

## Winter 2025-2026 Getting to Know... Evan Adcock

Because I know that Evan works for NASA, I like to tell people that I know an actual rocket scientist. But, as he has repeatedly explained to me, that's not what he actually does. Read on to learn what he really does for a living, and other things you might have been dying to know about our club's new treasurer.

One of the best things about Evan is that he and Kelsey met at the Harp. Evan came one Tuesday with a friend and left with many new friends, including his future wife.

Another cool thing: Evan grew up in the Chicago suburb of Cary, IL, but likes Pittsburgh much more. After growing up in a flat place, he fell in love with Pittsburgh's wooded hills, which he thinks lend character to both the landscape and the people. He and Kelsey hope to live here for the rest of their lives.

And now for what he actually does for a living. Evan is a material science engineer. You might ask: What does that mean? (I definitely asked that.) Material scientists research new uses for known materials and discover and create new materials. Evan's PhD is in Materials Science and Engineering with a focus on metal 3D printing or additive manufacturing. His work for NASA involves simulating how new materials and tools would work under different conditions.

Evan loved math and science and, once he outgrew an early ambition to be a veterinarian, he always wanted to be an engineer. His undergrad degree was in Mechanical



Engineering and Material Science Engineering. He didn't start working on his advanced degree right away. He worked for a year designing auto parts. Then he moved to Pittsburgh and worked as a technical sales manager for 3-1/2 years. But, his heart was in engineering, not in sales and management. So, he enrolled at CMU. During his graduate studies, his advisor included him on a NASA-funded project that was related to the project that he works on today as a contractor to NASA. What he likes best about the work he does now is that it gives him visibility into related

projects.

Although he likes Pittsburgh better, Evan got a good education at the Illinois Math and Science Academy. He liked being able to take the train into the city. But he doesn't romanticize or miss his time there. Pittsburgh is definitely the place for him.

He says his mom was the biggest influence in his life, the driving force behind his major steps. She encouraged him to apply to the Illinois Math and Science Academy. It's a residential school, and he was nervous about that at first, but says it was an important experience for him. As far as his personality, he says his biggest influences were Weird Al and Dr. Who. He has one older brother, 2-1/2 years older than he is, and says they've always gotten along.

Evan says that what he is most proud of in his life so  
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## What's Your Christmas Tradition?

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Alex Canto – Making videos with the “niblings” (nieces and nephews)

Mike Byrnes – Sitting on the edge of my bed wondering why I exist?

Vince Burns – Putting up the Christmas tree and model trains on Christmas Eve night with his mom and grandfather as a child

Richard Withers – Grew up on a farm and had an upstairs Christmas tree and a downstairs one. The downstairs one had a root ball and was planted outdoors after the holiday.

Michael Drohan – Michael and Joyce’s wedding anniversary is December 29, and their wedding song was “Angels We Have Heard on High.” Awwww!

Ken McCarthy – Spending Christmas Eve with his brothers and sisters

Rachel Summers – Making her great-grandma’s shortbread

Maddy Summers – Giving her brother coal in his stocking

Nick Johnson – Singing carols with the family around the piano

Alex Brown – Singing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus

Liz Grinko – Playing “find the pickle on the tree” and the theme music to Charlie Brown’s Christmas.

Elizabeth Meyers – Always getting a toothbrush for Christmas & Easter

Kathy Bashaar – Putting up the creche. Al made the manger for me as a surprise over thirty years ago, and my mom gave me Fontanini figures of the Holy Family. Over the years, each Christmas, Al bought me an additional figure. And the kids added whimsical touches like a Lego Christmas tree, tiny food made out of clay, a frog and a blue pig. A Syrian family who visited us once gave us a beautiful camel carved of cedar wood. I still put it all up every year and leave it up until Epiphany. (See photo)



Karrie Wagner – Breakfast with her parents at her house on Christmas morning

Jim Tipe – Decorating the mantle. Jim does a new painting every year to go over their mantle. (See photo)



Joanne Fitzgerald – Putting her Fontanini nativity set in the bay window

Celeste – Open face sandwiches on Christmas Eve. She grew up with this and didn’t like the sandwiches then, but now it is a cherished tradition.

Nan Pischke – Putting money on the windowsill on Christmas Eve

Theresa Orlando – Celebrating Christmas Eve at her house and then going to midnight Mass

Kathy Erhart – Kathy loves ALL Christmas traditions!

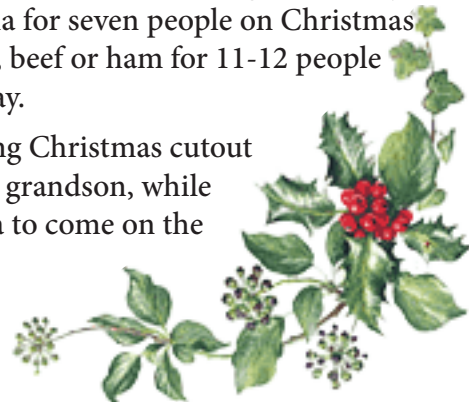
Sue Anne Hogan – Making Christmas cutout cookies with her son. Sue Ann has 25 different cookie cutters!

Alicia Loy – Baking Christmas cookies

Brandon Messineo – Looking at Christmas lights

Dave Hartnett – Dave has always cooked dinner for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, although family members have started helping in recent years. He makes lasagna for seven people on Christmas Eve and chicken, beef or ham for 11-12 people on Christmas Day.

Val Keeley – Baking Christmas cutout cookies with her grandson, while waiting for Santa to come on the fire truck.





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## What's Your Favorite Dance?

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We all love dancing or we would belong to an Irish dancing club, but what's your very favorite dance? Here's how some people responded to that question.

Evan Adcock – Haymakers Jig and Ballavourney Set.

They are non-stop, with lots of partner switching, and the Ballavourney has lots of housing

Heather Ward – Fairy Reel

Karrie Wagner – Waves of Tory

Alex Brown – Cashel Set

Joan Reddy – Bonfire Dance

Greg Boris – Haymakers Jig

Joanne Fitzgerald – Ballavourney Set

Colleen Rumble – Gay Gordon

Gia Regan – Waves of Tory

Sue Anne Hogan – Haymakers Jig

Theresa Orlando – Haymakers Jig

Kelsey Adcock – Ballavourney Set

Craig Connolly – Waves of Tory

Kathy Bashaar – High Caul'd Cap. It is fast-paced, and although the turns are a little tricky, I think it's a pretty easy dance. Also, it is as pretty to watch as it is to dance.

Al Bashaar – High Caul'd Cap because Kathy likes it (awwwww)

Hannah Hogan – Ballavourney Set

Celeste & Jim – Any dance they'll let us join or any dance with Theresa

Michael Drohan – Cashel Set

Joyce Rothermel – Rinkstown

Ken McCarthy – Ballavourney and Connemara Sets

Rachel Summers – Merchant Set

Maddy Summers – Fairy Reel

Ellen Johnson – Antrim Square

Nick Johnson – North Kerry Polka Set

Jenn Rumble – High Caul'd Cap and Cross Reel

Jim Guay – Ballavourney Set, Antrim Square and Corsican

Liz Grinko – Two Hand Hornpipe, fourth figure of Cashel Set (hornpipe), and Derrada Set because it includes a jig, a polka and a reel

Elizabeth Meyers – Keel Row and Ballavourney Set.  
Also Walls of Limerick because Irish children learn it at school.

Scott Szymansky – Patty Cake Polka because anyone can do it

Val Keeley – Haymakers Jig because it's bouncy and happy

Karrie Wagner – Waves of Tory

Nan Pischke – North Kerry Polka Set. The reason is that the other name of the dance is the Ballybunion Set and that is the town that her grandmother is from. Since Nan never met her grandmother it just makes her feel close to her.

Brandon Messineo and Alicia Loy – Waves of Tory

Dave Hartnett – Ballavourney Set because it's fast (and Dave notes that we don't even do it full speed! Whew!)

Bill Jamison – High Caul'd Cap and Ballvourney

I also asked our band members what dances they like watching and/or playing for. No surprise, nobody's favorite was Keel Row or High Caul'd Cap, but here are the ones they do like:

Mike – Waves of Tory and Sweets of May

Vince – Ballavourney Set

Rich – Clare Plain Set

Bruce - My choice is The Limerick Tumblers. It's a Set "created" by uilleann piper and dancer Terry Moylan of Dublin. Terry and his family used to visit Pittsburgh occasionally back in I want to say the 90s and he taught this set at The Irish Centre. It was quite popular, as I remember, for a while but I can't tell you the last time we played for it. I suspect that it's been a while. If you are curious a Limerick Tumbler is a pigeon. Yup, a pigeon. And it's a fun set.





Earlier this fall, the North American premiere of *Ceilidh* brought ceili dancing (albeit the Scottish kind) to the stage and the American public in Baltimore, Maryland. Mixing traditional Scottish music, original songs, and plenty of dancing, this musical, which had its original run in Scotland, is full of the same heart and spirit that drew so many of us to ceili dancing originally.

The story of *Ceilidh* centers on a family of callers with a long history of passing the tradition down. One of the earliest songs tells this history with great humour, telling the audience how each generation made it their own, adding their own spin to it. The main focus is on Ramsey, a young man preparing (and sometimes struggling) to follow in the footsteps of his father Leo, a legendary caller. Interspersed with present-day scenes, we also get to watch a younger Leo begin his journey as a caller and meet his future wife, Euna. The story is touching and poignant, and the original songs play beautifully off of the traditional ones.

What makes *Ceilidh* really special, though, is the way it actually feels like...well...a ceili. The venue was a large hall, with seating set up on three sides around the floor. There were three bars that stayed open during the show, so audience members could get a pint or a dram of whiskey as they pleased. Before the show, as the audience took their seats, the cast intermingled with them, chatting. Members of the cast and band jammed out as if at an impromptu session in one corner.

This feeling of belonging and community didn't end when the show started, either. Six or seven different times

during the show, the audience was invited up to learn and participate in the ceilidh dances. It wasn't required, of course, but gently encouraged and the majority of the audience joined in. (It likely comes as no surprise that my friend and I were usually some of the first people out of our seats). As may be expected from a musical about callers, the callers and cast did an excellent job teaching and guiding an American audience through these (largely) unfamiliar dances, and each one was joyful and energetic. I recognized only one (the Gay Gordons) but they made it easy to catch on. Our only complaint at the end of the show was that we wanted to dance more!

*Ceilidh* the musical really was one of a kind. It has trad music, dancing, a sing-along at the end, haggis and a dram of whiskey at intermission, and the chance to feel like you're part of the story. What more could you want? It makes you laugh just as much as it makes you cry (I wasn't the only one wiping away tears during the last song) and we left singing songs from the show. I was delighted to find out a show about our beloved dancing exists and although I may be biased) I can't recommend it enough. If you get the chance to see *Ceilidh the Musical* in the future, don't miss it!

More information and videos can be found at [Ceilidh Musical](#)

*By Caley Donovan  
con't. on next page*



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## Getting to Know... con't.

far, besides his PhD, is that he was an awkward kid who learned to be social (he sure did!). When I asked him what five words best describe him, he said introverted, social, optimistic, cautious and caring. Some people might think that “introverted” and “social” are contradictory characteristics, but I knew exactly where Evan was coming from on that, and I bet many others do, too, if they stop and think about it. You can love being with people, and still need time to yourself. And lots of people feel shy and self-conscious when they are young, but put themselves out there anyway and learn to be more relaxed in good company.

Evan has been dancing with us since 2019, and joined the PCC soon after. The first time he came to the Harp, his impression was that the place, the people (maybe especially one blonde person), the music and the dancing were all amazing. He hadn't done any other kind of dancing before, other than maybe at weddings and Just Dance.

Evan was briefly married at age 22, and his Australian Cattle Dog (like Bluey in the cartoon) lives with his ex. Her name is Kiwi (the dog, not the ex). It took him a long time to realize that his marriage was a mistake, but he has no regrets. He says his philosophy is that everything he did in the past got him to where he is today, so why have regrets?

Some fun questions I like to ask...

How Irish are you? Evan didn't think he was Irish at all, until his mom saw him quoted in a Ceili Club video saying he wasn't Irish, and she corrected him. He is “a little” Irish.

What would you like to do to improve yourself? Evan says he'd love to learn to play a musical instrument. He's fascinated by the physics of music and wishes he'd learned an instrument when he was younger.

What is your vision for your future? To seek happiness and live a life he likes. He and Kelsey would also eventually like to buy a house here in Pittsburgh.

What is your pet peeve? Aggressive drivers.

What are you good at? Math

What are you bad at? Writing. Evan says he had a hard time writing his PhD dissertation.

Are people basically good or bad? Evan thinks we are basically good, but our culture in the US is so individualistic that it turns some people bad.

What might people be surprised to know about you? Evan goes to a boxing gym at least once a week. He has also been skydiving (I neglected to ask about Rocky Mountain climbing or a bull named Fu Manchu). I don't know that either of those things especially surprised me, but I definitely didn't know them. Definitely not surprising for a material science engineer: Evan has also been a big Minecraft fan ever since it first came out.

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## No Christmas Ceilí This Year

We did not have a Christmas Ceilí this year because no one agreed to serve on the committee in time. By the time some good folks stepped up and tried to put something together, no venues were available. That is a pretty sad state of affairs. We all love this club. And love is about more than words and fun. Sometimes it's about doing the work. Please think seriously about serving on a party committee in 2026: Kickoff Ceilí, monthly ceilis, picnic, Christmas Ceilí. If each of us picks ONE of those event committees to serve on, we can continue to celebrate as we have in the past.

We did have a very nice happy hour at the Harp on December 16. Here are a few photos, including a couple of VERY well-dressed people.



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## Honoring Those Who Have Served on our Board

In follow-up to our article in the previous issue about the history of the club, we wanted to honor all the people who have served as PCC board members over our club's 35-year-history. No leaders, no club. Many of these folks are still active. We have fond memories of the ones who are no longer with us, having passed away or just moved on to another location or phase of life. Thank you to all who have served the PCC, past and present!

| Presidents:                | Vice Presidents       | Secretaries          | Treasurers         |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1989 - 1999                | 1989 - 1999           | 1989 - 1999          | 1989 - 1999        |
| Peter Shovlin, Jr. (2)     | Kathleen Byrnes       | Nan Pischke          | Maureen Strotmeyer |
| Jim Hickey (1)             | Rusty Petro           | Rusty Petro          | Dutch Creely       |
| MaryAnne McGill (1)        | Nancy Olivo           | Betsy Dillon         | Bob Kaniecki       |
| Maureen Strotmeyer (1)     | Don Urbanic           | Joe Moffitt          | 2000 - 2009        |
| 2000 - 2009                | Dan McIntyre          | 2000 - 2009          | Bob Kaniecki       |
| MaryAnne McGill (2)        | Joan Faust            | Mindy Durkin         | 2010 - 2019        |
| Maureen Strotmeyer (1)     | Denise McConnell      | Frank Cindrich       | Bob Kaniecki       |
| Al Bolkovac (2)            | 2000 - 2009           | Mary McIntyre        | Rose Gibson        |
| Jennifer Irvin (1)         | Jim Laffey            | Laura Hull           | 2020 - Present     |
| 2010 - 2019                | Bill Jamison          | 2010 - 2019          | Rose Gibson        |
| Joanne Fitzgerald (1)      | Jennifer Irvin        | Joanne Fitzgerald    | Kathy Bashaar      |
| Cheryl McLafferty Grey (1) | Mindy Dilmore         | Marcella Cirigliano, | Evan Adcock        |
| Maureen Strotmeyer (1)     | Al Bolkovac           | Ann Skrabec          |                    |
| Bill Jamison (1)           | Mary Ellen Chajkowski | Rose Gibson          |                    |
| 2020 - Present             | Renny Hess            | Mary McIntyre        |                    |
| Bill Jamison (1)           | Denise McConnell      | Frank Cindrich       |                    |
| Alex Brown (2)             | 2010 - 2019           | Kathy Erhart         |                    |
|                            | Mary Ellen Chajkowski | 2020 - Present       |                    |
|                            | Rose Gibson           | Kathy Bashaar        |                    |
|                            | John Osterhus         | Kelsey Stark         |                    |
|                            | Frank Cindrich        | Craig Connolly       |                    |
| (Terms in Office)          | Amanda Murphy         |                      |                    |
|                            | Jim Laffey            |                      |                    |
|                            | 2020 - Present        |                      |                    |
|                            | Jim Laffey            |                      |                    |
|                            | Jackie Schaefer       |                      |                    |
|                            | Stevie Hogan          |                      |                    |
|                            | Sue Anne Hogan        |                      |                    |

### Board Members over the years

|                 |                         |               |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Helen Barcaskey | Jean Mazzulla           | Dave Hartnett |
| Liz Grinko      | Charlie Butler          | Nick Johnson  |
| Maureen Joyce   | Lana Yagatich           | Wilma Gaughan |
| Suzan Dolfi     | Rachel Hansen           | JJ Gallagher  |
| Earl McCabe     | Kate Guay               | Jim Flynn     |
| Kathy Giorgi    | Maureen Jones           | Barb Connor   |
| Maureen Laffey  | Ellen Hammil            | PJ Kernick    |
| Ray Conley      | Michael Drohan          | Al Bashaar    |
| Kay Kowalski    | Jean Kaniecki           | Caley Donovan |
| Sandy DiMond,   | Lynette Castellucci     | Rita Edgil    |
| Mary Nagel      | Lana Kretchun           | Alex Canto    |
| John Cindrich   | Jannifer Hannan         | Pam Stewart   |
| Joan Connolly   | Kelly (Sinsegalli) Rose |               |

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## Winter Garden Notes

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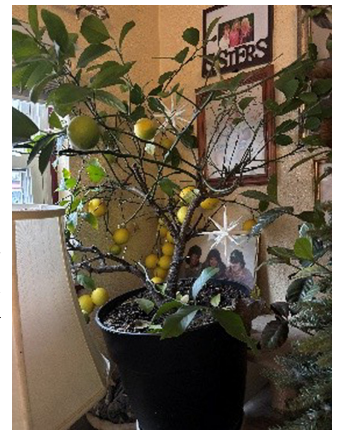
December, January, February, are slow gardening months. It is time to take stock of the garden you had last year. What went well and what went wrong. For me, I planted the wrong green beans. I bought them in a baggie at an Amish greenhouse. They were supposed to be bush beans but most of them were pole beans so they were hard to manage. Once I noticed they were trailing and not bushing I put up poles. Since I planted a small type butternut squash in the same space all of it was entirely too crowded. I tried to grow zucchini and the butterscotch squash in pots but was not happy with the results. The other error I make is that I keep promising myself I won't plant as many tomato plants but because of the varieties I like I must buy them in market packs, so I end up planting too many. I just hate to throw a plant away. I do try to give them away.

If you are going to start some seeds it is now time to look at garden catalogs. If you have ordered from the catalog companies, they will arrive in the next week. Read the information and description of the varieties that interest you. That may be because you have tried them as purchased seedlings or from a friend. I don't start many seeds because, for me, I find the seedlings I buy at garden centers/greenhouses look sturdier. The catalog companies are also online if you don't get the mailed copy. I saved seeds in 2024 but decided not to save them last year. Now I will have to find seeds for the few plants I want to replant. Park Seeds, Burpee Seeds, and Berlin Seeds are a few of the catalogs I am waiting to arrive. If those catalogs do not have some of my favorite,

I then google the variety. It is often cheaper to ship if you order more than 1 seed packet from the same company. I do try to start some of the seeds I have from previous years. Ideally the seeds should be checked for viability by placing a few on wet paper towels and check for sprouting. If they all or almost all sprout they are still viable.

I have some seed starting potting mix left from last year but will need a little bit more. I usually buy that locally. I also save market packs to start the seeds. I wash the market packs and soak in a 10% Clorox solution before using them in case there is disease in the market packs. In writing this I am now down the rabbit hole looking for seeds I know and a few new.

Time to check house plants, clean them, repot if they are needing it if they are starting to show new growth. Hopefully, remembering to water has been on your agenda! I have a large gardenia tree I ignored and now the leaves are all drying and falling off. I finally watered but only green leaves are at the ends of the branches! Lemon tree dropped leaves before I brought it into the house. I suspect it was during my grandson's tending while I was in Ireland for 2 weeks. The lemons are still ripening.



*lemon tree with 40+ lemons*

*By Carolyn Bolton*



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## Fall Ball Ceilí

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On October 18, we had a fall ceili at Bethel Park Community Center. Lots of sweet treats to much on. Caller Jim Guay treated us to a special set of some of his favorite figures from several different dances. Music was provided by Rich Withers, Bruce Mloyneaux, and Anne Trimble.



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## Upcoming Local Irish Events

| What  | When            | Where   | Contact & Information                |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Gaelic Arts Society<br>Jim Lamb speaks on Irish issues    | 1/18/26, 2 pm   | AJ Palumbo Hall                                       | Pghgaelicarts@gmail.com              |
| LAOH Allegheny County<br>Board St. Bridget Mass           | 2/8/26          | Chartiers Country Club,<br>601 Baldwin Rd., Pgh 15205 | www.laohalleghenycounty.org/<br>news |
| DropKick Murphys  | 2/12/26 6pm     | Stage AE, 400 North Shore Dr.                         |                                      |
| Gaelic Arts Society<br>Rebecca Miller speaks on genealogy | 2/15/26         | AJ Palumbo Hall,<br>Carlow University                 | Pghgaelicarts@gmail.com              |
| PCC Kickoff Ceili   | 3/8/26, 4-8pm   | Olympia Banquet Hall,<br>1575 Electric Ave, East Pgh. | See Sue Ann Hogan<br>for more info   |
| Pittsburgh Saint Patrick's<br>Day Parade                  | 3/14/26, 10am   | Liberty Ave & Grant St                                |                                      |
| Abbots Cross  | 3/17/26, 7:30pm | City Winery, 1627 Smallman St.                        |                                      |
| Gaelic Arts Society<br>Irish music & dance program        | 4/19/26, 2pm    | AJ Palumbo Hall,<br>Carlow University                 | Pghgaelicarts@gmail.com              |
| Gaelic Arts Society<br>High Tea                           | 6/7/26          | Pittsburgh Golf Club                                  | Pghgaelicarts@gmail.com              |

I thank Diane Byrnes, host of WEDO's Echoes of Erin for most of this information. Listen to Echoes of Erin at 12:30 p.m. on Sundays on WEDO 810AM and 93.3FM.

If you know about upcoming Irish-themed events, please email kbashaar@gmail.com. Deadline for Spring Ceilier is 3/31/26.

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### *W. B. Yeats Sampler*

#### **A Drinking Song**

WINE comes in at the mouth  
And love comes in at the eye;  
That's all we shall know for truth  
Before we grow old and die.  
I lift the glass to my mouth,  
I look at you, and I sigh.

*William Butler Yeats*

#### **A POET TO HIS BELOVED**

BRING you with reverent hands  
The books of my numberless dreams,  
White woman that passion has worn  
As the tide wears the dove-grey sands,  
And with heart more old than the horn  
That is brimmed from the pale fire of time:  
White woman with numberless dreams,  
I bring you my passionate rhyme.

*William Butler Yeats*

#### **Never Give All the Heart**

Never give all the heart, for love  
Will hardly seem worth thinking of  
To passionate women if it seem  
Certain, and they never dream  
That it fades out from kiss to kiss;  
For everything that's lovely is  
But a brief, dreamy, kind delight.  
O never give the heart outright,  
For they, for all smooth lips can say,  
Have given their hearts up to the play.  
And who could play it well enough  
If deaf and dumb and blind with love?  
He that made this knows all the cost,  
For he gave all his heart and lost.

*William Butler Yeats*

*Ceilier STAFF: Editor- Kathy Bashaar; Layout- Jim Guay*

If you have an article of Irish interest that you would like to place in The Ceilier- email kbashaar@gmail.com.