

Inside this Issue

Directors Notes

Rally Ireland

Almac Establishes NA Headquarters

Nations Unite for Autism

Cross Border Orchestra - Chicago

Children's Friendship Project NI

Interview with Dr Theodore Roumel

Key Goals

Library of Congress Concerts

OCO Opens on Wall Street

US Ambassadors Lead Business Delegation to Northern Ireland

US Ambassadors to the UK and the Irish Republic led a business delegation on a two-day fact-finding mission to Northern Ireland.

The deputation is the first in a series announced by the Honorable Paula J. Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs and the President's Special Envoy on Northern Ireland, to raise the profile of the investment conference proposed for Northern Ireland in spring 2008.

Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister Nigel Dodds welcomed the group, led by Ambassador Tuttle of the US Embassy in London; and Thomas C. Foley, US Ambassador to the Irish Republic, to the Parliament Buildings at Stormont and said: **"This visit gives us a great opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland. Increased levels of inward investment in high value, knowledge-based sectors will contribute to generating the growth and productivity improvements which will increase the economic prosperity of Northern Ireland in the longer term."**

"Northern Ireland offers a welcoming region where

overseas investors will find a good supply of skills from a well-educated workforce, a strong infrastructure and third-level institutions where the commercial exploitation of R&D and innovation lie at the heart of the academic and skills agenda.

"In short, we have hi-tech expertise, industrial ingenuity and a great lifestyle offering a province which is open for business, and a government which is deeply committed to working with business, for business.

"By investing in skills, innovation and economic infrastructure we aim to attract and encourage quality investment by international and local companies on which to grow our private sector." Over the course of their visit, the delegation had the opportunity to see why now is the time for international investment to come to Northern Ireland."

Ambassador Tuttle added: **"It is significant that the last US Government delegation to visit the Parliament Buildings witnessed the historic return of devolution and the promise of local leaders making decisions for the benefit of local people. We look forward to working with Minister Dodds as he seeks to further utilize the immense economic opportunities that are evident throughout Northern Ireland."**



Front; First Minister, Dr Ian Paisley; deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness; Back; Minister Nigel Dodds; US Consul General, Susan Elliott; Len O'Hagan, Harbor Commission; Ambassador Tuttle, US Embassy London; US Ambassador to Ireland, Thomas C.Foley
(Photograph courtesy of Matt Smith)

Director's Notes

It is a great personal pleasure to be able to use the medium of the Bureau's Newsletter to introduce myself to all our supporters across the United States. In some cases this is really a re-introduction as I know many people from my last posting as Deputy Director some five years ago.

I have taken great delight in renewing old acquaintances, and equally, I am enjoying making many new contacts this time round. Despite an absence of five years I feel very much at home in this city and I never cease to be impressed by the very genuine good will of everyone I come across.

Tim Losty, my predecessor, did a great deal to strengthen the role of the Bureau. Over the next few months, I plan to widen our outreach program to other cities and states, and to encourage more Americans to consider Northern Ireland not only as a business location but as a place to enjoy a well-earned vacation. I envisage the Bureau developing its working relationships with two other well-known agencies, Invest NI and Tourism Ireland. All three of us are here in the United States to work together and help Northern Ireland.

I can think of no better time to take over the reins at the Bureau. We have a new Executive which has been governing Northern Ireland for seven months. Ministers have just published a new draft Programme for Government which has the support of all parties in the Executive. Plans are also being made for a major economic conference in Belfast next spring.

That conference will be an excellent opportunity to promote the very best of Northern Ireland, and we hope that it will attract a large number of American executives who are looking to expand their operations in Europe. In the meantime, we had the honor of hosting a visit by the First Minister, Dr Ian Paisley and the deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness to New York and Washington, DC at the beginning of this month. That visit culminated in a welcome by President Bush at the White House on Friday, December 7th.

There are exciting times ahead, and I feel very privileged to be able to lead the Bureau team for the next three years. We couldn't have got this far without all your help and support, and I look forward to developing more mutually beneficial relationships over the coming months.

Norman Houston, Director



Norman Houston

Drivers Give Rally Ireland the Thumbs Up

Stormont Castle has seen many an historic night, but in terms of pure visual and aural excitement few would have matched the evening's start to the inaugural Irish round of the World Rally Championship. The November night was cold and dry, but the 44 degrees temperature was an indication of the difficulties to be encountered by drivers. The opening ceremony was a cacophony of sound and vision, celebrating the rich heritage of Northern Ireland.

Three days of tough racing over wet, dirty northern roads may have taken a heavy toll on some of the world's best rally cars, but it certainly did not dampen the enthusiasm of the drivers for the event, which was held on the island of Ireland for the first time. World Champion and current championship pacesetter Sebastien Loeb says he would be delighted to compete again in the Irish round, praising the event despite the tough driving conditions.

"It was a nice rally and it's always a nice atmosphere here," Loeb said. **"I have come here three times now to compete in rallies and won, so I would like to come again."** Mark Higgins, who hails from the Isle of Man, was fully supportive of bringing the rally to Ireland, North and South saying it was long overdue.

"Having a World Championship rally on the island of Ireland is something I think everybody's really wanted, and to actually pull it together is fantastic," he said. **"The atmosphere's been absolutely brilliant and the stages have been well run. To be honest, I thought the traffic was going to be a nightmare but they've organized that really, really well, we've had no problems at all."**

The drivers were particularly complimentary about the organization and the spectators. Many of them had reason to be grateful to onlookers who pulled their cars out of ditches and fields after crashes. Gareth McHale, gaining his second WRC points finish was delighted with his performance on his home rally, **"It was such a great rally, so well run and the volume of spectators at each stages was out of this world. To get a WRC point at home is just brilliant. Local organizers really proved that we can stage an event such as this."**

PWRC category winner, Fermanagh's Niall McShea was equally complimentary, **"The road surface was so greasy, each stage was unpredictable but so enjoyable. I loved the challenge. It was a brilliant rally. I spoke with other competitors and they all said they loved it. It's been brilliantly run and is definitely deserving of a place in '09."**

Almac Establishes North American Headquarters

Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell joined Almac Group founder Sir Allen McClay in October to announce a \$100 million project to establish Almac's North American headquarters in southeast Pennsylvania.

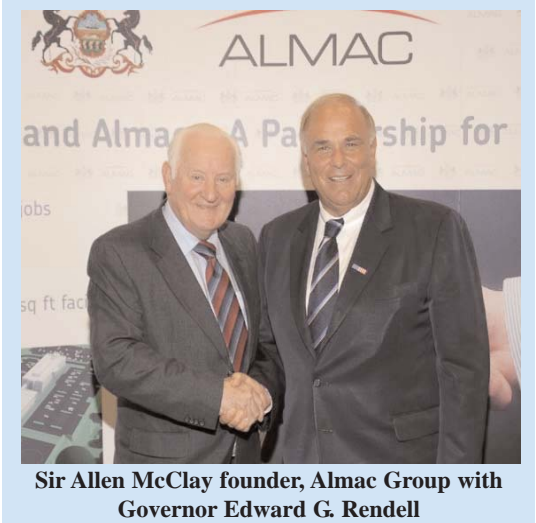
The Almac Group, based in Craigavon, Northern Ireland, provides integrated research, development and manufacturing services to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. The new US office will create more than 260 American jobs over the next three years, and more than 400 jobs by 2013. The new opportunities will include software development and laboratory specialists.

Speaking on behalf of Almac, Sir Allen McClay said he was delighted that Pennsylvania is now a "major part" of Almac's success story. He continued, **"The future for Almac in the US, in Ireland, and across the globe is very exciting, and this new facility will underpin our presence and our quality service to our clients in the USA."**

Governor Rendell shared Almac's enthusiasm for this project during his announcement of the state financial package. **"For us, as a commonwealth, it's a terrific result. They decided they wanted to grow and consolidate in one location. There isn't a state in the Northeast that wouldn't give their right arm for a company like Almac,"** the Governor said.

Tim Losty, former Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau, emphasized the importance of this investment in the context of the changing face of Northern Ireland. **"Almac is a prime example of the cutting edge businesses that have emerged in Northern Ireland. For years, we have focused much of our attention on attracting inward investment, but this project speaks to a Northern Ireland economy that is thriving and maturing every day."**

Almac's North American headquarters is due to begin construction next year, and will be fully operational by 2010.



Nations Unite for Autism

In September 2007, the Northern Ireland Bureau arranged a visit program for Autism NI, within the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership.

During the visit Autism, NI took its case to Capitol Hill along with a high profile delegation of Northern Ireland Assembly Members. They attended an intensive round of meetings with US Congressmen and Senators, accompanied by colleagues from the Autism Society of America.



Guests at the NIB reception including Jack McDonnell; Irish Ambassador, Michael Collins; Jackie McDonnell; Paul Quinn; and Mark Powell of the US State Dept.

Under the dome of the Capitol in Washington, DC, the Northern Ireland Autism lobby came of age as a historic Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the US Congressional Autism Caucus and the Northern Ireland Assembly Autism Caucus.

Congressmen Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) were instrumental in bringing this relationship to fruition. Both have been deeply committed to combating autism throughout their tenure in Congress, and were enthusiastic about the prospects of sharing expertise across the Atlantic.

Autism NI will seek to continue this partnership in the coming months with an invitation to their Congressional counterparts to visit Belfast in 2008.

This commitment to the sharing of expertise, research, information exchange and support on developing autism legislation was mirrored by the launch of the Atlantic Autism Alliance between the Autism Society of America and the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership.

During their visit to Washington, the Northern Ireland Bureau and the Embassy of Ireland co-hosted a reception for the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership which was attended by some of the key organizations in Washington, DC.

Cross Border Orchestra Performs in Chicago and Boston

The Cross Border Orchestra Ireland (CBOI), hailed by Sean Farrell, Irish Consul General to Chicago as “*musical ambassadors of Ireland*” have yet again made history by packing two of the world’s greatest music halls on their debut performance in Chicago, and return to beautiful Boston. The acclaimed orchestra thrilled audiences and received multiple standing ovations at all concerts.

The Orchestra was welcomed to Chicago with a dinner and performance at Chicago Gaelic Park in October, which was attended by several hundred invitees. Following a top class concert and numerous standing ovations, John Griffin, President of Chicago Gaelic Park, spoke passionately about the Orchestra’s performance. He said that Chicago Gaelic Park had welcomed thousands of performers through its doors for the past 26 years, but “*tonight’s performance by the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland is the best we’ve ever seen*”. The entire audience stood, cheered and applauded in unanimous agreement.



Cross Border Orchestra at the Chicago Symphony Hall

CBOI also performed at the Curie Metropolitan High School which is one of the most highly acclaimed performing arts schools in North America. This concert was sponsored by Chicago City and was attended by over 1,000 young people primarily from deprived communities throughout the city’s suburbs. The audience was thoroughly enthralled by the orchestra and clapped, sang and danced their way through the entire performance which was specially tailored to suit the young attendees. The concert was also attended by representatives from the Chicago Public School Board who were inspired by the CBOI’s music and mission and as a result, hope to be able to use the CBOI as a model for reintroducing music to Chicago Public Schools.



Tenor, Emmanuel Lawler at the Chicago Symphony Hall

The highlight of the tour was the spectacular evening in Chicago Symphony Hall. The rousing call of thirty pipers from the Chicago Shamrock Pipers rang out through the city on this calm summer’s evening as they played outside the auditorium to welcome over 2,000 audience members into Symphony Hall. There were at least eight standing ovations in what was a hugely uplifting experience and certainly the Orchestra’s best concert and greatest achievement in 12 years. Tenor Emmanuel Lawler was wonderful throughout the evening and wowed the crowd singing a range of music from Irish to Classical. Particular favorites of the evening were Patrick Martin on Uilleann pipes who created a haunting dimension to the extraordinary concert and drummer, William Millers, who created quite a sensation with his Lambeg Drum.

Another highlight of the tour was the CBOI’s performance at the American Ireland Fund Gala Ball in the luxurious and glorious surroundings of the Hilton Hotel, Chicago. Over 700 guests attended. CBOI took to the stage to entertain the crowd, many had heard thrilling reports about the Orchestra’s performance at Symphony Hall, and were filled with great expectations and the CBOI did not disappoint. Their performance of a series of show-stoppers was absolutely electric.

From Chicago, the CBOI went on to Boston Symphony Hall which is ranked as the 4th best music hall in the world. Here the Orchestra once again performed with a choir made up of 500 children from greater Boston. A farewell dinner and party for the Orchestra was held at Boston’s Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. Irish Cultural Centre President Sean Grant organized and hosted this great farewell celebration which was tremendously enjoyed by orchestra members and staff alike.

This tour was a monumental achievement for the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland. No other orchestra in Ireland, and few the world over, have the expertise, capability, vision or drive to undertake such mammoth national and international projects, and succeed to this extent.

Twenty Years Bringing Youth Together

By Sharon Harroun

The Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI) started in 1987. Over the past twenty years it has changed the lives of over 2,000 teenagers, and through them it has changed the lives of their families, friends and ordinary people from every part of Northern Ireland.

CFPNI has run cross-cultural programs for teenagers who, for the most part, had little or no previous contact with their counterparts from the other tradition in Northern Ireland. The aim was to break down barriers, bring the young people together and promote mutual understanding between them. The teenagers participated in extensive activities in Northern Ireland and came to the United States for a few weeks in the summer, where they stayed in pairs — one Catholic, one Protestant — with American host families.

I first became involved as a host parent in 1990. From 1993 until 2004 I served as a board member of CFPNI, the last two years as Chairman. They were very rewarding years, which changed my life and instilled in me a love of Northern Ireland and an admiration for its people.

With the first ceasefires in Northern Ireland, and the beginning of peace talks, CFPNI began to focus more and more on leadership development, contributing to the peace process as best we could by helping to prepare the young people for a different kind of Northern Ireland. We knew that the sustainability of the peace, even after the 1998 agreement was reached, would depend upon a new generation of leaders.

In the United States the teenagers met leaders from all walks of life, from business to religion to government. Senior politicians from both major parties — Democrats like Senator Hillary Clinton and Republicans like Congressman Jim Walsh — gave freely of their time to talk to the teenagers. So did Ambassadors Richard Haass and Mitchell Reiss. One year we had a leadership conference at De Sales University in Pennsylvania. In addition, teenagers participated in community projects in Anacostia and in Baltimore.

In all these, and many other activities, we were fortunate to have wonderful encouragement and support from the Northern Ireland Bureau. Former Director Don Alexander and Deputy Director Norman Houston both became board members of CFPNI after they left Washington. Directors Peter Smyth, and more recently Tim Losty, were tremendously supportive of the program. We also enjoyed help from their colleagues in the British and Irish Embassies, and the US State Department.

Now with a government up and running in Belfast, and a new generation of teenagers with little recollection of the troubles, the American part of the CFPNI program has completed its final year. As someone who was involved with it for sixteen years, I am sad about that. But I am proud of what this all-volunteer organization has achieved. I have watched many teenagers grow into wonderful young adults, some now in their thirties. They have kept up the friendships they made through CFPNI. Many of their families are close friends. They have changed Northern Ireland and will continue to change it.

At a reunion in Enniskillen in October, I was delighted to see, as always, the passionate dedication of the Northern Ireland volunteers and the enthusiasm of the teenagers and CFPNI alumni. Sad though many of us are that the American part of the program has now ended, it is right that it should do so. It is time for the Americans to step back. The work in Northern Ireland will continue in some form. Those volunteers will continue the work of reconciliation and bridge-building, and the CFPNI alumni will help build the new Northern Ireland. Of that I have no doubt.

We in America have learned and benefited from our experience with CFPNI as much as we may have contributed. We have learned a lot from Northern Ireland about reconciliation and the human spirit. We have made friendships that will last forever.

Many readers of this newsletter have supported CFPNI over the years, and I send my heart felt thanks to you all.

The Northern Ireland Bureau would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Sharon Harroun for her commitment and friendship to Northern Ireland.

Sharon was instrumental in the establishment and development of CFPNI. We also appreciate the fact that in her new life in LA, Sharon maintains her commitment to Northern Ireland.

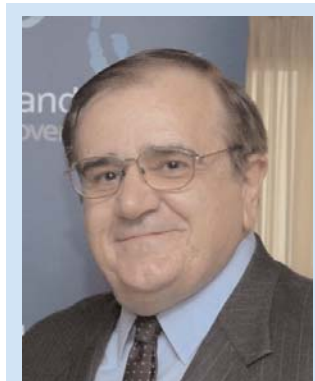


Sharon Harroun

Interview with Dr Theodore Roumel President & CEO of The Roumel Group

Brief Background

I first became involved with issues in NI in the 1980s when I met a civil servant from Belfast at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia. We became fast friends and kept in touch over the years. That gentleman was Nigel Hamilton, now Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.



Dr Theodore Roumel

In the late 1990's I was involved in developing relationships between the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and entities in the Republic of Ireland. It was a very successful venture and is now being expanded. At that time I also met technology transfer professionals from NI. We conversed, and I visited the University of Ulster to meet with officials and scientists.

What is your interest in Northern Ireland?

I was asked if I would be interested in advising the NI Bureau (NIB) in Washington, DC on science and technology issues that arise and I agreed to join the NIB Board of Advisors. I worked with Tim Losty and Michael Gould on a variety of issues and continue to do that now with Norman Houston.

What was your latest activity in Northern Ireland?

I was invited by Dr David Brownlee of the NI Innovations section of the NI Clinical Research Support Centre (CRSC) of the NI National Health Service, to present a key-note address at the kickoff of the efforts by the CRSC to capture intellectual property being developed by CRSC staff. I attended the meetings at Templepatrick outside of Belfast which turned out to be very successful.

At that time I also held meetings with Prof Peter Gregson, Vice Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, and Dr Jerry McCormack, Pro Vice Chancellor, on a variety of matters regarding marketing of technologies from Queen's and possible collaboration between Queen's and the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute in Baltimore Maryland. Those discussions are still underway.

I met with officials of the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in NI regarding a new land based Marine culture system (which will be cutting edge in technology)

to raise salt water fish species in enclosed tanks. This technology permits the raising of salt water fish species in an environmentally friendly manner that includes the capture of waste products, methane and leaving minimal inert sludge.

AFBI is now assessing the viability of this for use in NI and the revival of the fishing industry in NI for high value fish to be produced and used internally as well as for export outside the country. We will be working on this closely with NI officials over the next few months.

Again, this is a technology from the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute and has been well received by several Ministers in the NI government.

Was your recent visit successful?

In all, it was a successful trip, and I look forward to visiting Belfast and Northern Ireland in the near future.

What have you seen in Northern Ireland that the United States would be interested in?

People in the US would be very interested in the opportunities for investment, education and tourism in NI. More specifically, the change in the skyline and infrastructure of Belfast and the proposed development of the Titanic Quarter.

As well as other parts of the city for entertainment; the friendliness of the people of Northern Ireland; the beauty of the countryside; and the scholastic, scientific/technical and artistic capabilities of the people of Northern Ireland.

I guess this may sound like a commercial for Northern Ireland and it probably is--but I do believe it.

Northern Ireland - Websites

University of Ulster

www.ulster.ac.uk

Queens University

www.qub.ac.uk

NI Clinical Research Support Centre

www.crsc.n-i.nhs.uk

NI Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute

www.afbini.gov.uk

Invest Northern Ireland

www.investni.com

Titanic Quarter

www.titanic-quarter.com

Ilex

www.illex-urc.org

Discover Northern Ireland

www.discovernorthernireland.com

Northern Ireland Office

www.nio.gov.uk

Belfast City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk

Program for Government

“Our aim is to build a peaceful, fair and prosperous society in Northern Ireland”
below are some of the key goals put forward by the Northern Ireland Executive for building a better future.

- **Increasing the employment rate**
- **Supporting 45 new businesses and 600 existing companies**
 - **Securing inward investment commitments**
 - **Growing the creative industries sector**
 - **Increasing the number of tourists**
 - **Reducing child poverty**
- **Investing in regenerating disadvantaged communities, neighborhoods, towns and cities**
- **Increasing the number of children and young people participating in sport and physical recreation**
 - **Investing in social and affordable housing**

Library of Congress Concerts Available Online

Missed this past summer's concert series featuring musicians from Northern Ireland at the Library of Congress?

Luckily, audio excerpts and complete webcasts are now available online at the Library of Congress's website through the links below.

Daithi Sproule, traditional singer and guitarist, and Robert Watt, Highland bagpiper
www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4076

Rosie Stewart, traditional singer
www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4066

John Moulden, lecturer, on the topic American Influence on Irish Song
www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4067

Gary Hastings, flautist, and Brian Mullen, singer
Concert and Lecture: www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4078

Camerata Ireland, orchestra
www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4087

Issue 12 Winter 2007

OCO

Belfast Company Opens for Business on Wall Street

OCO, a Belfast based firm specializing in foreign direct investment (FDI) intelligence, location assessment and consultancy has taken a significant step forward in becoming what is believed to be the first Northern Ireland company to base itself on Wall Street in New York, one of the world's most prestigious locations.

OCO will operate from 14 Wall Street located just a short distance from the New York Stock Exchange. OCO offers consultancy services and FDI tracker and location assessment products to multinationals and economic development organizations in the US market. Already, OCO has secured a number of clients based in the US including the United Nations (UN) which use OCO as its exclusive source for FDI data.

Founded in 2001 by Mark O'Connell, the company has rapidly expanded to employ over 50 professional staff across offices in Belfast, Paris, Cork, Brussels, Shanghai and now New York.

“Some of the World's largest investment comes from the US and Wall Street certainly plays a crucial role in today's global financial markets,” says Mark O'Connell, CEO of OCO. **“After six years of the company's development it was felt important to have a foothold in the US market both to service existing clients and grow our business further. By having a presence on Wall Street we can be closer to the major multinationals and economic development organizations who require strategic advice on investment locations globally.”**

The OCO business in the US will be headed by Gregg Davis who previously worked for the US State Department and Oppenheimer & Company. He said: **“OCO views the provision of FDI intelligence and investor targeting services to the North America market as a key growth**

area for its business and this is reflected in opening the New York office.

“OCO views the provision of FDI intelligence and investor targeting services to the North American market as a key growth area for its business and this is reflected in opening the New York office. As competition intensifies for FDI, there is a real need for organizations to have a clear and up to date picture of the FDI environment. We want to continue to build our reputation in the US market as the leading FDI authority.”

OCO's growing US customer base includes government and investment agencies such as the State of Arizona, Enterprise Florida, New PA (Pennsylvania) and a number of private sector companies such as McAfee Software. OCO also currently represents a number of US business interests in Europe.



L to R; Mark O'Connell, CEO, OCO; with Gregg Davis who will head up OCO Business in the US and Dr. Henry Loewendahl, Global Director for OCO's Investment Products

Tim Losty, former Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington DC said: **“I am pleased to see a business from Northern Ireland with a strong international outlook establish a presence in the United States and this will further strengthen the economic relationship we have with America. I hope many organizations here will benefit from the expertise and knowledge OCO will be bringing to the marketplace.”**