

# Raise a pint to St. Patrick

Three West Chester Irish bars have activities planned today

By BRIAN K. MILLER  
Special to the Local News

One thousand five hundred forty-three years ago, the son of a Welshman who had been sold into slavery in Ireland and escaped, but later came back to convert the Irish pagans to Christianity after hearing a calling from God, died. His given name was Maewyn, but he later chose the name Patrick, and he is a saint in the Catholic church.

Just so you know who you are drinking to today.

Where you'll be drinking is what concerns three well-known West Chester bars, all of which have undergone substantial changes over the past months. Kildare's, the Blarney Stone and Ryan's Pub will be offering food and drink specials, prizes and plenty of music and mirth as they hope the green flows with much glee into their cash drawers.

Although Kildare's, located at 18 W. Gay St., was

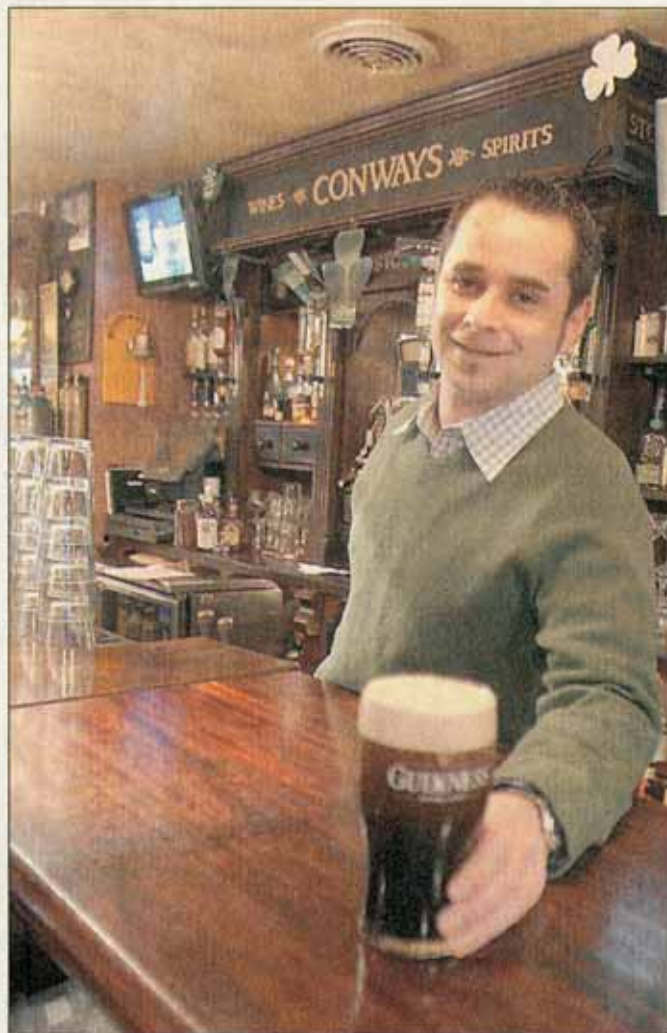
## More Irish

Abbey Green  
Motor Lodge  
and Irish Shop  
is celebrating  
25 years.

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for Irish food.

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Staff photo by Larry McDevitt

Bartender Dave Magrogan serves up a pint of Guinness at Kildare's on West Gay Street in West Chester.

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## Irish

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open last year at this time, the major renovations to the building had yet to begin. It was still basically the former The Restaurant and the Bar set-up; the exterior and interior changes were not completed until May. Bar manager Sean Looney said nearly \$2 million was spent recreating the feel of an authentic Irish Pub in the venerable Gay Street location.

"Just about everything in here has been imported from Ireland," said Looney.

The party kicks off at noon with the Malarkey Brothers opening a long, four-hour set of Irish tunes. At 2 p.m., the Campbell Academy of Irish Dance will be in to perform. WMMR 93.3 FM is scheduled to do a live broadcast from the bar from 3 to 7 p.m. The Brennan School of Dance will frolic for two hours of gaiety from 6 to 8 p.m. The entertainment will be topped off by the Irish rock band Con, which will play from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Among the prizes given out

during the day will be a trip to Ireland.

Just don't ask for a green beer at Kildare's. "There will be no vials of green food coloring anywhere around here," said bartender Mary Taylor.

Added Looney: "Green beer is an Americanized thing. We just don't think it fits with a traditional, authentic Irish pub."

Well, OK, but you can get a cold, green, frosty one at the Blarney Stone, although general manager Steven Schwenk said the bar will only personalize the drafts; the pub doesn't have a keg of green beer chilling for the grand day.

"But this is our day," said Schwenk. "It's huge to us. We've been planning this day for months."

The Blarney Stone, which sits just outside of town at 1227 West Chester Pike, is actually celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year. The building has held numerous

establishments over the years, but \$300,000 worth of improvements, completed last December, have really changed the feel of the bar.

"It was completely gutted," said Schwenk. "The walls, the floors, everything was taken out. It was a complete renovation."

Schwenk is also proud of the improved menu, overseen by chef Sean Lockard. Menu highlights include Siobhan's meatloaf, shepherd's pie and Guinness stew.

Schwenk expects an overflow crowd today and has planned for a heated tent in the location's parking lot. Guests will be entertained by the McDade Irish Step Dancers, who will be stepping

off at 2 p.m. A disc jockey will be piping out the Irish tunes throughout the day and evening.

Ryan's Pub, at 124 W. Gay St., is actually celebrating its third St. Patrick's Day, after retooling the old La Cocotte space in

the borough. The bar will feature Irish crooner Patrick Donahue from 5 to 9 p.m., along with traditional food specials — lamb stew, and corned beef and cabbage. There will also be plenty of prizes.

"It's one of the best days of the

year," said bartender David Van Ryn, who'll be manning the taps tonight. "It's a fun atmosphere, and the energy level is high."

"You know, that day, everybody's Irish."

Except for, of course, St. Patrick.



# FOLK FARE

Local eatery offers twist on the traditional Irish potato dish of boxty

By JO-AN RECHTIN  
Special to the Local News

**T**here may be as many versions of boxty as there are poems about it. One version goes:  
*Boxty on the griddle, boxty in the pan  
If you can't make boxty, You'll never get a man.  
Boxty on the griddle, boxty in the pan,  
The one in the middle, it is for Mary Ann.*  
*I'll have none of your boxty, I'll have none of your blarney.  
But I'll admit my petticoats near my head,  
And be off with my Royal Charlie.*

Boxty is a traditional Irish potato dish that can be baked in the form of potato bread, or made on the griddle as a type of potato pancake.  
"We make ours very thin, almost like a crepe," said Stephanie Goldberg, executive chef for Kildare's Inc., "and they sell like nobody's business."  
With locations in West Chester, King of Prussia, and coming in Manayunk, Kildare's attempts Irish authenticity in menu and décor.

"One thing I learned while training in Ireland," said Goldberg, "was to use the freshest ingredients and feature their flavors. Irish cooking does not mask flavors with heavy spices."

Kildare's makes boxty with a hint of garlic and parsley and fills them with meats, seafood and cheeses. "We use our creative American license to go crazy on the fillings," said Goldberg, adding that "the conceptual part of boxty is still there."

Kildare's Chicken & Cheese Boxty features grilled chicken with mushrooms, onions & tomatoes, topped with cheddar cheese. Served with Thick Cut Chips, the boxty sells for \$7.95. A shrimp version filled with shrimp and tomatoes sautéed in a white wine and garlic sauce with goat cheese is priced a bit higher.

"In Ireland, we wouldn't eat boxty with fillings," said Irish native, Jacynia Brett, of Pottstown. Although Brett did not grow up with boxty made from cooked and raw potatoes as it most often is, she does recall her mother making a type of potato pancake on the griddle with leftover potatoes and was familiar with the traditional countryside dish.

Although boxty on the griddle and boxty baked in the oven are both made with raw

and cooked potatoes, the pancake or crepe-type boxty batter is thinned down with milk. Boxty may also appear as dumplings and puddings and is sometimes called "stampy."

**Boxty**

From "A Pissin for Potatoes" by Paul Gayler

- ½ pound, large, floury potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated (about 1 ½ cups)
- 1 cup mashed potato (made without butter, milk, or cream)
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ stick (1/4 cup) sweet butter, softened
- ¼ tsp. salt

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the grated potatoes in a thin, lint-free towel or piece of cheesecloth and squeeze out the liquid. Place in a bowl, add the mashed potatoes, flour, baking powder, softened butter and salt and mix well.

Turn the mixture out onto a floured board and divide in half. Roll each portion into a circle about ½-inch thick and score a cross on the top. Place on a well-buttered baking sheet and bake for about 40 minutes, until browned and risen. Serve hot from the oven, broken into quarters, with lashings of butter.

**Traditional Irish Boxty**

Jacynia Brett, Pottstown

Note: Jacynia Brett's recipe for boxty was very similar to the one above, but is made to be baked on the griddle. More milk may be added to thin batter to pour into griddle.

- 1 cup raw potato, grated
- 1 cup mashed potato
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- A large knob of butter, melted (1/2 stick)
- About 1 cup milk

Grate raw potato into a bowl. Turn out grated potato onto a clean cloth and wring out any liquid into a bowl. Starch will settle at the bottom of the bowl. Pour clear fluid from the top and spoon out the starch. Add starch to raw and mashed potato and mix.

Sift dry ingredients (flour, baking powder and salt). With melted butter, add dry ingredients to potato mixture. Mix milk into dough adding more if necessary to make dough pliable. Lightly knead dough on floured surface. Divide dough into fourths. Form four large flat cakes. Score each cake into quarters. Bake on a griddle until cooked through.



Staff photo by Stacy Zahner  
At top, Kildare's boxty is topped with cheddar cheese and above, is stuffed with chicken, mushrooms, onions and tomatoes.