



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

2022 St Patrick’s Season is Huge Success

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

The 2022 Saint Patrick’s celebratory season was a wonderful success at the Center. Our doors were fully open over several days as we welcomed and entertained a large number of our members (from near and far), their guests and local community residents with the finest musicians, dancers, songsters, and Irish artists. We even found time to host students from San Domenico elementary school in Marin County in the lead up to March 17th.

It was great to be back gathering again, after the abrupt cancellation of all the 2020 St Patrick’s events and the muted 2021 activities. The energy and buzz around the Center was great, and people were so happy to be out and about again connecting with old friends. There were a lot of compliments on the quality of the Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner that was offered during March. Hats off to Mark Burke and the St Patrick’s Week Committee, UICC staff, and volunteers for a job well done.

Irish Music Extravaganza

New York based International Fiddle sensation Eileen Ivers and her band kicked off the celebration of Irish music this year with a virtuoso performance on March 11th before a gathering of musical aficionados. A standing ovation upon the completion of her performance was well deserved. We had almost every available local Irish musician play at the Center between Parade Day, the Sunday GreenFest Block party, and on Thursday March 17th. Thanks to all those who contributed to the musical program.

Irish Step Dancing

While looking through the many photos that were posted online on the various UICC social media channels

for the Saint Patrick’s season, I came across a photo that immediately struck me, one that sums up why we work so hard on the UICC Board to make sure the Center remains open in our current space and aspire for greater things in our future new home.

The photograph taken by Eileen Mize (part of the UICC Marketing team) features four young dancers from the Boyle Academy of Irish Dance as they listened to their dance teacher (Noreen Boyle) give them a pep talk before they performed for the first time on the Main Stage in the St Patrick’s room on March 17th.



Pictured are Olivia Moriarty, Emma Moylan, Lyla Meskin, Ellie McDonald.

The photo captures excitement, fear, interpretation, wonderment and awe in the girls faces as they await their debut on the stage to a packed audience. Irish Step dancing is steeped in Bay Area Irish American social history, and we should always strive to have a place

where all the Irish dancers can practice and perform for their families and patrons of Irish arts. There are thousands of boys and girls that have danced locally over the years, and each and every one of them have at one time danced at the UICC. May that tradition continue for many years to come.

Local Media Coverage

We hosted several local TV stations on March 17th (ABC7, KPIX, Channel 2, and NBC) at the Center. The NBC broadcast (California Live) went live across the state between 11am and 12 noon and featured the Sunset Céilí Band (Kathleen Smith, Kevin Roche and Eamonn Flynn) playing a selection of jigs and reels while Aoibhínn, Fintan and Roisín Reidy performed a selection of Irish steps.

KCBS radio host Melissa Culross also stopped by the Center to record a piece for her Bay Currents Podcast. It was great to be able to share with the wider Bay Area community all that is great about Irish arts and culture on the west coast.

School Tour March 15

We hosted our first school tour of the year on Tuesday March 15th as we welcomed the Second Grade class from San Domenico School, San Anselmo. We organized instruction in the Tin Whistle, Bodhrán, Singing, Irish Step dancing and hurling for the kids. Overall a great day which ended with Josephine Brogan opening the Irish Shoppe for the kids who loaded up on Irish crisps and chocolate for the trip home to Marin County. Thanks to Cork native Claire O’Donnell, a teacher at the school, for getting in contact to organize the visit. The success of this visit could see more regular school tours being part of the new building down the road.

Kids Music Program

There has been great feedback from the kids and parents on the Kids music, singing and drama program which has filled the halls of the Center since the first week of January. There were two showcase events on February 26th and March 26th, where the kids participated in a show produced by Eamonn Flynn. Sign ups are still ongoing, and you are never too late to start learning!

2025 Project Update

Now that our plans for the new building have been submitted to the San Francisco Planning Department, the work on the interior finishes, design and lighting components is ongoing on a weekly basis with the Building Group. We have applied for various capital grants recently, the most notable being grants at the State of California and Irish government through the Emigrant Support Program. We should know by the end of July if our applications will result in future funding.

Fight Night Returns

The UICC has teamed up with Fire in the Ring boxing club to bring a Fight Night back to the Center on Easter Saturday, April 16th. Tickets for the event sold briskly upon release to the public and is expected to be a sell out by showtime.

Love Harder Project Fundraiser

Tim Flannery & The Lunatic Fringe play their first appearance at #Wawona-Gates on Saturday, April 30th. Tim promises an evening of music, storytelling, and good-natured fun, all in the name of The Love Harder Project, which strives to put an end to bullying and violence.

Happy Easter

Warmest thoughts to you and your family this Easter.

Eileen Ivers Launched The St Patrick’s Musical Festivities At The Center In Spectacular Style

The Grammy®-Awarded and Emmy-nominated Irish Fiddle player Eileen Ivers and her band kicked off the St Patrick’s season with a concert in the St Patricks room on Friday, March 11th before an appreciative crowd. Ivers pushes fiddling tradition boundaries from a folk music staple to a fiercely fresh, powerfully beautiful, intensely driving world stage experience and we were happy to host her. Below are some of the attendees.



Eamonn Flynn, Eileen Ivers and Vince Keegan.



Tom Smith, PJ Curtin, Joanne Hartnett and Priscilla Murphy.



Kathleen & Brendan McKeon with Kathleen McDonough.



Eileen Ivers with Fintan and Roisín Reidy.



Majella Burns, Pauline Cassidy and Rita Kelly.



Coleman & Michael McDonough with Denise LaPointe.



Joe McFadden with Eileen Ivers.



Kevin Buckley and Jacob Hoertkorn.

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San Domenico School Visits the UICC

THE CENTER HOSTED ITS FIRST post-covid School Tour on March 15th as we welcomed the Second Grade class from San Domenico school in San Anselmo—California's oldest independent school. It was the first ever time the school visited the United Irish Cultural Center. Cork born Claire O'Donnell, who teaches in the school, reached out to the Center earlier this spring to see if we would host the Marin County school. Together we organized a fun day of activities drawing on the resources currently available to local children in our Irish Arts and Culture programming department. Claire and her colleague Carla Harris were very gracious for the program of activities we developed for the day. The kids got to play the bodhrán, tin whistle, sing Irish songs, play hurling and learn some Irish step dancing. At the end of the program of events, the kids were all treated to the goodies available in the Irish Shoppe.



The San Domenico Second Grade class with teachers Claire O'Donnell and Carla Harris.



Noreen Boyle instructing the kids in Irish Step Dancing.



Autumn Rhodes teaching Tin Whistle.



Josephine Brogan had a big rush of kids at lunchtime in the Irish Shoppe.

Amateur Fight Nite Returns to the Center April 16th

AN AMATEUR BOXING EXTRAVAGANZA returns to the Center on Easter Saturday, April 16th starting at 5.15pm. The event is a partnership between Fire in the Ring boxing in Brisbane

and the United Irish Cultural Center. Professional boxers Charlie Sheehy and Callum Walsh are confirmed to attend for a meet and greet with all local boxing fans. The event is expected to sell out.



Pro-fighter Charlie Sheehy with his father Miguel.



Kevin McLaughlin and Jimmy Ford discuss tactics ringside at Fire in the Ring Boxing Club.



John O'Shea and Danny Duran.



Jake Hubbard, Paul Hackett, Rob Hernandez and Kevin McLaughlin.

Kids Music Program Corner

THE SPRING MUSIC CLASSES CONTINUE each week with several local musicians providing instruction to the younger members of the UICC community. Irish fiddle player Darcy Noonan has been busy since January teaching fiddle. Here are some photos. Above right: Fintan Reidy, Seamus Standard with Darcy Noonan. Below: Rex Lamar Moore with Fiddle instructor Darcy Noonan. Below right: Kameron Bilbao, Seamus Standard, Drum instructor Kathleen Smith and Roisín Reidy performed on March 26th at Wawona Gates as part of the Kids Spring Music program showcase.



Maeve O'Reilly was the winner of the UICC St. Patrick's Day parade photograph competition organized by the Marketing team at the Center. Maeve is seen here with UICC President Liam Reidy accepting a hamper full of Irish goodies from the Irish Center Shoppe. Congratulations to Maeve!

