



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

# UICC Members are our First Class Passengers

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

### First Class Passengers

DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF the pandemic, former board Treasurer Craig Viehweg commented one evening in a board meeting that he was amazed at the consistency of the community donations to the Irish Center—more especially while we were shuttered due to the San Francisco public health order. Craig said: “Our members are our First Class Passengers.”

### Can we survive?

Craig had come to this conclusion after evaluating the early economic impact of being closed between March 12th and June 19th, 2020. He identified the consistent dues-paying members as the one shining bright light in our monthly net assets. At the time the board was actively figuring out how to reduce our fixed costs, pay the bills, and more importantly stave off liquidation of the Center, which has been the bastion of the Irish American community in San Francisco for almost a half century. Craig alerted the board that we had enough saved in the bank from our herculean efforts in 2019 (our rescue year) to survive about six months without securing or identifying any additional new funding. The Center, he said, would close for good on Sunday, October 18th, 2020 based on his in-depth scrutiny of the numbers. It was all very sobering to hear.

I am certain that airline CEOs in their corporate boardrooms across this country ensure that their first class passengers are treated like royalty. These passengers are those that remain with their preferred

airline for a long time and are happy to pay the highest airfares for the extra privileges that come with those seating assignments. Airlines offer all kinds of membership packages to retain and keep customers happy in the cutthroat world of airline membership programs, such as premium customers airport lounges; expeditious movement through security; complimentary pillows, blankets, food, and beverages; wider and more spacious seats, and dedicated airline staff to cater to all their high-flying customers’ preflight and in-flight needs.

While the UICC can’t help with airline security lines, we do offer many benefits via our membership program. A UICC member can get member discounts on rental spaces, early bird access and discounts to ticketed events, the chance to serve on the board, reduced rates to educational classes and summer camp programs, and in some cases free access to events. Members can also attend meetings held quarterly with the board and also vote on UICC related changes to the bylaws as they arise. In addition, there is the knowledge that you are also financially supporting and belong to an exclusive club that is one of only two Irish centers west of the Mississippi (the other being in Phoenix, AZ).

### Liam, I want to help you!

I often get a tap on the shoulder while I’m at the Center from people who say, “Liam, I want to help you and the Center.” I love getting to hear that as my impulsive

response is: “Are you a UICC member? If not, then that’s a great place to start to help the organization and by contributing \$13/month online you can build up your level of support from there.” Thanks to all those who have signed up recently when I have encouraged them to be a member!

The monthly dues are a great source of regular support to help cover the cost of maintaining a 20,000 square foot facility here in the city. UICC member dues are an important part of our annual budget and without this financial support we would have to scale back some of our programming and decline some of the opportunities we get to showcase up and coming shows and talent touring the US from Ireland from time to time.

Original membership numbers (such as Charter members) provided to the early financial supporters of the current 1975 building are highly coveted and much revered by Irish American families whose parents or grandparents were responsible for building the Center. These families cherish the chance to transfer their families number and membership type as part of their families legacy and connection to the current Center.

### Are you a UICC member?

Many people think they are active “members” of the Center—but only dues paying members (annual or monthly contributors) are considered active members. They are the ones that can benefit from being a UICC member. So ask yourself—are you an “active”

member? Not sure? Get in contact with us, or fill out the membership form on this page and send in your annual dues payment of \$150 to the Center. You can also email membership@irishcentersf.org

### Mary Lou McDonald Visit

Several board members met with Sinn Féin President during her visit to the Bay Area last month. Events were held in Sonoma County and Treasure Island, at USF, and here at the Center, where she toured the Dowling Library and observed a presentation of our 2025 Project. A packed St Patrick’s Room witnessed McDonald deliver a powerful speech about the bright and hopeful future for the island of Ireland. Overall a great occasion to have a wonderful representative from the Irish government here locally. We may be 6,000 miles away from our native land or our ancestral home, but the strong bonds we have to Ireland transcend well beyond the statement “I’m Irish.”

### Emigrant Support Program

The UICC proved successful in its grant application to the Irish government for support of Cultural Programming (\$55,000) and the Patrick J Dowling Library (\$13,000) for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This financial support will allow us to continue to build and expand our cultural programming here at the Center.

### Irish Language Class

We are looking for an Irish Language Teacher to teach children ages 5 years and up here at the Center. If you are interested, contact Josephine

Brogan at jbrogan@irishcentersf.org .

### Oktoberfest by the Beach

It’s that time of year for our autumn festival with an International flair as we celebrate the food, culture, and beverages from Germany on October 15th. Doors at 6pm with dancing, games and music by The Internationals.

### Belfast Homecoming

Calling all those with a connection to Belfast to come along to hear a presentation on the Belfast International Homecoming 2023 by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir. Wednesday October 19th at 7pm in the Members Room.

### Connaught & Ulster Dinner

The provincial clubs of Connaught and Ulster team up this year for their annual dinner on Friday October 21st. Starts at 6pm.

### Dublineseque

Eamonn Flynn and friends are back for a Halloween music special on October 28th in the Emerald Room.

### Emerald Society

Emerald Society President John Hallisy and our friends in Bay Area Law Enforcement return to the Center for their annual dinner on October 29th. Congratulations to Commander Rachel Moran, Officer of the Year; Paul O’Driscoll, Citizen of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award winner SFPD Officer (ret.) Nick Shihadeh.

### Halloween Story Time

Storyteller Máire Clerkin is back for a kids story time on Saturday, October 29th from 9.30-10.30am. Register online.



Be a First-class passenger at the UICC!

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Event Discounts • Room Rental Discounts • Members-Only Events • Voting Privileges • Board Eligibility • Monthly Bulletin

### MEMBERSHIP FEE SCHEDULE

Single Membership \$150 | The term for annual dues is 365 days from the date your dues are recorded; regulated by the UICC Board of Directors. Membership Renewals with flexible payment options are available at [www.irishcentersf.org/membership](http://www.irishcentersf.org/membership)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FEES

Fees can be paid by Check or Credit Card or online at [www.irishcentersf.org/membership](http://www.irishcentersf.org/membership)

CHECK  M/C VISA  DISCOVER Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY PHONE # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Can you volunteer your time/talents? Please list services/skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Applications may be mailed to 2700 45th Ave SF CA 94116 or emailed to [membership@irishcentersf.org](mailto:membership@irishcentersf.org)  
Membership Fees are Tax Deductible to the extent permitted by law. Consult your tax advisor. The United Irish Cultural Center Federal Tax ID # is 26-0610341

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# Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald Receives Warm Welcome At The Center

There was a wonderful turnout at the Friends of Sinn Féin Dinner at the United Irish Cultural Center Friday, September 10.

More than 400 guests packed the St Patrick's banquet hall and enjoyed an evening that included entertainment by the Pearse & Connolly Fife and Drum Band and Irish dancers from several Bay Area dance schools which served to set the stage for some inspiring speeches from Seamus Canning, Sinéad McLoughlin and then the guest of honor, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald. Much passion and energy—and hope for a future that starts here and now.

This picture is provided courtesy of jGuerzonPictorials and more picture of the event can be seen on page 15.



Dawn Doyle, (Chief of Staff Mary Lou McDonald), UICC President Liam Reidy, Ciarán Scally, Mary Lou McDonald, and Ciarán Quinn, Sinn Féin's Representative in the USA.

# 12th Annual Mad Hatter Tea Party Is Huge Success!

A GRAND AFTERNOON WAS HELD UNDER the Wawona gates tent honoring and celebrating the Mad Hatter Tea Party Sunday, September 25th.

A big thank you to our sponsors; Ligia Torres, Valerie McGrew, Maureen Murphy, Rebel Cork Benevolent Association, Maureen, Kathleen, and Coleen Dowling, the San Francisco Bay Area Law Enforcement Emerald Society, Monica Maguire, Maggie Overbay, Peggy Flanders, Cathy Mi-bach, United Irish Societies, Jennifer Gauthier, Lisa Hernandez, Barbara Heppart, Molly Cottrell, Liz from Oceana Market, Noreen Corry, Jenni Pei from Sweet Passion Bakery.

Thank you to Esostos, Creightons Bakery, Sweet Passion Bakery and Dianda Italian Bakery.



Jennifer Drennan and Josephine Brogan.



Kathleen McDonough, Colleen Dowling, with Mad Hatter Party organizer Anne Cassidy.



Gertrude Kyne and Marie Gavney.



Noreen Corry, Margaret O'Sullivan, Mary Moylan and Roisín Reidy.

# Rock The Gates Welcomes Over 1,000 To The Center

ON AUGUST 27, 2022, THE IRISH Center was rockin' from top to bottom for its first-ever summer fleadh, and we welcomed close to 1,000 people through the gates! This family friendly music festival had something for everything. There was no lack of traditional entertainment in the form of Irish dancing from the Kennelly, McBride, Murphy, and Whelan schools of Irish dance as well as piping from the Irish Pipers. The musical acts covered three stages and several genres from singer-songwriter and Irish trad to punk, rock, bluegrass, and rebel. The festival wrapped up with a stadium-quality performance on the St Patrick's stage by LAvation—a U2 tribute band out of LA. The Center was alive with everyone enjoying themselves. We have received some wonderful feedback summed up by words like "awesome," "phenomenal," and "bril-

liant" to name a few. One reveler shared, "By far the most fun event I've ever attended at UICC! The music performances and the Irish dancing were all fantastic. And the event itself was very well organized—kudos to all involved!"

From a UICC Membership Drive and kids activities like face painting and Spiderman bounce house to the shopping opportunities, food options, and non-stop entertainment line-up, the energy was through the roof. Thanks to everyone who came out and supported the Irish Center and to the army of volunteers who worked tirelessly. We are so grateful to our Irish Dancers and Irish Pipers, our celebrity bartenders, to our lighting and sound pros, and to all the incredible musical acts who ROCKed! Stay tuned for an announcement regarding 2023. Dare we call this one a "first annual"?!



Kevin and Tighe Birmingham.



Consul General Michéal Smith and family with UICC President Liam Reidy.



Kristen and Dean Scott from The Celtic Tea Shoppe.

# Ardal O'Hanlon Comedy Night

LAUGHTER REALLY IS the best medicine! Thanks to all who came out to the Irish Center on September 10 for the laughs—great craic altogether! The St Patrick's Room was roaring thanks to SF native and LA-based comedian David Studebaker who made a

return visit to the UICC to open for the main event—Irish comedian Ardal O'Hanlon. Great to see so many folks enjoying a night out with some great entertainment, a fun crowd, and a little whiskey tasting offered by a show sponsor, Keeper's Heart Whiskey.



David Studabaker, Aoibhinn and Stephanie Reidy.



Thomas Power, Ardal O'Hanlon, David Crittenden.

UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER of SAN FRANCISCO

4th annual

# Oktoberfest

by the Beach

music by The Internationals

Sat., Oct. 15, 2022 | 4 pm

at The Irish Center SF  
2700 45th Ave, SF

—Stein holding contests  
—Authentic dancing  
by the Golden Gate Bavarian Club

NEW for 2022! Option to pick you own table/seat

TICKETS: [www.IrishCenterSF.org](http://www.IrishCenterSF.org)

#OktoberfestByTheBeach

EAMONN FLYNN & FRIENDS PRESENT

# DUBLINESQUE HALLOWEEN EDITION

FRIDAY OCT 28

\$20

DOORS/7:30 PM | SHOW/8 PM

UICC EMERALD ROOM  
2700 45TH AVE. @ WAWONA, SF

IRISHCENTERSF.ORG