

# Hope, wariness greet cease-fire in Ireland

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Irish-Americans in the Diocese of Rochester greeted news of a cease-fire by the Provisional Irish Republican Army with mixed emotions of hopefulness and wariness.

The PIRA announced the cease-fire in its war against the British Army, and other forces supporting British rule, Aug. 31 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The cease-fire went into effect Sept. 1.

The feelings of many Irish-Americans in the area were captured by the comments of Dave Halligan, chairman of the Rochester branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, an Irish music and cultural organization that recently sponsored a benefit concert at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Brighton.

"I would say it's a very wonderful development," Halligan observed of the cease-fire. "It's taken a lot of work on a lot of people's part to bring this about."

Nevertheless, Halligan expressed concern that paramilitary forces loyal to Great Britain would continue to kill Catholics in an attempt to provoke the PIRA into ending the cease-fire.

"It's a question about the other parties," he said. "The IRA has now taken a step forward. The helpful prodding of the British government can get the loyalist parties to meet the nationalists."

Bob Kelly, a native of the Republic of Ireland, has worked to secure U.S. support for a campaign to end job discrimination suffered by Catholics in Northern Ireland. He also noted that loyalist paramilitary forces had not been called upon to give up their fight against the PIRA. The Rochester resident added a hope that the cease-fire would not mean that Irish nationalism was a dead cause in Northern Ireland.

"We all love peace," stated Kelly, a Korean War veteran. "Nobody wants fighting and war. But you have to have liberties too, and your peace."

That peace can only come if Protestant employers stop discriminating against Catholics who need jobs, and if loyalist paramilitary forces stop shooting Catholics, he asserted.

James T. Doohar, chairman of the Irish American Cultural Institute in Rochester, expressed cautious optimism that the cease-fire would provide Catholics and Protestants some breathing space in which to reconcile and work toward a united political system. A period of peace could encourage Irish Protestants to realize how much they have in common with their Catholic counterparts, he explained.

"My own feeling is that if the country is simply allowed to settle its own problems on a person-to-person, region-to-region basis, they'll simply breed the Brits out," he said.

Last year, Doohar's organization sponsored a speech at St. John Fisher College by Colin Craig, director of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela, an ecumenical retreat center in Ballycastle, County Antrim, brings Protestants and Catholics together for reconciliation sessions.

Craig eschews violence, whether caused by nationalists or loyalists in his land, and has argued for years that only in peace can the divided people of his country work out a political solution.

In a Sept. 1 telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier* from his home in Northern Ireland, Craig said Irish-Americans can best support the cause of Ireland's unity by supporting the PIRA's cease-fire.

"It's not the end of the war," he commented. "But it's a key step."

Irish-Americans, particularly those who support the PIRA and its political party, Sinn Fein, should send two sig-

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nals to Northern Ireland, Craig asserted. The first is that they are unhappy that the PIRA has not termed the cease-fire permanent, even though Craig noted that a temporary cease-fire might be the best anyone can ask from the Republicans at this point in time.

Secondly, Craig stressed that Irish Republicans must not gloat about the British Army's inability to defeat them during the last 25 years. He labeled such a stance "triumphalism," and said "it'll drive the Unionists into a corner."

Contrary to popular belief, Craig said that a number of Protestants might con-

sider a unified Ireland if they felt they had nothing to fear from living under a Catholic majority. For years, loyalist leaders have railed against union with the mainly Catholic Irish Republic, exploiting Protestant fears of allegedly repressive Catholic rule, he said.

"The ability of the loyalist community to maintain that perception of the Irish state is diminishing," Craig explained.

The Republic of Ireland has become a more secular nation in recent years, he noted, adding that its membership in the European Economic Union — a membership it shares with Great Britain — is part of a "Europeanization" taking hold throughout Ireland and overshadowing the nationalist/loyalist dispute.

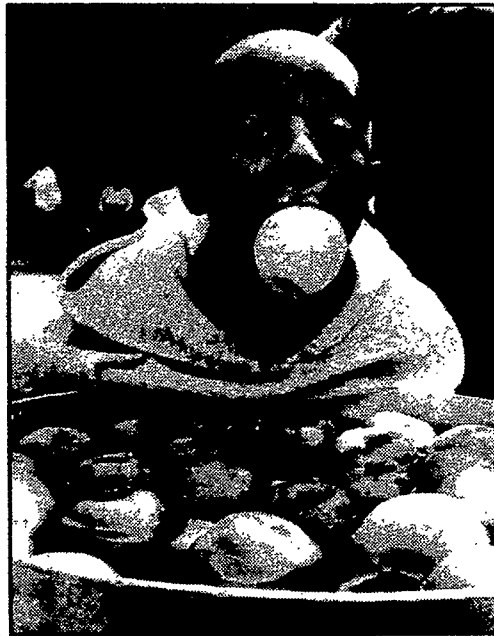
He added that Catholics are gaining in population in Northern Ireland, and,

coupled with the possibility of reduced Unionist fears about a united Ireland, such factors could bring about an end to the island's political division.

"Within a certain number of years, the majority would wish to express a desire for unification," he predicted. "And the Unionist leadership is well aware of this."

At this point, Craig believes that Irish-Americans must support Protestants and Catholics who wish to move to the region's political "middle ground." Such ground has never been safe in Northern Ireland he said, because moderates are often seen as traitors to their own communities, while also being held suspect by the other side.

"In situations of conflict like this, there are no solutions, only settlements," he said. "Each side is going to win something and lose something."



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## 10 years of giving hope

St. Martin's Place, located at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 55 Ontario St., celebrated 10 years of service to the community on Sept. 2 with a neighborhood carnival. The hospitality center helps residents in Rochester's northeast section by providing such services as a neighborhood meal program, referrals to state and local services, and educational and recreational facilities. In the above photo, Gabriel Williams gets a mouthful during the apple bob; at right, Melissa Motroni, a freshman at the University of Rochester who attended the carnival as part of the U of R's annual Wilson Days, ties a balloon onto a youngster's hand.



## Jury convicts former St. Ann's nurse of neglect

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A six-member City Court jury deliberated for only 20 minutes before convicting Jacqueline L. Dennis, a registered nurse formerly employed at St. Ann's Home for the Aged, of patient neglect and records falsification.

Dennis had been arrested in March of this year and charged with unlawfully neglecting three St. Ann's residents in 1993 and falsifying various medical records to cover up her conduct. St. Ann's, 1500 Portland Ave., fired Dennis in March, 1993.

Following a three-day trial, the jury returned its verdict late in the afternoon on Wednesday, Aug. 31, according to Jerry M. Solomon, special assistant at-

torney general-in-charge of the regional office of the New York State Special Prosecutor for Medicaid Fraud Control.

Dennis was convicted on four counts of willful violation of health laws, and three counts of falsifying business records in the second degree.

Judge Gary E. Smith, who presided at the trial, ordered Dennis to appear on Tuesday, Sept. 6, to set a sentencing date. Dennis could be sentenced to up to two years in jail, Solomon said.

Dennis' attorney, James E. Brown, said the conviction would be appealed, and he predicted that his client would receive no jail time. He also questioned the swiftness with which the jury had reached its verdict.

"The jury was out less than a half-hour on seven separate counts," he com-

mented. "There's something suspicious about that."

For his part, Solomon complimented St. Ann's for its role in the state's case against Dennis.

"The staff and the administration of St. Ann's was just outstanding in the cooperation and the prosecution of this case," he remarked.

After being fired by St. Ann's Home in 1993, Dennis started working for Westgate Nursing Home in Gates. She allegedly also faces charges that she neglected to perform blood-glucose tests on two diabetic residents at Westgate in March of this year, and that she allegedly concealed her conduct by falsifying medical records.

That case is pending trial in the Town of Gates Justice Court, and Dennis has pleaded not guilty to the charges.