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# DAILY NEWS

## For bartenders, Irish dancers and others, it's all in a St. Patrick's Day's work

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DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

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Everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day — and with this year's holiday falling on a Tuesday, many New Yorkers are working, as well. But these men and women are putting in overtime on Patty's Day, from performing in parades and parties to making sure bar crawls stay under control.

### 9 QUESTIONS FOR A BARTENDER

#### [STEVEN MOLLOY](#)

AGE: 31

JOB: Bartender at Connolly's Pub, 121 W. 45th St.

HOURS: 50-60 a week

TIME ON THE JOB: More than 10 years

How did you get into bartending?

Well, I came over from [Ireland](#) about 10 years ago, but I was bartending in [Boston](#). After three years, I came to [New York](#) and the owners of [Connolly's](#), Bernie and Ann, hired me. It's a real Irish place, and they like to keep it all in the family.

So what's a typical St. Patrick's Day like for you?

It's insane. I usually get in at about 6:30 a.m., start setting up the bar, and the first people start coming in at around 7.

Really? Who comes in that early?

Sometimes it's people still drunk from the night before, and sometimes it's shift workers who will be at work during the night. Then there are the parade-goers that come in before heading out to the parade. And the bar is packed until about 4 or 5 a.m. But what's great is Patty's weekend always brings out the same people, so we get to see some regulars.

By weekend you mean the holiday will be celebrated starting the weekend before?

Yep, we'll be celebrating Friday through Wednesday. It will be the first chance this year that I'll be having to pay off my credit card.

What's the most popular drink on St. Patty's?

Guinness, of course.

Who are the most famous people you've served?

That guy from "[Will and Grace](#)" came in — also [Kiefer Sutherland](#), [Gabriel Byrne](#) and [Kathleen Turner](#). It's great to see these people and talk to them — I mean, in Ireland you don't see anyone but your grandparents.

What does St. Patrick's Day mean to you, being from Ireland?

It's like having a taste of home here. I have an 8-year-old son who was born here, and I've been trying to teach him about our culture — that Patty's isn't just an excuse to paint your face and run around like crazy.

So what do you do after your Patty's shift?

Get the hell out of here. I don't really drink anymore.

Why not?

It's like if you said to someone after they left their office, "Hey, want to come to my office?"



Zalcman for News

Irish bartender Steven Molloy expects to pay off some major bills with the money he makes working St. Patrick's Day.

## 5 QUESTIONS FOR AN IRISH DANCER

### NIALL O'LEARY

**AGE:** *Late 30s*

**JOB:** *Dancer, dance teacher*

**HOURS:** *Teaches six or seven days a week, dances every day*

**TIME ON THE JOB:** *More than 30 years*

#### **What is Irish dancing?**

Irish dancing is a high-energy dance form where you are moving your feet very quickly, making very syncopated, complex rhythm patterns. The defining feature is, you are dancing generally without moving your arms. Irish dancers move their feet very quickly, and there's lifting of the feet high off the floor, jumping and leaping. It evokes a feeling of excitement.

#### **How does it differ from "Riverdancing"?**

"Riverdancing" has become a common word to describe Irish dancing, but "Riverdance" is more performance-related: using the arms and maybe dancing in a straight line. It's a word from a commercial show.

A number of things are done differently in "Riverdance." Some people who teach Irish dance get very upset when [people] confuse the two. It's "Irish dancing," not "Riverdancing." The show contained music based in Irish music, and it also contained dancing very much rooted in Irish tradition, but it wasn't the epitome of traditional Irish dancing. They were moving around and doing some untraditional but challenging steps.

#### **When did you begin dancing?**

I've been dancing all my life. I grew up in [\[Dublin,\]](#) Ireland, and I've been dancing since I was about 4½. When I was 10 years old, I won the All-Ireland Dancing Championship. Then at 21, I won the All-Ireland and the World Dancing Championship. I love dancing to good music; I have enjoyed watching it since I was young because of its high energy and precision of movement. Two of my main interests are rhythmic variation and syncopation, and Irish dance is a vehicle for me to explore both!

#### **You also teach at the [Niall O'Leary School of Irish](#) dance. Are these fast-paced steps difficult to pick up?**

It's something I suppose that is challenging to somebody who has been accustomed to other kinds of dancing. But with a good teacher, I think you can learn to do anything. I'm getting children from all different cultures and different religious groups and ethnicities ... and I have a lot of adult students who might have done Irish dancing when they were 6, or never before. Sometimes they start off having trouble, but after a while they get really good. I get great joy from seeing somebody go from not being able to do something to being able to do it very well.

#### **What are you doing for St. Patrick's Day?**

I also have a professional Irish dance troupe [the Niall O'Leary Irish Dance Troupe], and we are doing a performance at the World Financial Center Winter Garden at 12:30 p.m. I'm also involved with the [Irish Arts Center](#) [553 W. 51st St., [www.irishartscenter.org](#)]. My students and I will perform at the Irish Arts Center's Open Day [today], where they open our doors to the public, free, and offer a variety of Irish music and dance performances, language workshops for adults and children, face painting, films and more.

## 7 QUESTIONS FOR A FIDDLER

### CADY FINLAYSON

**AGE:** *42*

**JOB:** *Irish fiddler*

**HOURS:** *70 per week*

**TIME ON THE JOB:** *20 years*

#### **How did you begin your Irish musician career?**

I was trained as a violinist, so I was all about classical music. Then when I moved to New York, I heard the Irish fiddle and fell in love.

#### **So you aren't Irish?**

No, I'm actually originally from [Seattle](#).

#### **Do you ever think it's funny that a non-Irish woman would lead an Irish life?**

It's like a dress that just fits, you know? You just know it's the one. And when I went to Ireland for the first time, I felt like I was going home.

#### **What does your music sound like?**

Irish music is very energetic, and the melodies are very spirited. My band and I try to mix in international influences, but the backbone of the music is traditionally Irish.

#### **Do you and your band have a strong Irish following?**

Yeah. But — as the old saying goes — on St. Patrick's Day, everyone's Irish.



Burke for News

Cady Finlayson isn't actually Irish, but to hear her fiddle you'd never know it.

### **What's the busiest St. Patrick's Day you've ever had?**

Well, one year we went from a gig in the morning in New York to another gig in Philly, then we came all the way back to [Brooklyn](#) to end with a gig at night. It was exhausting.

### **Do you celebrate the holiday after all your gigs are over?**

St. Patty's Day is wild, but it's really a month-long celebration for us. We were just in [Staten Island](#) last weekend for a pre-celebration. But honestly, I play Irish music 355 days a year, so St. Patrick's Day is every day for me.

## **5 QUESTIONS FOR A HEAD BOUNCER**

**KEVIN DALY**

**AGE:** 33

**JOB:** *Head bouncer*

**HOURS:** 6 1/2 a week

**TIME ON THE JOB:** 5 years

### **Why do you do muscle work for Rambling House in the [Bronx](#) when you already have a 9-to-5 desk job?**

I did it in college, and then I got out into the workforce. I do have a day job in direct marketing. But I hung out at Rambling House a few times with my friends, and then after awhile I asked, do you guys need bouncers? It's just something to break up the monotony of the daily grind. And I live about two blocks from Rambling House. I work 6 1/2 hours, usually just Saturday nights, but I will be there on St. Patrick's Day.

### **How does working on one of the biggest drinking days of the year compare to a regular rowdy Saturday night?**

Well, it's longer because they usually also require a couple of us during the day, for the families — the corned-beef-and-cabbage crowd. Then as the day progresses, we get a lot of people getting out of work, some people coming up from the parade who've been in the city all day. It's a long day for us, and we're usually packed to the nines until 3 or 4 a.m. It's really hard for the waitresses. They say they go home crying. And we get a good amount of college kids trying to sneak in.

### **How do you manage all those unruly drinkers?**

Well, we generally have a nice crowd, but St. Patrick's Day is one of our "amateur nights." There's a lot of people who normally don't go out, people who are not familiar to the bar scene, and if they take an elbow or get bumped by accident, we make sure they don't overreact. The main thing is to diffuse anything like that. We make sure nothing escalates. We don't get a lot of physical problems, but you get on occasion one or two people who just had a little too much, and I make sure they get out the door and get in a cab.

### **What's your plan of attack for Tuesday?**

I'm usually standing right next to the band, because it's a high-traffic area. There are a lot of people dancing around, so I make sure nobody is bumping into people, or jumping and waving their arms. I usually position myself there, and then set two guys at the door, and one guy at the back door, normally. For St. Patrick's Day, I'm putting on two extra guys, so there will be six of us in total.

### **Surely your sheer size is your secret weapon?**

[Laughs] I'm 6-foot-5 and 340 pounds. I'm a pretty big dude. When [unruly customers] see me walking over, they usually drop it right away so they don't get involved with me. I'm also in sales, so I'm a talker. So I use a combination of being able to talk to people ... and yeah, a little size intimidation.

## **6 QUESTIONS FOR A TOUR GUIDE**

**[SETH KAMIL](#)**

**AGE:** 42

**JOB:** *President & tour guide, Big Onion Walking Tours.*

**HOURS:** 60-70 per week

**TIME ON THE JOB:** 15 years

### **So you guide an Irish New York tour. What's it all about?**

It's a walking tour that shows through landmarks how meaningful the Irish have been to developing the City — like the fire and police departments, for example. It takes place mostly around Chinatown, which used to be entirely Irish. The tour is particularly meaningful around St. Patrick's Day.

### **You see bigger tour groups around the holiday?**

Oh yeah, absolutely.

### **And do you see a lot of Irish people on the tour?**

Yes, really a lot of locals. It's funny sometimes because a lot of people who are descended from the Irish have this really deep pride in a culture they know very little about. For example, a lot of people associate Irish with Catholic, but that's not always the case. I've had people get a little crazed, literally foaming at the mouth, when I explain the non-Catholic history to them. It's hilarious.

### **So what's the deal with drinking and St. Patrick's Day?**

The academic answer is that drinking has always been a part of the blue-collar, working-class social gathering, and this is, for the most part, what the Irish were. Also, there's the fact that at one point in New York you couldn't drink the water, so beer was a great alternative.

**What's the craziest thing that's ever happened while you've been giving a tour?**

I was in the middle of talking when a man staggered across Bowery up to a pretty blond lady in the group, with a bottle of Thunderbird in his back pocket. He dropped his pants and asked her if he could father her children. Mind you, this was New York in the early '90s, so it was a very different vibe downtown.

**What will you be doing this year?**

I'll be working. I used to live on E. 86th St. That was enough parade for me.