



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

Irish America is Bouncing Back Better

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

I SPENT A DAY LAST MONTH (August 19) immersed in all aspects of Irish American arts, culture, and business at the third annual Global Irish Campfire at Iona University, in New Rochelle, New York. The UICC was invited to send a representative to discuss innovation within Irish Centers for a post pandemic era and to discuss challenges in creating sustainable Irish community centers. We also had the opportunity to present on the 2025 Project. As part of the excellently organized symposium, speakers and panels were also afforded a national and international audience (via zoom) and so the Irish Center 2025 Project was beamed across the globe.

Founded by the Christian Brothers in 1940, Iona College is a newly named university campus (it was promoted to university status this past July). The campus is just about an hour north of NYC and easily accessible via the Metro North rail line from Grand Central Station. I love to return to New York City every chance I can. It's where my own Irish American immigrant story began in June of 1995 when I arrived at JFK airport in Flushing Meadows, Queens. After disembarking the Aer Lingus flight from Shannon, I made my way to a US immigration kiosk where I handed over my passport which included my DV-1 visa (green card) paperwork. After a quick look up and

down between documents, my passport photo and myself—the agent behind the counter said “Welcome to the United States of America.” What a great welcome to get from an immigration officer!

Beginning

The Global Irish Campfire is the brainchild of Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Publisher of the *Irish Echo*—the most widely read Irish-American newspaper in the United States. Developed as an online symposium with 700 participants and 100 Speakers in 2020, the gathering was hybrid last year in NYC at Rosie O'Grady's in midtown Manhattan. This year's Campfire was almost 100 percent in person—save Gerry Adams and Congressman Brendan F Boyle (PA) who appeared via Zoom.

All Together Now

It was great to hear about what other Irish centers are doing as we all emerge from the pandemic in terms of building back our in-person programming and bolstering engagement of the community. Many of the Irish centers across the USA are doing better than before the lockdowns as membership and support of Centers has increased. A common theme across the US at the moment is the lack of programming space for music and dance spaces—something we are well aware of here at the Center. Another is the hesitancy of the

older generation to engage in in-person events. It seems like Zoom events (which are hard to monetize) are here to stay.

2025 Project Reaction

As part of the campfire program I got to present at length about the 2025 Project. After the talk and a showing of the 3D video fly-through of our proposed new building, which many of the people were seeing for the first time, the audience showed their appreciation with a loud round of applause. Many also came up to me afterwards to wish us luck with our ambitious project. There is a lot of support across the country for what we are doing!

I must say the technical hookups and broadcast of the entire conference proceedings was top class. Hats off to Aisling Events which was responsible for the recording, sound, and lighting at the conference. All of the talks and panels are now available on YouTube. We will share those on our social media channels.

Campfire attendees were amazed at the scale and ambitious nature of the 2025 plan and congratulated our efforts to expand our cultural footprint and facility as a community hub on the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

The symposium concluded with the awards luncheon where I collected a coveted Cara medal on behalf of all the work that the entire Board of

Directors has done in the recent past to ensure the success of the Irish Center.

Blood Drive Success

Local 798 Firefighters Union teamed up with the Center for a Blood Drive on August 23. A total of 38 units of blood was donated which will help 114 patients. Thank you to SFFD Paramedic Jeff Marcaletti for coordinating the effort.

President of Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald will visit the Irish Center on Friday September 9th for a dinner hosted by the Friends of Sinn Féin in the St Patrick's room. Tickets: Ciarán Scally (510) 333-2677.

Robert Emmet Commemoration

The United Irish Societies Halfway to St Patrick's Day Robert Emmet Commemoration takes place on September 18, 2022 at the Golden Gate Park Band concourse. Eamon De Valera dedicated the Statue of the Robert Emmet in front of the Academy of Sciences 102 years ago. Starts at 12 noon.

Mad Hatter Tea Party

The annual Patrick J Dowling Library Fundraiser takes place on Saturday, September 25 from 1-3pm. Hats encouraged, sandwiches, sweet treats, and assorted goodies served. Anne Cassidy Carew is once again the gracious host, and

this event is one of most colorful days at the Center each year.

Byrne Brothers Music

The Byrne Brothers will return to the Center on September 28. Their mid-week concert is a few days before they fly off to Los Angeles to pick up the “Young Artist Academy Award for Music Ensemble 2022.”

Hinterland West

As one of the sponsors of Hinterland West 2022, the Center is delighted that the festival events on the weekend of October 1-2, 2022 will take place here. This two-day literary festival features a compelling lineup of leading writers, thinkers, and creative talents from Ireland and the Bay Area.

In Memory

We extend our sympathy to the families of the following in the UICC community who passed away recently. Joe McDonald, former Board member, who also volunteered as the Center's chef upon his retirement from the Sunset restaurant; Patricia Hayes, wife of the UICC's first Vice-President Thomas Hayes and more recently mother of Patty Hayes who also served as VP; Brian Tickler, father of Angela who worked as the Center's event manager recently.

“Go ndéana an Tiarna trócaire ar a n-anamacha.”

May the Lord have mercy on their souls.

Global Irish Campfire Invite Affords The UICC National Exposure

by Liam Reidy

THE 2022 GLOBAL IRISH CAMPFIRE CONFERENCE in New Rochelle, NY provided the UICC a national forum and outreach to other US based Irish Centers. I got the chance to present on our ambitious 2025 Project and also inform those gathered at Iona University about how we navigated the pandemic and came out a stronger community as a result of all our collective hard work, especially over the last four years.

Many of those in attendance were amazed at plans to develop a new Irish Cen-

ter here in San Francisco and wished us all the best of luck in our journey forward. I made friends and contacts with many of the attendees. I have been invited to present the 2025 project at a breakfast meeting (via zoom) of the Irish Business Organization of NYC in the coming months. Overall, a very quick trip to my former “home town” of New York where I first arrived in the US to validate my green back in June of 1995. It's hard to believe that was all of 27 years ago. Time marches on!

The photographs here are all courtesy of Nuala Purcell.



Irish Global Campfire 2022 organizer Máirtín Ó Muilleoir (Publisher of the Irish Echo) with Liam Reidy, UICC.



Liam Reidy with Rob Walsh, Senior Advisor to the President of Manhattan College.



At the Campfire I presented for 15 minutes on the 2025 Irish Center Project.



Paul Finnegan, Irish Business Organization, New York; Barry Ó Séanáin, Irish Arts Center, NYC; Liam Reidy, UICC, and Sean O'Dowd, Silvercrest Asset Management Group.



As part of a panel on *Innovating for a Post-Pandemic Era: Creating Sustainable Irish Community Centers & Hubs at the Heart of Rejuvenated Communities*, I got to talk about our wonderful members, sponsors, donors, volunteers and community partners and how they helped us through the pandemic.

The panel was chaired by: Aileen Leonard Dibra (center) Executive Director of Irish Immigration Centers. Left to right: Liam Reidy, UICC; Nathalie O'Shea, Celtic Junction Arts Center, St. Paul, MN; Maureen Kennedy, Irish Heritage Center of Cincinnati, OH; and Pat Carolan, former President Gaelic American Club, Fairfield, CT.

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Margaret McAuliffe Is The 2022 St Brigid Humanitarian Award Recipient

THE NATIONAL LADIES ANCIENT Order of Hibernians announced earlier this summer that Margaret McAuliffe of San Francisco, is the Recipient of the 2022 St Brigid Humanitarian Award. The prestigious St Brigid of Ireland Humanitarian award was presented in July 15 at the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians National Convention held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Margaret Spillane McAuliffe immigrated to the United States from County Longford, Ireland in 1959. She met her husband Dan and are the proud parents of James making their home in San Francisco.

Margaret has shared her time, talent and treasure with



her community. She is active in her church on the parish and diocese levels working with St Philip's, the St Martin De Pores

Society, the Alpha Pregnancy Center, Catholic Women organizations, and the Good Shepherd Grace Center. Her involvement includes helping the unborn to the elderly and those dealing with life challenges with alcohol and drug addictions.

She is very active in the Irish Community of San Francisco. Being an immigrant herself, she works with the Irish Immigration Pastoral Center. The McAuliffes have hosted J1 Visa holders. They gave support to family members of the victims of the 2015 Balcony collapse including raising funds to help with funeral expenses.

In her nomination, State President Kathleen McCarthy stated: "When you think of our

Motto of Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity, you not only think of Margaret you see it in every action and everything she does. She is the true spirit of what a member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians should be."

Margaret McAuliffe is an excellent choice for this prestigious Award in honor of our Patron St. Brigid; a woman of faith and action.

Pictured left are: Karen Keane, LAOH Past President, Margaret McAuliffe, and Marilyn Madigan, LAOH National President at the National Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Photo courtesy of Nuala Purcell.

The UICC and San Francisco Fire Dept. Local 798 teamed up to bring a Community Blood Drive to the Irish Center on August 23rd.



Station 19 Truck stopped by to support the Blood Drive. Blood Drive Co-ordinator Jeff Marcaletti, with Josh Davis, Dustin Rice, Michael Juan, Todd Prakin, and Ivan Tjia.



Jeff Marcaletti- SFFD Paramedic, with volunteers Stephanie Reidy and Maggie Overbay.



Josh Montero, SFFD giving the thumbs up to the SFFD & UICC Blood Drive.



Local sunset resident Annamay Cayabyab was one of the first people in line for the Blood Drive.



Josh Davis, SFFD, Station 19, and task force dog Bosco attended the Blood Drive.

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• IRISH AMERICA •

Be a 2025 Project Ambassador For The United Irish Cultural Center

ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2022, an intimate group of guests enjoyed a house concert with a view—and a great cause! It was a wonderful gathering organized by Rebecca Harrington who has been inspired by 2025 Project ever since learning about it when attending a concert at the Irish

Center earlier this year—that of her cousin Gregory Harrington—and she was eager to introduce the project plans and concept to more people.

Fabulous entertainment including the virtuoso violinist Gregory as well as singer-songwriter and pianist Eoin Harrington, set the perfect tone

for Liam Reidy and Leo Cassidy who presented plans for the Irish Center SF's bold vision. If you are interested in hosting a small gathering to help others learn more about this exciting project and vision for the future, please reach out to campaign@irishcentersf.org. It's an exciting time to get involved!



Above: Virtuoso violinist Gregory Harrington. Top right: Leah Gilbert and UICC Board member Jeanne Connolly. Below right: Singer-songwriter and pianist Eoin Harrington (who provided the home for the gathering).

Irish Negotiators Work To Broker Nuclear Weapons Deal In United Nations Talks In New York

DIPLOMATS FROM THE IRISH government's Department of Foreign Affairs are currently involved in high stakes talks at the United Nations in an effort to end the spread of nuclear weapons.

The tenth review conference on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in New York opened in early August, with Ireland playing a pivotal role among non nuclear countries in the talks. There are eight Irish negotiators involved in the month-long talks.

Sources have said that while there is widespread agreement among States on the need for a continued reduction in nuclear weapons, there is a reticence among the big atomic countries of the US, China, Britain, Russia, France. Israel also has an estimated 90 warheads.

There are also complications among countries such as India, Pakistan, and North Korea as they seek to arm.

Risk reduction is about limiting the likelihood of an inadvertent escalation to full nuclear war.

Such escalations, negotiators believe, can be started accidentally but this is mitigated by dense safeguards in each country. Ireland is not immune from the nuclear weapon threat. The Irish coast has seen Russian Tupolev Tu-65 "Bears" patrolling down the western seaboard—they are capable of



A Russian TU-95 Bear bomber photographed off the coast of Ireland.

carrying atomic missiles.

On those occasions British Royal Air Force fighters were scrambled and accompanied the bombers until they left the airspace.

It is also believed, according to security sources, that nuclear armed submarines operate in the Irish Sea and around the coasts of Ireland.

Ireland has a long history of campaigning for nuclear disarmament—in 1958 Ireland introduced at the UN the first of what became known as the "Irish Resolutions."

This diplomatic campaign culminated in the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Ireland was the first country to sign the NPT in 1968.

Ireland was part of a group of states who lobbied for and negotiated a new Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. This Treaty, the first of its kind, calls for a ban on the production, use and possession of nuclear weapons.

In her address to delegates at the beginning of the conference Minister for State Hildegard Naughton recalled the threat of nuclear catastrophe during the Cold War.

"I am proud of Ireland's role in the creation of the NPT, a major contribution to international peace and security. The NPT reminds us that even in the most dangerous of times, progress is not only needed but is possible ... All States Parties have an obligation to work for a safer world for current and future generations; a world that does not include the spectre of nuclear weapons. I can assure you, President, Ireland is ready to play our part," she said.



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