



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

2021: What a Year ... Rescue, Recovery And Rebuild!

by Liam Reidy, President, United Irish Cultural Center, (lreidy@irishcentersf.org)

THIS TIME LAST YEAR WE faced an uncertain future as the Irish Center was temporarily closed in the run up to Christmas and well into the New Year due to the Shelter in Place mandated by the local public health department.

We had survived very challenging times all through 2020 and for the full year before that in 2019. During 2019, the Center was only opened for community based events, and we relied on our board and many volunteers to host member activities that have been part of the community calendar for decades. We were essentially in rescue mode to keep the doors of the center open and the bills paid. We managed to do that throughout 2019 as we steadied the ship, and I think that stood to us in 2020 when we faced even greater challenges with the outbreak of Covid-19. The rescue effort at the Center continued all through 2020, and into the early part of 2021.

By the spring of this past year, like most cultural non-profit institutions across the country we entered recovery mode as lockdown restrictions were lifted and a sense of normalcy returned to the community. The doors to the Center were opened again to our members as we reactivated the building. While we were shut down, we used the time wisely to examine closely our current facility and started to think about the future of the

organization and the facility itself. After a few organizational meetings it didn't take long for the board and a group of dedicated members in the community to reach consensus: an entirely new building may be the way forward, to satisfy the needs of our expanding membership and cultural programming offerings.

The idea of a rebuild and the construction of a new building to reinvigorate the United Irish Cultural Center was presented to the membership at a public meeting on May 7th of this year. There was broad support for the ambitious redevelopment project presented to the community by the architects Studio BANAA, and the Building Committee spearheaded by Redmond Lyons, and Leo Cassidy. All summer long the building plans have been fine-tuned and redrawn to accommodate all that the community wants in the building.

The landmark destination building at 45th and Wawona when completed will be a beacon for the Irish American community and a legacy gift proudly passed on from this generation to the next. I recently read all the minutes of the meetings for the original UICC building before and after its construction and the same sentiment can be heard from those pages.

Won't you join us now and be part of this ambitious redevelopment project and invest in

the future of our community. It is going to take participation of the entire village to realize this amazing vision. Won't you help us get there? Reach out and ask how you can help.

Membership Drive

The board has worked tirelessly to rebuild relationships with the community by reconnecting hundreds of Irish and Irish Americans to what will be our future home for many decades to come. Our membership roll has almost doubled in two years from 750 in 2019 to 1,400 this year! There are many more potential members out there and I encourage you all to join us for the next chapter in the history of the UICC. Give the gift of membership this Christmas to a family member or loved one. Sign up at: <https://irishcentersf.org/membership/>

Unsure of your membership status? Take a moment to bring your membership up to date if you have allowed it to lapse. Email membership@irishcentersf.org to find out your status. Thank you in advance for your sustaining membership dues.

Annual Appeal Letter

Friends and members of the Center will receive an Annual Appeal letter in early December encouraging an end of year gift towards the ongoing Operations Budget. We had a wonderful year of cultural programming successes in 2021. We had an amazing Irish Summer camp where 40 local

elementary school children participated in our first ever fun filled camp, which culminated in an amazing concert in the St Patrick's Room in June. We increased the number of Irish Dance schools teaching class at the Center to five schools. Soon we will offer the younger members of our community the opportunity to learn Irish music and participate in Irish singing lessons; January 2022 is the target kick off date.

UICC Endowment Established

The Board has authorized the establishment of an Endowment Fund with \$100,000 of funding from excess operating funds. A committee is working diligently to get the fund opened and funded before year end and to hire a top notch investment advisor. This is another step in the right direction for the future sustainability of the whole organization as we set aside funds for the rainy day and to support additional cultural programming endeavors.

Cork Club Dinner Honoree

North Cork native Tim Murphy (originally from Dromtariffe), a former Past President of the UICC (1978-79), is being honored as the 2021 Corkman of the Year on Saturday December 11th. Tim celebrates 60 years as a member of the Rebel Cork Benevolent Association, a fraternal organization established here in the City in 1883. It is great to have the

Rebel Cork Dinner return after the hiatus last year due to the lockdown.

Library and Scholarship Raffle

Community members were mailed tickets for the annual raffle fundraiser to support the Leo T Walsh Scholarship Fund and the Patrick J Dowling Library. Mail the tickets and donations back before December 16th when the draw takes place live online during the Biscuits and Books Library Show.

Save the Date

An Irish Christmas Show (as seen on PBS!) returns to the Center on Saturday Dec 4th for a 2pm Matinee Show. Always a great show for families and kids in the run up to Christmas. The Young Dubliners play Saturday Dec 4th indoors starting at 7pm. Looking forward to January 2022, the "Keepers of the Steps" Irish Dance Exhibition opens on Thursday January 13th and runs through January 31st. The John and Maureen Kennelly Memorial Feis takes place on January 14 through the 16th. We host Phil Coulter in concert on Saturday, February 5th while Eileen Ivers is the highlight of the St Patrick's Weekend musical offerings with her concert slated for Friday, March 11th. Tickets for all events are online at www.IrishCenterSF.org

Happy Christmas to all our friends, supporters, members. Stay safe! We'll see you in the new year.



Welcome Vice-Consul O'Brien

CONSUL GENERAL ROBERT O'DRISCOLL dropped by the UICC recently to share some good news with the Board that the Center will receive \$65,000 this year from the Emigrant Support Program (ESP) administered by the Irish government. The grant award is dedicated to Cultural Programming (\$55,000) and the Dowling Library Digitization project (\$10,000). Consul General O'Driscoll also introduced his new Vice-Consul Doireann O'Brien. Also pictured here is Liam Reidy (UICC President) and Elena Kazlas (Project 2025 Feasibility Consultant) from Boston, MA.



Happy Birthday Pat Ryan!

CONGRATULATIONS TO UICC MEMBER PAT RYAN who celebrated his 101st Birthday in October. Pat was at the Center on Sunday, November 21st with his daughters Mary Ryan and Kathy Pallas.



30 Years at Sloat and 19th Avenue

CONGRATULATIONS TO UICC MEMBER CYRIL HACKETT who celebrates decades of business at the Christmas Tree Lot at the corner of 19th Ave and Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco. Cyril first opened the lot back in 1991 and has maintained the seasonal enterprise ever since.



Future Cultural Programming Plans

MARGARET MCPPEAKE (Irish Crossroads), Prof. Catherine Flynn, (UC Berkeley), Catherine Barry, (SFARTS) and Kate Gunning (SF Irish Film Festival) visited at the UICC recently to meet with 2025 Project Building group to discuss future cultural programming plans for the new building.

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Marin County Project 2025 Fundraiser

TOM AND JILL LINEHAN in Marin County hosted our first Project 2025 Fundraising party on November 20th last. Many thanks to Tom and Jill for opening their home to hear all about the exciting and ambitious plans for the new building. If you would like to host a future fundraiser party please reach out to us at campaign@irishcentersf.org

Above: Leo and Deirdre Cassidy, Liam Reidy, Brendan Walsh, Tom and Jill Linehan and Stephanie Reidy. Below left: Ed Linehan, Renee Engelen and John Joe Mullen. Below right: Mike and Mary Keane, Novato.



Derek Warfield Concert Success

LIVING LEGEND OF IRISH SONGS and storytelling Derek Warfield and his band The Young Wolfe Tones returned to the Irish Center for two sold out music concerts on November 13th and 14th.

People traveled from all over the region to hear the songs of Ireland being belted

from the stage with such gusto.

Derek led the crowd in a sing along for three hours belting out many Irish favorites such as “The Fields of Athenry,” “The Road to Paradise,” “Seán South,” and “A Nation Once Again” which got the crowd out on the floor dancing.

Photographed here are

some of the attendees.

Many thanks to all the volunteers that helped out over the weekend to make it a an all-round success.

Local musician Thomas Power opened for the band on the night and was also invited on stage for the grand finale of songs.



Declan & Ann Costello.



Karen Murray & Johnny Killegrew.



Derek Warfield & Aileen Dulohery.



Thomas Power, Brian Lynch, & Andreas Durkin.



Gilbert O'Sullivan, Cyril Hackett, & Tom Molloy.



Conor, Liam, Joan & Paul Fitzpatrick with Ann Goyette.



Marie Woods, Annie McBride & Sandra Dale.



Fiona Killegrew, Gerry & Frances Doherty.



John Gorman, Brian & Maureen Mulry.

Congratulations to
UICC Past President
Tim Murphy



2021 Corkman
of the Year



from Liam Reidy, President
& UICC Board of Directors



THUR, FRI, SAT, SUN from
JANUARY 13-31, 2022

St. Francis Room

United Irish Cultural Center
2700 45th Ave | San Francisco, CA 94116



Don't miss this special exhibit exploring
the roots, rhythms, and rituals of one of the most enduring
traditions of our Irish Heritage—Irish Dance.

Tickets on sale mid-December!

Anne Cassidy Carew, Committee Chair
Ann Baglin; Noreen Boyle; Virginia Casey; Michael Dillon;
Jennifer Drennan; Margaret Flanders; Kathleen McKeon;
Eileen Mize; Jamie O'Keefe



Join the conversation!
@keepersofthesteps