

EIIC NEWS



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APRIL 9, 2008 EIIC THANKS PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

At an event hosted by the Emerald Isle Immigration Center and the Brehon Law Society at Gallagher's Restaurant on West 52nd Street in Manhattan, President Bill Clinton was honored with an award and ceremony to express thanks on behalf of Irish-America for his role in the Peace Process.

At the event, President Clinton said he was delighted to be among so many old friends and that in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the GFA, he said he thoroughly enjoyed his role in it all.

"I got a lot more out of this than I gave. It was a total joy," he said. "Even the first meeting with Ian Paisley. The worst fears for any politician are that I'll forget one of my talking points or worse still, I'll nod off. When I met Dr. Paisley, for the first 20 minutes I got it with both barrels, so there was not a chance that I would forget the talking points and there was no chance that I would nod off," he laughed.

"But I liked him, much in the same way that I like other people with whom I disagreed with profoundly. But he ended on a high note in doing business with Martin

McGuinness. And the lesson I drew from that is to not give up on anybody. It's important to remember, and good for people of other faiths to remember, that St. Patrick was the only figure in history to Christianize a whole people without spilling blood. Think of the blood spilled," he said. "If everyone on earth followed their faith, there would be peace everywhere."



"St. Patrick's lesson is peace is better than the sword and the only thing that works for children is peace. The language might be different, the faith different, the political history different, but the human psychology is exactly the same in every place," he said.

Addressing the people of the north particularly, who have come through the difficult struggle for peace, he said; "All around the world people are cheering for you for they know in their heart of hearts people are fortunate enough to be thinking about their tomorrows. You should celebrate this every year."

The Emerald Isle Immigration Center then presented President Clinton with a Waterford crystal vase, to commemorate his role in the Peace Process. The award was presented by Bronx Immigration Counselor, Ciaran McDonnell, originally from Belfast.

One Immigrant's Story

Growing up in Ireland I often felt out of place. I could never pinpoint why but I just felt different, like something was wrong with me. I was lonely and restless and even thought about taking my own life. I never identified my problem but quickly learned that alcohol made those thoughts and feelings go away.

As I entered adulthood, I relied on alcohol to increase my confidence and ease my mind. Throughout those years, my drinking did not go unnoticed, my family and friends became concerned. Some of my friends confronted me on my drinking problem and my father, a recovering alcoholic himself, warned me that I could not "keep running away from myself". Ignoring this advice I left home at 24 convinced that moving to a new place would alleviate my problems.

Over the years I continued to lose friendships and romantic relationships because of my drinking. Even some of my friends who were heavy drinkers saw something different in me and would refer to me as an alcoholic. Their comments did strike a cord with me but I would shrug them off.

In 1997 I arrived in New York with my girlfriend. Outwardly we discussed returning to Ireland but in my mind I knew that New York was my future. I got a job and was making a great wage but soon my drinking escalated as I quickly grew comfortable spending time in the late closing pubs and buying beer at the 24 hour delis. After being in New York for a while, familiar patterns resurfaced as my relationship ended and I continued to drink heavily. I had black outs and began using cocaine to minimize the blackouts, worsening my problems.

Gradually I began to consider more seriously that I had a drinking problem. I started calling an 800 number for assistance. Often I would speak to a counsellor on the other end of the line but I would not follow through with her suggestions.

Finally, one morning after a particularly long night of drinking, I found myself again on the phone with one of the counsellors. That day I went to a meeting of a well known self help group. Seeing that I was not alone and that others had similar experiences was greatly comforting. Since that day my life has improved immensely. I have a better relationship with my family and friends and I feel happier with myself. I have learned that there is a large number of fun things to do that don't involve drinking. I have an active social life and great friends to spend my time with. I have been sober for seven years..



Calling All Employers J1 Jobs Needed for Summer 2008

The J1 students are coming. If you have summer job openings for students arriving from Ireland on the J1 visas, get in touch with us and leave your details. Every year the EIIC successfully connects hundreds of students with jobs here in the US. Similarly, if you know of a student who is coming over looking for work, get in touch.

CALL 718-478-5502 Ext. 208

KNITTING CLASSES

Knitters of all abilities are taking part in a knitting campaign to create blankets for the elderly and infirm Irish in nursing homes in the city.

The initiative, launched in the Bronx EIIC offices, invites classes of beginners, intermediate and advanced to knit one foot squares that will then be stitched together to form the blankets.

The wool to start off the project was kindly donated by a local Woodlawn senior and classes are open to the public. They take place in the Katonah Avenue, Bronx Office on Tuesdays from 10am to noon. Please call 718-324-3039 Ext 102 for details.

NEED HELP?

Speak to Someone in Confidence

The EIIC has a qualified social worker available to assist in times of need. For caring, compassionate and confidential assistance, please contact: 718-478-5502 x104.

Drop in therapy hours with a licensed clinical social worker are available in the Bronx office on Thursdays between 4-8 pm and in Queens on Mondays between 4-8 pm. Please call Laura O'Brien at 718-478-5502 Ext. 104 for more details.

All services are held in strict confidence.

Information, referrals and counselling are available for:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Relationship issues
- Pregnancy
- Depression or Other Emotional Problems

INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES AT AIRPORTS WILL INHIBIT UNDOCUMENTED ACCESS TO THE US

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced that it has now begun collecting additional fingerprints from international visitors arriving at international airports in the US, to stop thousands of “immigration violators from entering the country”.

The new regime, effective at a host of US international airports from last month, means that 10 prints will be taken from visitors, instead of two, as was the norm previously.

The change was officially cited as necessary to “enhance security and facilitate legitimate travel by more accurately and efficiently establishing and verifying visitors’ identities.”

The change is in addition to a decision in 2004 to start taking photographs from all non-US citizens between the ages of 14 and 79, with some exceptions, when they apply for visas or arrive at U.S. ports of entry.

Mr. Paul Morris, Executive Director of Admissibility Requirements and Migration Control, Office of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said that “for legitimate visitors, the process becomes more efficient and their identities are better protected from theft” but that “for those who may pose a risk, we will have greater insight into who they are.”

The department’s US-VISIT program “checks a visitor’s fingerprints against DHS records of immigration violators and Federal

Bureau of Investigations (FBI) records of criminals and known or suspected terrorists,” he said, adding that officers will check biometrics against watch lists when deciding whether or not to grant visas to visitors and allow them into the country.

The increase from two to 10 fingerprint collection at airports will also improve fingerprint matching accuracy, both for immigration records and for latent fingerprints collected by Department of Defense (DOD) and the FBI from known and unknown terrorists from around the world. Washington Dulles International Airport began 10-fingerprint collection on November 29, 2007, and Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport began a year ago. Logan International Airport, with almost 2,000 international visitors completing US VISIT biometric procedures every day, most of them from the Ireland, the UK, Germany and France, introduced the measures last month.

New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport, Chicago O’Hare International Airport, San Francisco International Airport, George Bush Houston Intercontinental Airport, Miami International Airport, Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport and Orlando International Airport were all the latest airports to adopt the new measures.

The remaining air, sea and land ports will move to collecting 10 fingerprints by the end of 2008.

New United States Passport Fees Introduced

The Department of State has introduced a new fee schedule for passport services.

At this time applicants will also have the option of pre-ordering a new Passport Card, a low cost, limited use (land and sea only) alternative to the Passport Book designed for those living along the border. In addition, the age for which both parents must appear and sign a passport application on behalf of a child will increase from 14 to 16 years old. Fees are being adjusted to cover the cost of providing efficient and secure passport services including infrastructure, technology and staff. The

Passport Execution fee collected by passport acceptance centers and U.S. consular sections abroad is being reduced from \$30 to \$25. To protect children from abduction, and to address concerns regarding runaway children, from February 1 last, both parents are now required to personally appear at a passport acceptance facility, passport agency or U.S. consular section abroad with minor applicants under the age of 16 (up from age 14) and sign the application. New application forms and updated information on applying for a Passport and Passport Card are available February 1 at <http://travel.state.gov/passport>.

	<u>Current Passport Application Fee</u>	<u>Current Execution Fee</u>	<u>Current Total Fee</u>	<u>New Passport Application Fee</u>	<u>New Execution Fee</u>	<u>New Total Fee</u>
Passport Book						
Adult	\$67	\$30	\$97	\$75	\$25	\$100
Passport Book						
Child	\$52	\$30	\$82	\$60	\$25	\$85
Passport Card						
Adult	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	\$20	\$25	\$45
Passport Card						
Child	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	\$10	\$25	\$35
Adult Passport						
Renewal	\$67	Not Applicable	\$67	\$75	Not Applicable	\$75

Men of Law Honored at Briscoe Awards Ceremony for Exemplary Assistance to the Irish

The Annual Briscoe Awards event took place in January with prestigious awards bestowed upon two men of great legal acclaim.

Jordan A. Ziegler and the Honorable Richard A. Brown were both honored for their part in helping the Irish community in exceptional ways and the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, which hosted the event, was delighted to record its gratitude to the two men.

The night was a roaring success with men of the cloth, Monseigneur James Kelly stepping in for EIIC Chaplain Father Colm Campbell who could not be in attendance and Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum taking to the stage with wit and humor, poignancy

and verve, recognizing the talents of the two honorees on this auspicious occasion.

Also in attendance were notable members of the community, including Ben Briscoe, City Council member John Liu, and City Council Member Vincent Gentile.

The sold-out event, held at the 21 Club in Manhattan, helped raise funds for operating costs for the EIIC and the Center would like to extend its thanks to all our sponsors who took part in the proceedings.

Next year's unmissable event is scheduled to take place in the 21 Club again, in January 2009. More details to follow.



Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum



Brian O'Dwyer (EIIC Chair) with 2008 Briscoe Honoree Jordan A. Ziegler, Ben Briscoe, 2008 Briscoe Honoree The Honorable Richard A. Brown and EIIC President Donald Kelly.



Msgr. James Kelly

Tax Filing is Possible for the Undocumented Immigrants Too

Even if you're undocumented, you should still file taxes as they will assist your case for a visa in the long term.

So, if you don't have a Social Security number, how do you file a tax return? You do that by using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) as a substitute. You get the number by including IRS Form W-7 the first time you file a tax return.

If you file with an ITIN, you won't get the economic stimulus rebates the IRS will be sending out in May. If you do file with a valid Social Security number, you can get the rebate regardless of your immigration status.

Many undocumented immigrants want an ITIN for banking and other purposes. Under current rules, however, you can get the ITIN only when filing a tax return. To get an ITIN, you must have a legal obligation to file a return. You have that obligation if

you earned \$400 or more as an independent contractor, you are self-employed or your employer doesn't report your income to the IRS. Many undocumented immigrants want an ITIN for banking and other purposes. Under current rules, however, you can get the ITIN only when filing a tax return. To get an ITIN, you must have a legal obligation to file a return.

For information about the ITIN on the Web, go to www.irs.gov. For information about Social Security accounts, visit the SSA Web site at www.ssa.gov.

If you need help preparing your tax return, try the free services offered through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). VITA provides trained volunteers to assist tax filers with income of \$20,000 or less if you have no dependents, or \$40,000 or less with dependents.

EIIC EVENTS

DINNER DANCE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 2007



Pictured Left to Right Executive Director, Siobhan Dennehy, Dinner Dance Co-Chair, Noreen O'Donoghue, Honoree John Greaney, EIIC Chair Brian O'Dwyer, Honorees Kathy Nolan, Mae O'Driscoll and Dinner Dance Co-Chair Lisa Johnston.

Advocacy Day a Real Success

The Emerald Isle Immigration Center participated in the New York City Advocacy day organized by the New York Immigration Coalition on Wednesday, March 26th, 2008. The event provided an important opportunity to show the strength of immigrants in New York City and to highlight local issues that affect immigrant New Yorkers. Funding and support for immigrant services, adult English classes and immigrant access to parks, decreased drop-out rates among K-12 English Language Learners, access to quality health care, affordable housing, worker centers supported by the city were amongst the issues raised at City Hall.

In the afternoon, pre-organized teams took part in legislative visits with their City Council members as well as representatives from city agencies. The NYIC coordinated the teams and the appointments and the event was very well attended.



ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY FOR BRONX OFFICE



May 2nd, 2008 we noted the one year anniversary of our new Bronx office on Katonah Avenue.



Emerald Isle Immigration
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Woodside, NY 11377

 825-C

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We're on the web at
www.eiic.org

**SAVE
THIS
DATE**

***UPCOMING
EVENTS***

FRIDAY ~ OCTOBER 24, 2008

Annual EIIC Dinner Dance
Astoria World Manor

If there is anything you would like to see in future issues please contact our newsletter editor (info@eiic.org) for inclusion in our next newsletter alternatively you can check out our website @ www.eiic.org