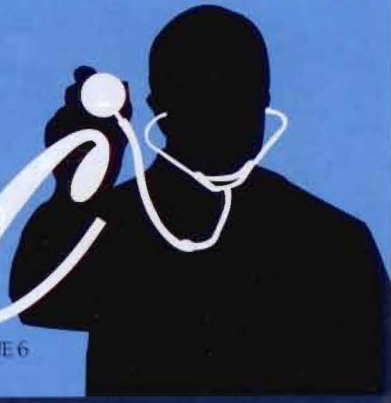


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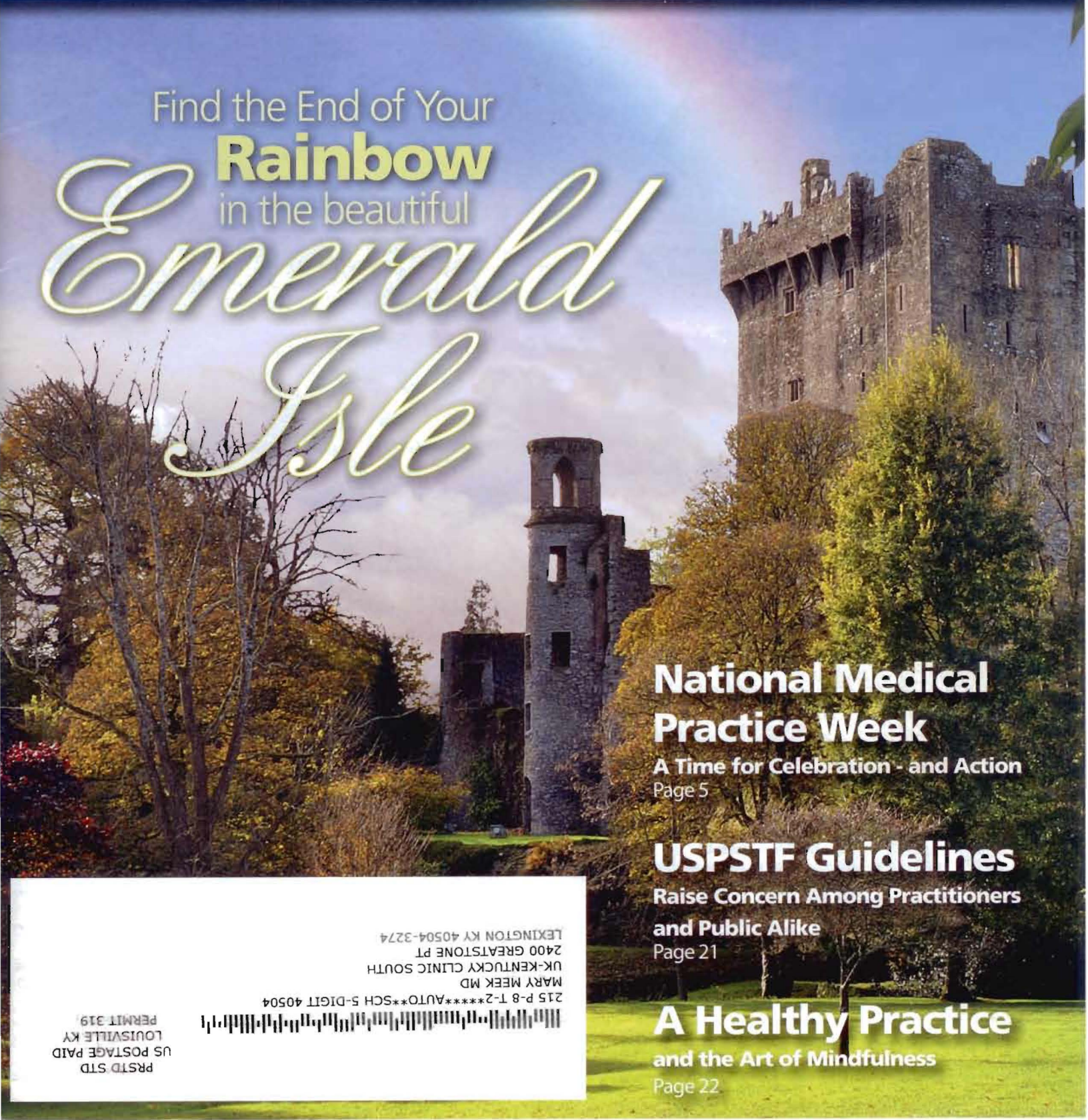
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in the beautiful

## *Emerald Isle*



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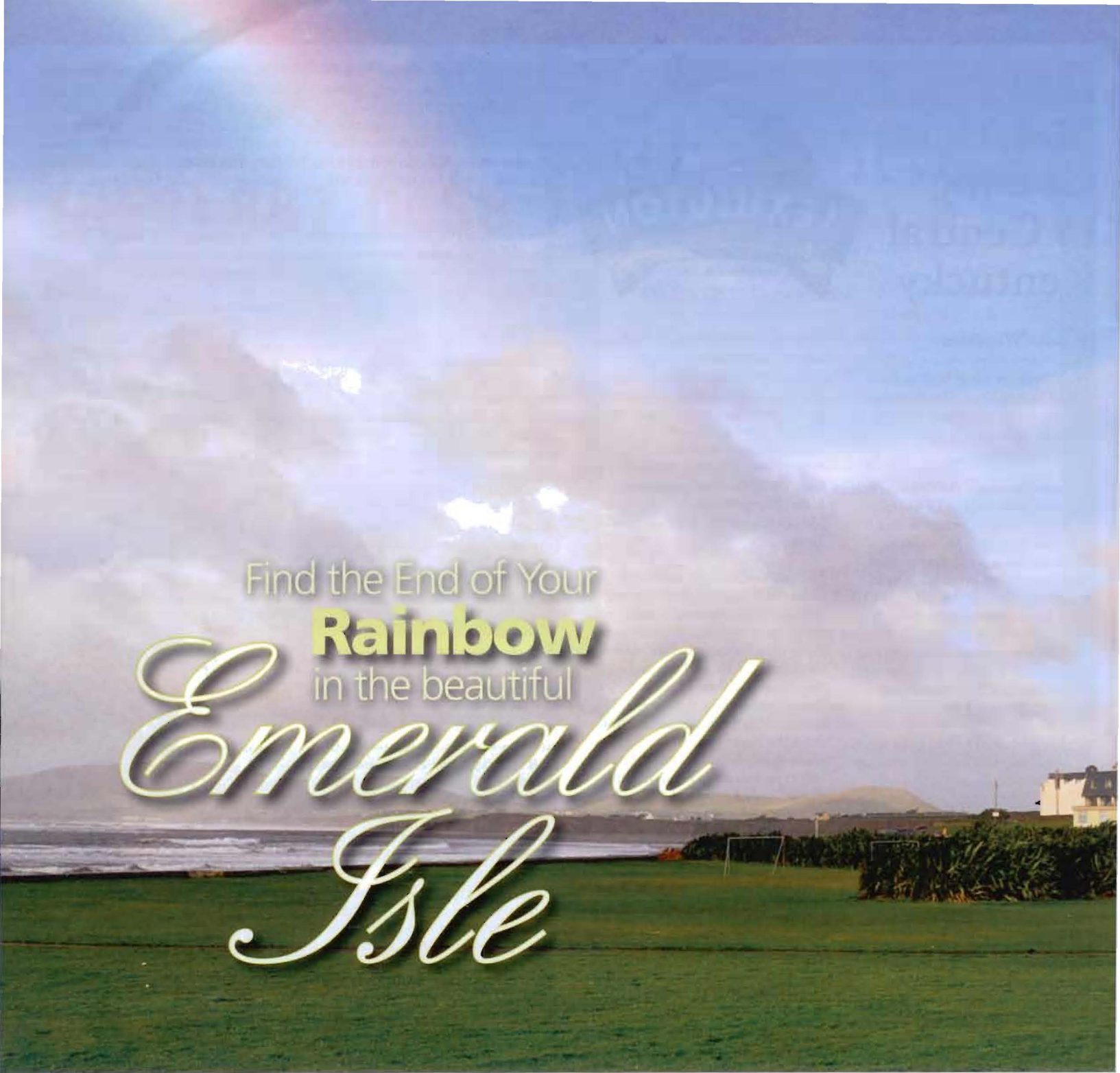
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# Emerald Isle



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with Dublin City, Guinness St  
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by Jan Ross, Social Media Director, The Travel Authority

## Ireland is where strange tales begin and happy endings are possible.

- Charles Haughey

Ireland is astonishingly beautiful. Fields as bright green as polished emerald are surrounded by stone fences carefully laid by hand hundreds of years ago. The cold, gray Atlantic smashes against craggy cliffs and rocks, creating a somber mood but then a perfect rainbow appears and lifts your spirits. It is a mystical, ancient land where you will see crumbling towers left beside modern neighborhoods because the superstitious Irish people don't believe in tampering with history. And it's not only their love and reverence for their history that makes the Irish people so interesting; it's also their knack for storytelling.

In November 2009, my husband and I toured Ireland from Shannon to Dublin with Brendan Vacations in a very comfortable motor coach. We decided this is the best way to see the country. Brendan transports you from one fabulous five-star hotel to another, making sure you see all the sights to be seen on the way with little effort on your part and an Irish guide accompanies you the entire trip.

A cool misty rain filled the air on the day we arrived and we soon found that it rains every day in Ireland. If you plan your outings around a sunny day, you will never leave your hotel. Just do what the Irish do and wear a raincoat with a hood that you can throw back when, inevitably, the wind blows away the rain clouds, the sun comes out and a rainbow appears. If

you missed seeing a rainbow, don't worry. There will be another one appearing shortly.

The first few days, we stayed at Dromoland Castle, an ancient castle which has been converted into a luxury hotel. This was by far the most fantastic place we have ever stayed and I will be writing about it in more detail next month in this same column, because it deserves a story of its own. From Dromoland, we ventured out to The Cliffs of Moher for our first full day of sightseeing with Brendan. After becoming used to green fields, still lakes and craggy rocks, it was a shock to pull up in our motorcoach and see the Atlantic Ocean stretching to the horizon. It's easy to forget that Ireland is actually just a large island until you arrive at the beautiful coastline.

From the Cliffs of Moher, we drove to Rathbaun Farm, an actual working Irish farm where we were thrilled to watch a collie actually herding sheep in a demonstration set up just for us – but we were even more thrilled with the lovely farm lunch we were served. This was the first but not the last time we devoured fresh Irish scones, heaped with blackcurrent jam and delicious, whipped cream. It's worth a trip to Ireland just for those scones – especially if you also pick up some boxes of the delicious Irish chocolates. We were astonished to learn that Ireland is known for its fabulous, homemade chocolates and we stocked up on several boxes of Lily O'Brien, Butler and Skellig chocolates to bring home.

The next day was spent marveling at the fabulous landscapes in the famous Ring of Kerry – or the Iveragh Peninsula, to give it the correct name. This beautiful and unspoiled region from the lovely coast to the rugged interior has attracted visitors for hundreds of years to marvel at its beauty and we were no different. Our best memories of Ireland will always be of the rustic castles and the beautiful Ring of Kerry.



The Foynes Flying Boat Museum was our next stop, where we had a tour of a replica of Pan Am's Yankee Clipper. Bunk beds, seven-course meals, room to stroll around – if only we could travel like that today! Did you know Irish Coffee was first concocted at Foynes? And they give you free samples!

I still have storytelling I would love to do about the beauty, mystery and grandeur that is Ireland. Like our Irish hosts, I could do on and on with my storytelling about this gorgeous country but I guess you will just have to visit yourself so you can tell your own stories!

#### About the Author:

Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer and the Social Media Director for The Travel Authority. You can read her blog at <http://thetravelauthority.blogspot.com/> to find out about other great travel deals and information. Or call The Travel Authority at 1-877-AXP-1515. They have locations all over Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Florida and Tennessee and will help you get the possible deal for your next trip.

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