



Michael F. Crowley Lectures

Our Third Program of the 2013-2014 Series

Christopher Klein, Author & Journalist

Tuesday, November 12, 2013 - 6:00 p.m.

International Tennis Hall of Fame-Special Event Room
194 Bellevue Avenue, Newport*

John L. Sullivan, “The Boston Strong Boy”: America’s First Irish-American Hero

Born in Boston’s South End to Irish-immigrant parents, John Lawrence Sullivan (1858-1918) was the last of the bare-knuckle heavyweight boxing champions. He was the first American athlete to earn over one million dollars, the first American sports “superstar,” and an Irish-American hero during the Gilded Age.

Writer Christopher Klein has published a new book on Sullivan entitled *Strong Boy: The Life and Times of John L. Sullivan, America’s First Sports Hero* (Lyons Press, November, 2013). It is the story of a hard-hitting and hard-drinking boxer against the backdrop of Irish-America emerging during the Gilded Age. When Sullivan, known as the “Boston Strong Boy,” captured the heavyweight title in 1882, no Bostonians celebrated more than the Irish, who had felt blistered by Brahmin scorn since their arrival. That legendary spirit of the fighting Irish that was made flesh in Sullivan transformed him into a hero for hundreds of thousands of sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle who had felt emasculated in the wake of the Great Hunger, powerless under the thumb of the British, and slighted in their new homeland. Sullivan’s strength and self-belief were elixirs for a people who had suffered from malignant shame.

Klein’s illustrated lecture will include a plethora of historic photographs from this colorful era in American history. Copies of his book will be available for signature and sale after the talk (\$25, hardcover).

CHRISTOPHER KLEIN is an author and freelance writer specializing in history, travel, and sports. He is a frequent contributor to the travel pages of *The Boston Globe* and History.com, the web site of the History Channel. His articles have also appeared in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *The Boston Globe Magazine*, and *Harvard Magazine*, among others. In addition, Christopher is the author of *Discovering the Boston Harbor Islands* and *The Die-Hard Sports Fan’s Guide to Boston*. A native of Andover, Mass., he graduated with highest honors from Drew University in Madison, NJ.

Following the lecture a reception with light hors d'oeuvres will be held.

Reservations Requested: Please contact Ann Arnold at 401-841-5493, tpm1@earthlink.net

Museum Members: \$2 donation. Non-members: \$15, which can be applied to a 1-yr. membership.

* *Wheelchair Accessible via elevator to 2nd floor. All enter via Hall of Fame archway*