



*Maireann croí éadrom a bhfad.*



*A light heart lives a long time.*



Successfully remembering raucous revelries in rich regalia at renowned regattas and in resplendent restaurants rambunctiously retold in amazingly-allegorical AWE-inspiring alliteration in our AWE20, this year's Annual Wee Epistle 21 (AWE 21) unfolds with trepidation due to troubling tumults amid tempestuous times tearfully 'tempting to transcend tempest and tumult to lighten the heart, quicken the step, incite the smile, and produce, dare it be hoped, a much-needed snicker, laugh, chortle or even guffaw! Long-time AWESome readers will no doubt recall that at this dawning of Ryan Year 21 (RY21) 'tis our tradition, nay custom, to convey in convivial character the comings and goings of the wee band of Ameri-Irish heretofore and theretofore known as the Ryans, and urgently so lest such splendiferousness fall prey to the ephemeral whimsy of memory and drink; therefore, the flights of fancy and fantasy which follow can be said, and truly so, to be the luck of the Irish, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and the Grace, dare I say it, of almighty God himself -



thanks be to God (TBTG)! 🍀 But before I get too far ahead of me self I must say: *Beannachtam na Feile Padraig!* Happy St. Patrick's Day and Happy Ryan New Year! 🇮🇪 All Long Time AWE-Inspired Readers (ALTAIRs) will happily tell those about to find out (TATFO) that the road to the AWE was indeed paved with good intentions, namely the thoughtful exchange of written greetings upon the occasion of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ (aka Christmas); however, the birth of our own heavenly-sent bundles of joy imposed such happiness upon us that all regard for external engagements and reciprocal revelry succumbed to the simple joys, toys, and ploys of parenthood, and overcome by such as we were we were, nevertheless, eternally grateful for your written expressions of fealty and family at that most holy of times and we continue to be so; hence, our annual repayment of that debt of friendship in this Annual Wee Epistle at the almost-as-holy Irish feast

of Saint Paddy! (and Guinness and Jameson's) Saints be praised (SBP). Luck, loquaciousness & liquor, the three sisters of Ireland, now combined herein will guide, it is most sincerely hoped, your exploration of our blessed isolation from the healthy hinterlands of your very own lockdown. 🍷 Pandemonius pandemicists one and all 'n'all are very welcome to wit, wisdom, and wine (the latter greatly enhancing the former) as we toast RY20 whose memory now recedes faster than a pub-goer at paying time and we say "*Céad Mile Fáilte*" -- "A hundred thousand welcomes" to a bright new year full of fun, family, flights of fancy -- any flight to anywhere will do frankly -- and vaccinated friends in abundance and here's hoping that famous phrase of yesteryear "Who was that masked man?" will rapidly recede into recesses beyond recall.

🍀 All caveats now observed, let's get on with it! Here, hold my Guinness!! 🇮🇪

God has a plan TBTG, which is no doubt unfolding as it should; how-if-so-ever the past year has tested that reality for more than a few ALTAIRs I'm sure, but here in the Ryan Clan God does indeed fulfill the plan for despite it all 'n'all we remain healthy, happy, and hopeful no one more so than Gleefully-Gratefully-Glamorously-Amorous Gloria the Gourmet, who has taken to Appalachian life like strings to a banjo (don't go there). Deliverance from devilish influences abounding in the champagne lifestyle of Parisian boutiques and luxury cruise ships meant GGGAGtG adapted planting herbs, flowers, and soon-to-be vegetables (no not me) turning our 2.5 acres into a perennial parkland, whilst converting the blessings of 8 apple trees into jam, butter, and sauce -- cider this fall! Her greatest accomplishment? She can finally grow mint, which is taking over the place -- send chocolate -- so she has finally put down roots! Finding friends, enhancing mercantilism ad infinitum, playing golf, and rediscovering Happy Hour returned a sense of normalcy, and champagne, especially when she discovered that the Amazon.com river brings life



to the food desert in which we live. Sallying forth to visit Mike in exile she leveraged our pied-a-terre near DC to reconnect with those dear but not near and we "traveled" to attractions too close to visit in non-plague times: Mount Vernon (see above), Alexandria's Masonic Temple, and the Air Force Memorial to name a few (TNAF). The luck of the Mexican-Irish was evident in her Legion Lottery winnings resulting in rounds for the regulars around the bar. Gloria loves her life and her AWE-someness is legendary and also genetic as evidenced by generations that follow (plural being a helpful hint it is hoped TBTG). "On verra" on dit en France et Inshala!

🍷 Carissa's COVID countermeasures created calm, comfort, and commerce alongside the artist formally known as "The Jeff" and henceforth to be referred to merely as "Jeff" (it means we really like him). Countermeasure #1: Stir crazy in Boston? Buy a house in Maine.

Countermeasure #2: Bored? Set up a \*knock on wood\* successful airbnb business to pay for the mortgage (Warning: blatant pitch for business follows - [www.airbnb.com/h/pinehavenme//](http://www.airbnb.com/h/pinehavenme//))

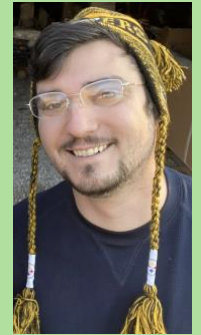


@pinehavenbeavermtn. (The first link is a website but as God is my witness I have no idea what @etc. means, but Carissa does so here it is!). Countermeasure #3: Learning the joys of homeownership? Make a list of projects to accomplish. Step one is redoing the driveway - unofficially deemed the worst driveway in all of Maine. Countermeasure #4: Need to keep busy with social distanced/COVID safe activities? Run 1025km (each) during the summer, play countless board games, or take up snowboarding (Jeff) [My butt that hurts!], and ski black diamond slopes (Carissa) [Thank you Eberhart!]. Carissa “is” CTP Boston (that’s proud Dad speak, but read as “still employed at”), which I’m sure has a



website as does Markforged where Jeff works, but both are able to work from home (have laptop - can travel -- to Maine for now). Jeff’s job involves having a 3D printer in their home so Jeff can do his job (and print a bunch of random things) [but why only D’s? I’d print other letters too but that’s just me.] They’re looking forward to getting back to the travel competition of being the first in the family to visit a new country, so they are waiting patiently for vaccinations (very young and very healthy TBTG so a long wait - oh I hope not!) and herd immunity to become a thing. Until then they’re keeping on keeping on, getting creative with their masks (thanks to the 3D printer), exploring the world through food and drink (which explains why they run so much), and spending time with their Quaranteam! LoveCat, you’ll be relieved to know, is still Queen of Cat Tree (their Boston home) while Squirrely remains King of the Sacred Family.

🍀 Michael Me Boy (M<sup>MB</sup>) has taken to water (and sewage) like a drunk to drink, gainfully employed (SBP/TBTG) in training, to serve the Community no less, operating both the water purification and sewage treatment plants, which as anyone knows are essential to the process of Irish nectar (before and after). Adding that license to his 2 Masters might actually result in something others might call a “cah-reare”-- Keep studying Lad! It’s physics, chemistry, mechanical engineering, being in and out of doors and working with a few good people, so right up his alley, but no bowling so far. A bit of golf, a bit of the ladies, this-n-that, gardening slave to GGGAGtG and M<sup>E</sup>’s clean out the barn buddy keep him busy.

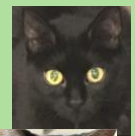


🇮🇪 Michael the Elder (M<sup>E</sup>) having survived his year-long exile with wit, integrity, reputation, and sanity intact returned to the holy land of his youth with memories, accomplishments, and new friends to boot! A quick trip to Europe with the Boss in June highlighted an otherwise Zoom-filled fun-factory in which fine friends feasted, told taller tales, and quaffed much in merriment. Our Transatlantic Security Jam (Google it) brought so many great thinkers together at one time in solidarity and with purpose that it ranks well above things like sitting in for the Boss at two virtual NATO Ministerials (I did nothing but it was way cool), getting the French to Oui, meeting the press, or sitting for a time in the big office thinking big thoughts. Chum & Chesney always reminded me with Lazer focus of “The Good Stuff”

and so happy to be home, despite the distance to the Kebab Palace, M<sup>E</sup> returned to the life of a country gentlemen grilling gleefully, golfing gratefully, gulping gluttonously, greying gradually, and glowing Gloria-ously. Still failing at retirement M<sup>E</sup> is back teaching, writing, talking, consulting, conniving to do good, and advising anyone who’ll listen sober or not!

🏠 Whilst Volvo+4 is no more, the wee Ryans counted themselves ever blessed to be in such surroundings in such surreal times, whether the Maine get-a-way (for rent!) or sharing our ancestral house nary a petite demi-heure away the wide-open spaces provided ample respite as we “vacationed” regularly in our second homes. Rural realities abound here: creamy custard (PA for soft ice cream), Polish home-made pierogies, boating with beer, a yard with deer, skiing and sledding without fear (ok, a bit of exaggeration there so unlike M<sup>E</sup>), sumptuous sunsets, serene settings, our always cheerful Quaranteam, and our Heaven-sent Community give us continuous pause for praise and thanksgiving, but most of all we are thankful for you dear and gentle reader - and since you’ve read this far - true and faithful friend one’n’all’n’all!

TBTG for all of you-SBP! 🍀 We raise a glass to you and yours, be you near or on some foreign shore, for ‘tis God’s Grace that ere we met, and His true promise that we’ll yet be reunited in our love and arm-in-arm in Heaven’s pub! 🇮🇪 Finally, as is our custom please join us in inviting our Lord to watch over our coalition troops as they go into battle today, to give comfort and strength for the battles they will fight inside, and to shine His face upon the families at home as they also serve who sit and wait. **Godspeed one and all ‘n’ all!**



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