

HELPFUL HINTS 'N' TIPS FOR THE BOSTON-BOUND

Did you ever notice how you can be "bound" if you're going nowhere and "bound" if you're going somewhere? What's up with that?

Anyway this was written well before Séamus Connolly decided that Gaelic Roots 2003 was the last one of the series. It will be missed.

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A number of people who really should know better have inquired as to Zouki's plans for Gaelic Roots 1999.

Unfortunately he has been asked to appear at an Alternative Udmurt Yak Fertility Festival being held that same week somewhere (? on the steppes of) Central Asia.

Notice the use of the verb "appear" as contrasted to "perform". Zouki appreciates the implied caution, but suspects an error on the part of the Festival organizers - perhaps he is being confused with Zorki, a legendary figure often referred to as "The Wayne Newton of Udmurt music" - but has no intention of spilling the metaphorical beans in view of the BIG MONEY involved [at least it looks big - I'll check out the Udmurt glurff - US dollar exchange rate tomor-row] which put Gaelic Roots' offers of reimbursement to shame.

Your week together does give every appearance of being enjoyable, but to ensure same - especially if it will be your first time in Boston - Zouki would like to offer these few tiny hints:

- the water in Boston is OK to drink without boiling; the same is not necessarily true for some of the local brews, of which there are many. If you want to sample one, order a very small quantity - say a shot glass full - and ask a bodhrán player to test it first. Bloody vomit or unconsciousness are generally considered good indicators to avoid whatever the hell was in the glass.

- the natives are friendly enough once the Vestigial Human Sacrifice known as "rush hour" is past.

- hard as it is to believe, a few local sub-groups (in many senses of the word) still worship the Kennedys, so Teddy jokes should be avoided. Chappaquiddick is nowhere near BC anyway, but you female types should still be wary

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about accepting rides from any "happily-married" Irish-American Demo-crats. If on the other hand the person offering the ride says his name is Barney Frank, it isn't a problem unless you're both wearing the same color nail polish.

- the Fenway area contains both Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, and many gay bars. There are no sessions (of the IRTRAD sort) in any of these bars. If you wander into the area to pick up a pair of studed underwear - strictly of course to get a laugh out of your session buddies back in Neosho or Keokuk - never accept used bubble-gum from strangers.
- there is a restaurant in Boston known as Durgin-Park that features obscene slabs of meat and equally obscene and impertinent elderly waitresses, the like of whom you innocents from anywhere west of Albany have probably never seen. Feel free to engage in verbal abuse with these women - it's what they're there for. Physical abuse is more or less frowned upon except if a self-defense situation is involved. If you like to live dangerously, wait till the end of the meal and as you are leaving, tell your waitcrone "Your service sucked - forget about a tip!" (Make sure before doing this that your medical insurance covers suicidal acts).
- at some of the better-known session pubs in Boston, the temperature of the beer and the temperature of the welcome you receive may be about the same. Deal with it. Play twice as loud as you usually would and forget about tuning. Sing a few bars of "The Wabash Cannonball" while the Heavy Hitters are trying to ignore you. Go back to the dorm, take a good hot shower, and forget you were ever in the place (until you get back to Boulder or Butte and need to pick up a few brag points). If it's any consolation, they don't treat us Lower-Tier Locals any better.
- Bostonians consider anyone who attempts to speak the local dialect using phrases like "pahk the cah" or "tuner fish" or "wicked ..." to be morons. You have been warned!
- "scrod" and "quahogs" are sea-creatures, both good to eat. Tabasco sauce must be requested. You will be laughed at if you ask for grits. Service is not included in the bill. Ketchup on eggs and the attempted use of cash mark you as an Outlander; you may be asked to submit a set of fingerprints and/or a DNA sample if you try to use a personal check. If you're in an Italian restaurant in the North End and can't pronounce the dish, you probably wouldn't like it.

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- Speaking of the North End, it's best not to go into Mike's Bakery unless you can comprehend the Ying-Yangness of a black-and-white cookie before gobbling it down. With maybe a cappuccino.

Have fun!

