KINGS

-LINNEA CAPRONI

Tucson's sister city of Co. Roscommon in Ireland lies in the west-central region of the Republic of Ireland, in the region of Connaught. Roscommon County is famous as the home of the famed O'Connor clan. This clan was one of the most powerful in Ireland, issuing 11 High kings of Ireland and 24 Kings of Connaught. In the 1700s, one clan member, Hugh O'Connor, joined the Spanish army in the New World and was instrumental in establishing the presidio at Tucson.

In Co. Roscommon, ghostly vestiges of the mighty O'Conors can be seen in the ruins of Ballintober Castle (Baile and Tobair), the O'Connor clan seat built in 1300. The walls of this impressive fortification were 22 ft high and about 1000 ft in length, with an interior living space of 1-1/2 acres. Ballintober Castle was confiscated by the Cromwellians circa 1652, then restored to and occupied by O'Conors until the 19th century. Today the castle's skeletal remains dominate the town of the same name.

A more vital example of the powerful O'Conors can be seen at Clonalis House near Castlerea (Caisleán Riabhach). Here is the clan's ancestral home, occupied since 1700. The significant site is marked by an Italianate 45-room mansion built in 1878. Visitors to the area can tour the mansion and see the rooms that house an incredible collection of archival material dated as early as the 5th century BC. Also of interest are the coronation stone of the Connaught Kings, the harp of Ireland's last bard (Turlough O'Carolan), and antiques representing centuries of French and British style.

Sister Cities Association took and filled orders for several varieties of tamales that were graciously supplied by the El Charro Restaurants of Tucson.

TRSC was able to surpass their lofty goal of selling 1200 tamales, that's 100 dozen, during the holiday season. With the support of the Tucson community, El Charro Restaurants and Tucson-Roscommon members a total of 1344 tamales were sold.

SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL: 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN D.C.

-LINNEA CAPRONI

In July 2006, more than a thousand sister city activists from throughout the world will converge on Washington, D.C. to mark the 50th anniversary of Sister Cities International and President Eisenhower's 1956 White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy. Attendees will be part of a global effort to tell the story of Sister Cities International—about its unique role in the history of citizen diplomacy by promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation - one individual, one community at a time.

The celebratory conference is designed to bring the citizen diplomacy message of peace to Capitol Hill and to honor the notable contributions of sister city volunteers and local government leaders over the last 50 years. Program events include the Best Practices Showcase, updates on the Islamic Peace and Friendship Initiative, a Presidential Luncheon with keynote speaker President George W. Bush, Embassy Row Cultural Celebrations, the Sister Cities International gala at the National Building Museum (home to several presidential inaugural balls) and much more.

TRSC will be participating in the 50th SCI conference in Washington, D.C. In addition, TRSC will be hosting a mayors' luncheon in Tucson at the historic Manning House, March 17. The theme of the luncheon will be the 50th anniversary of Sister Cities International and the mayors of both Tucson and Co. Roscommon will be in attendance.

For more information on the 50th anniversary SCI conference, visit www.sister-cities.org.



COWBOY CRAIC...

Continued from Front Page

As the week came to a close, it felt as if we were leaving family and indeed we were, as Desmond Eagan and his wife, Viv, and the rest of the committee had quickly become a part of us in those brief six days. The music and laughter that we shared with them carries us through our days now that we are back in the states. We are already focusing on July 2006 and our return to the Institute to teach again. In addition, we have just received word that they would like Debra, a registered Cherokee tribal member, to exhibit her beadwork during the session. Now the task at hand is to find funding for the trip and the exhibit's opening night reception.

Cowboys, HERE, in Ireland, You better believe it, my good man. Where else would we be? Each one of us in the Whispers group has ties to Ireland. They may be only a distant stirring of blood long since mixed or a stronger pulsing of one who's Grandparents delighted them with the stories of the multi-faceted green hills of home, but the ties are strong. I cannot travel to Ireland without touching the shore of Inishmor. What is it that connects me to that island over all the others? Perhaps, I will never know. I hear the bodhran and the fiddle and my feet cannot sit still. I dance the dances that I learned at my Gran's knee and suddenly, she is there with me, if only for that time when the music plays. Yes, Ireland is a magical place where even mythical creatures such as Cowboys feel at home. Funny thing is that although you may leave physically, your heart and soul will be left behind. In its place, you will feel the beat of the heart of Ireland and her soul will sing you to sleep until you return. Sometimes, she speaks to you and asks that you share her words with others so that they might feel the magic.

I hope you enjoyed the journey. I hope that it will entice you to make your own sojourn one day. Ireland and the wonderful people who inhabit her counties are waiting to welcome you home.

For more information on Catherine Lilbit Devine and the other members of Whispers of the West, visit their website at www.whisperswest.com.

ROSCOMMON/TUCSON SCHOOLS LINK-UP

Reprinted from Roscommon Herald
Article Date: November 09, 2005

REPRESENTATIVES from the Sister Cities/Sister School Programme who have been establishing cultural links between Tucson, Arizona, and Roscommon recently have been in contact with Roscommon Community College regarding a link-up with a school in Tucson. This project will not only enable the two schools to develop exchange programmes, it will also facilitate the exchange of cultural information through computer technology.

There has been a joint application made between the two schools to Hewlett Packard for video conferencing equipment, which would allow the two school talk to each other in real time. It is intended that a sharing of different subjects matter will create an extra dimension in education for the students.

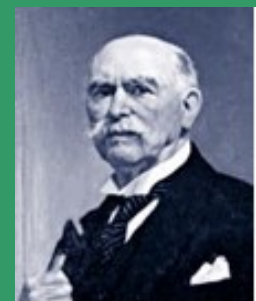
It also gives them the opportunity to experience an education system from another country. It is hoped to link in with the school (Cholla High) before Christmas.

GET INVOLVED! POSITIONS STILL OPEN IN TRSC!

TRSC is now seeking dedicated individuals to fill several important positions throughout the organization. The following positions are currently available:

- Membership Committee Chair
- Membership Committee Members
- Newsletter copy and layout team
- Website copy, layout and maintenance
- Fundraising Committee Chair
- Fundraising Committee Members
- Business Outreach and Advertising

These positions will be filled on a volunteer basis and are not paid positions at this time. For more information, or to express interest in any of the listed positions, please contact Sam Trejo at strejo@xcentech.com or Linnea Caproni at sassylime@earthlink.net.



**TUCSON/
ROSCOMMON
SISTER CITIES**

New Site!

Visit us online at:

www.tucscommon.org

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OUR MISSION...

... IS TO CULTIVATE AND MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CITIES OF TUCSON AND ROSCOMMON TO ENCOURAGE CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

- DEVELOP LONG TERM LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TUCSON AND ROSCOMMON, PROMOTING COOPERATION ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS TO EXPERIENCE A WIDE RANGE OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, BOTH WITHIN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AND THROUGH INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE.
- SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES IN BOTH LOCATIONS.
- COLLABORATE WITH ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON SIMILAR PROJECTS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY VISIBILITY AND STRENGTHEN PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION...

YES! I WANT TO BE INVOLVED!

Become a member of Tucson/Roscommon Sister Cities and

- Participate in arts, cultural, economic, and educational programs with and about our sister city community in Roscommon, Ireland
- Receive first notification and early registration for all organization events
- Get The Quarterly mailed to your door or your inbox

Individual Member @ \$25 annually Student Member @ \$10 annually

Business member @ 100.00 annually Donation @ \$ _____

Make checks payable to Tucson/Roscommon Sister Cities

Send to

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