



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

A Time To Be Thankful, And Reinvestment For The Center

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

AS WE APPROACH THE END of another calendar year we tend to look back and wonder where did the time go? November is the season for giving thanks for everything that we're grateful for; all that sustains, nourishes, and supports us.

The Thanksgiving celebration bookends the month and brings us homes decorated with warm autumnal accents and hearty food, but also offers an opportunity to spend time with the people who make our lives special. We primarily celebrate with family but more broadly I think it's a good time for the Irish American community to celebrate having a vibrant year round Irish Center.

I say this because I had a call from Seamus Balfe (a fellow Limerick man) a couple of weeks ago. Seamus lives in East Durham, a small hamlet in Greene County, New York—about two hours north of NYC. Seamus lamented the fact that although the Irish Center in the village is open from May through October, it is closed for the winter. There is a very small population (600 people) in the vicinity of the East Durham center and it is not viable to stay open during the winter season. During the year the Center relies on the groundswell of support and weekend getaway crowds from the NYC metropolitan area. Highlight

attractions include the Irish Music Festival over Memorial weekend and the Irish Arts Week in the Catskills during July.

Compare that situation to our own here in San Francisco and you realize how fortunate we are to have access to our building 52 weeks of the year! Of course there are days when the Center is relatively quiet but between now and the end of the year we are at full capacity with a wide range of cultural and community events that draws many different people from the surrounding community to the Center.

Ongoing Education

I am always learning from conversations with people involved with other Irish Centers across America. I was fortunate to attend meetings in Kansas and New York this year on behalf of the Center. The knowledge shared at these meetings with other participants have come back home here to San Francisco and have been applied locally where appropriate. It's a constant labor of love for many volunteers and a major challenge facing Executive Directors of cultural institutions to keep the Irish American community engaged in Irish arts, music and sports (hurling and Gaelic football predominantly). There are so many local distractions (and online)

for entertainment and event options for our community. It's hard to compete sometimes with professional sports teams, and top of the chart musical talent that regularly perform in the Bay Area—never mind all the local school and college events that people are drawn to attend on the weekends.

Recent Challenges

The UICC has faced its own set of challenges in recent years and we have come back stronger after a major investment of time and energy from the Board and community members, who put a shoulder to the wheel when it became apparent that we may lose our Center. Now as we prepare for a much brighter and ambitious future Irish Center we are developing organizational structures to be more sustainable in the future even with unforeseen setbacks.

A Sustainable Future

The Board established an Endowment in late 2021, and brought onboard a professional financial consultant—James Sheffield, UBS Financial Services—to actively manage the fund. This is part of a long term sustainability strategy being developed at the Center by the finance team. We recently moved to bolster our investment account which will put the Center on a firm financial

foundation going forward which will to ensure we can support our ongoing costs and provide support to our community even in tough times.

Your chance to support

While many of you are supporting the 2025 Project capital campaign—UICC members will also get the opportunity to contribute towards the Center's cultural programming, endowment, library and Leo T Walsh scholarship program between now and the end of the year through our end of year fundraisers and appeals.

Annual Appeal 2022

Later this month UICC member households will receive an Annual Appeal letter requesting support to maintain and expand our investments in our cultural programming footprint. Donations to the Appeal last year afforded the Board to increase the budget for kids music classes (provided free of charge) and provide support for the Irish summer camp. Sixty kids between the ages of 6-14 participated in the annual summer camp which ran for three weeks last June. Investing in the next generation of our community is a recurring theme at the Center. Last May our educational scholarship program (Leo T Walsh Fund) disbursed over \$40,000 to students graduating elementary and high schools

moving onto the next phase of their education. Some of these students will be the supporters of the UICC down the road and maybe even stewards of the institution in time.

Library and Scholarship Fundraiser

A team of volunteers from the Patrick J Dowling library recently sent a letter and raffle tickets to UICC members seeking support for the Leo T Walsh scholarship and Library Fund for 2023.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to all those who have sent a personal note of thanks for all that we are doing to keep the Irish Center flag flying high here in the city for all our supporters. We look forward to your generous support this season.

Teresa McDonagh RIP

We were all sad to hear we lost an amazing supporter in Teresa McDonagh last month. Teresa was ever present at everything that was going on at the Center for decades. I will miss her words of encouragement and her hearty laugh. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

Happy Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving to all our members and supporters throughout the community.

Oktoberfest By The Beach 2022

Thank you to all who joined us for our 4th annual sold-out Oktoberfest by the Beach! A hearty thanks to Molly and Mark Burke for their leadership and vision and to all our sponsors and wonderful volunteers for creating and making possible an awesome environment and atmosphere—the St. Patrick's room was utterly transformed. Music by the Internationals, authentic dancers, activities, and fabulous food and drink—great night!



Mark and Molly Burke.



Niamh McCreavy, Niamh Kenny and Jackie Cooper.



Monica Doherty Murphy and John Fogarty.



John Shanley, Paul Fitzpatrick, Patrick Sheehan.



Catrina Caltagirone, Maggie Burke, Katie Kohmann, Alyssa Brown.



Ana and Adam Diekhising



Sue Peracinni, Denise Kohmann, Molly Burke.



Adam and Haruna Schutz.



Rebecca Silva, RC Russell, Liz Russell, Shelli Murphy.

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SF Planning Department Site Visit

THE SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT TEAM overseeing our planning application visited the Irish Center on September 26th last. Liam Reidy, UICC President gave the group a tour of the neighborhood and the existing facility. We have been in weekly planning meetings over the past few months now, as we move through the planning process.

We recently completed a wind impact and transportation study as part of the planning process.

Photographed in the back yard of the Irish Center are, left to right: Tania Sheyner, Kelly Yong, Josh Pollak, Rachel Schutt, Liam Reidy (UICC President), and Gabriela Pantoja.



Belfast Homecoming And Irish Campfire

WE HAD WONDERFUL evening of idea and story sharing on October 19th as the Irish Center welcomed former Lord Mayor of Belfast and Irish Echo newspaper publisher Máirtín O’Muilleoir. Máirtín talked about the growth and change in Belfast since his youth and he attributes today’s successes to the involvement of Irish Americans. He spoke of the importance of building relationships—much like bridges—as a way to connect and strengthen communities at home and abroad.

UICC President Liam Reidy met Máirtín at last August’s Big Irish Campfire conference of Irish leaders from around the country and was taken by his energy. “Máirtín is one of the biggest outside the box thinkers that I’ve encountered on the Irish American circuit. He never fails to energize and unite a crowd!”

Máirtín spoke with excitement of the #2025Project and gifted the Irish Center with a welcome plaque to hang in the new space. Thanks to all who joined us on the night. We are all stronger for the connections and relationships we share.



Ciarán Scally and Michael Black.



Paul Downey, Patrick Burke, and Enda Gallery.



Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Anne Cassidy Carew and Liam Reidy.



Michael McCrory, Lucy Duffy, and Máirtín Ó Muilleoir.



Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, John O’Riordan, and Charlie Lavery.



Máirtín presents Liam Reidy, UICC President with a token of his visit to the Irish Center.



Eileen Mize and Ben Hunter.



Gilbert Coyle, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and Peter Cooper.



3rd ANNUAL RAFFLE FUNDRAISER

benefiting the UICC’s
Leo T. Walsh Scholarship Program
& the Patrick J. Dowling Library



TICKETS

Tickets available at the Library, UICC office,
and by emailing: library@irishcentersf.org

1 for \$20 | 3 for \$50 | 7 for \$100

Drawing on Dec. 8, 2022



1st Draw \$1,500
2nd Draw \$500
3rd Draw \$250



 @IrishCenterSF IrishCenterSF.org

2700 45th Avenue | San Francisco, CA 94116 | UICC is a 501c3 organization

DEREK WARFIELD & THE YOUNG WOLFE TONES



Live at the Center
Saturday Nov 12 at 8pm
Sunday Nov 13 at 4pm

TICKETS @ IRISHCENTERSF.ORG

SHOP LOCAL THIS YEAR!

Holiday BOUTIQUE

SATURDAY DEC 17TH

CHRISTMAS GIFTS 12 NOON
ARTS & CRAFTS -5PM

LOCAL VENDORS!

+ IRISH CENTER SHOPPE

FREE ADMISSION

Vendors Call 415-741-8803 To Book a Table

