



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

# San Francisco Irish Center Enters National Spotlight

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

THE CENTER HAS BEEN selected to host the 2023 Big Irish Campfire conference in San Francisco on August 24 and 25. The Campfire will bring together civic leaders, entrepreneurs, business leaders, politicians, and representatives from Irish Centers all across America and Canada to discuss matters relevant to our communities, share ideas, and develop long term strategic partnerships around Irish arts and culture programming. The Big Irish Campfire conference is the brainchild of Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Publisher of The Irish Echo in New York. It was first hosted in New York in 2019.

### NICCoNA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Network of Irish Cultural Centres of North America took place in New York City on January 13. Hosted on the 17th Floor of the Consulate General of Ireland, New York office at 345 Park Avenue, there was a great exchange of ideas and discussion centered around Irish artists performing in the US, immigration issues around visas for touring artists, and financial support for Irish Centers to host and underwrite programming originating from Ireland. The Irish Ambassador to the US, Geraldine Byrne Nason, was present, as was Sharon Barry, Director of Culture Ireland, and New York Consul General Helena Nolan. I made several new connections with repre-

sentatives from various Centers around the country and we will be developing those relationships as we move forward into 2023.

### New York Irish Arts Center

While in New York City I had the opportunity to visit the recently opened \$60 million dollar Irish Arts Center at 51st Street and 11th Avenue. Executive Director Aidan Connolly graciously hosted all of the visiting NICCoNA conference attendees. The new building is a very impressive 21,700 square foot space dedicated to Irish arts and culture which plays host to a range of artistic programs throughout the year. As part of the tour, we were treated to a spectacular showcase of new theatrical productions being produced in Ireland and touring the US in 2023. Fishamble, a Dublin based theatre company, will visit the Center in May to produce "The Humours of Bandon."

Following the conclusion of the showcase and the reception that followed, I filtered out of the building and into the New York evening. On my walk back to my midtown hotel I envisaged our new home at the corner of 45th Avenue and Wawona Street. I felt very confident that we too could have a similar destination and hub for Irish arts and culture back home in San Francisco. I have no doubt that with the ground-

swell of initial UICC member support, philanthropic, corporate, local, statewide, federal, and national government of Ireland funding that we can make it happen. I asked myself the question—Could we build it?—and came to the conclusion of a confident YES WE CAN!

### NYC Irish Theatre Scene

I was flabbergasted to learn that there is a very robust Irish theatre scene in NYC. There were Irish plays and dramas staged off Broadway almost every night of the week during the month of January alone, with two to three different offerings each night. Theatre-goers are certainly spoiled for choice!

### Spotlight on Education

Our community's current eighth grade students and high school seniors were kept busy over the holiday period applying to high school and college, as part of the next steps on their educational journeys. Now that all those applications have been completed, it serves as a reminder that the Leo T Walsh Scholarship program is now accepting applications for 2023. The deadline is Friday March 17, with winners to be announced in May.

### Building and Facilities

The onset of a series of powerful 'Pineapple Express' storms and bomb cyclones that

marched across the Bay Area in late December through the first two weeks of January put the Center's roof to the test. Though installed back in 1999, and despite the record rainfall, we are happy to report that the roof held up. We made some repairs to the heating system in the St Patrick's Room in late December. Thankfully those repairs did not impact our holiday parties and celebrations held during the festive season.

### Irish Secretary General

On January 23, along with our co-hosts at the local Consulate's Office, we welcomed the Irish Secretary General Joseph Hackett to the Center. I had an opportunity to present details of the 2025 project, while the United Irish Societies and SF Youth GAA presented their plans for the season ahead.

### Grand Marshal Dinner

Pat Uniacke will be honored as the Grand Marshal of the 2023 St Patrick's Day Parade at the Center on Friday, February 24. The theme of this year's parade is "Hurling into the Future." Youth Gaelic games will take center stage this year as they host the Continental Youth Championships in the east bay city of Dublin next July over a four-day festival.

### Kennelly Memorial Feis

We hosted the Kennelly Memorial Feis mid-month with

more than 200 step dancers taking to the stage, some of them for the first time, to ensure the continuation of the tradition for years to come.

### Youth Music Classes

Music classes have resumed for the spring. Thanks to the generous support of those who donated to our 2022 Year End Annual Appeal, we have thirty kids signed up to participate in banjo, fiddle, bodhrán, guitar, singing, tin whistle, and piping classes. Drumming classes resume on February 2.

### Amateur Boxing

The UICC is teaming up with Fire in the Ring Boxing to showcase a night of amateur boxing at the Center on Saturday March 18.

### The Black Brothers

Michael and Shay Black will present a concert of songs and music to kick off the St Patrick's festivities on March 3rd at the Center. Button accordion player Félim Egan and keyboardist, Eamonn Flynn will join them on stage.

### St Patrick's Season

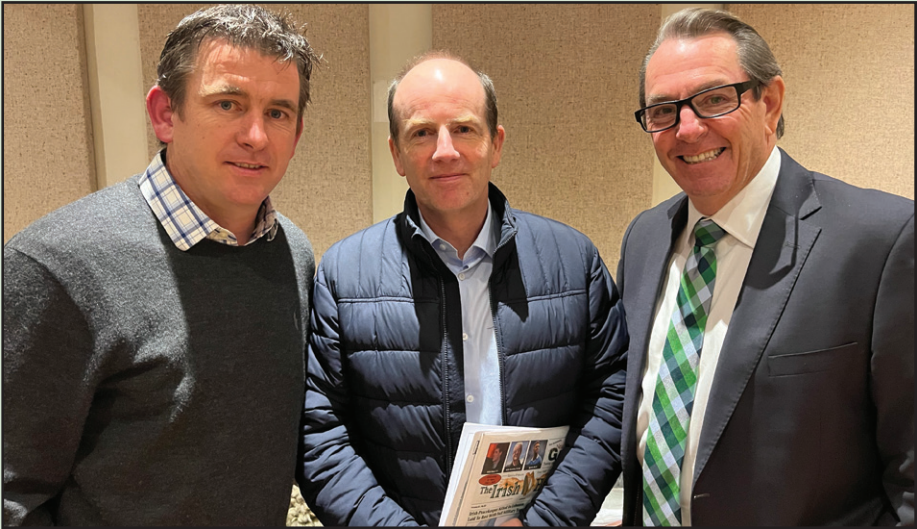
It's hard to believe that the St Patrick's season is almost upon us again. We look forward to a great lineup of Irish music, singing, dancing, and hearty corned beef and dinner cabbage. The parade takes place on Saturday, March 11, with St Patrick's Day falling on a Friday.

## Irish Government Official Visits The Center

Joe Hackett, Secretary General of the Irish government visited the Irish Center on Monday January 23. Joe was accompanied by Ciara Delaney, Irish Embassy, Washington DC, Micheál Smith, Consul General, Jennifer Chadwick, Vice Consul, and Elizabeth Creely.

Joe met and chatted with representatives from San Francisco Youth GAA, United Irish Societies and the United Irish Cultural Center board. Youth GAA Chairman James Quinn spoke about the vibrant Gaelic games locally and the

upcoming Continental Youth Championships in the east bay city of Dublin later this summer. Liam Frost presented on the activities planned around the 2023 St Patrick's season and beyond while Liam Reidy presented on the 2025 project. There was lively discussion, back and forth on a number of topics including Irish government support for the new Irish Center building once we have planning approval for the city of San Francisco planning Department and the future of the Irish Center.



Liam Reidy, UICC President, Joe Hackett, and Liam Frost, President, UIS.



Leo Cassidy, Micheál Smith, Consul General and Redmond Lyons.



Brian Rogers, SF Youth GAA, Jennifer Chadwick, Vice Consul San Francisco, and Elizabeth Creely, Irish Consulate Office.



Ann McKiernan, SF Youth GAA, Ciara Delaney, Irish Embassy, Washington DC, and Chris Del Carlo, United Irish Societies.



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# NICCoA Annual Meeting New York, 2023

The annual meeting of Irish Cultural and Heritage Centers of North America (and a sprinkle from Canada) took place in New York City on January 13. The meeting was hosted by the New York Irish Consulates office and the newly opened Irish Arts Center on the west side of the city.



Liam Reidy with Jean Butler, Butler Irish Dance, New York, and former Riverdance principal dancer.



Exterior of the new \$60 million New York Irish Arts building on the west side of New York at 726 11th Ave.



Liam Reidy with Aidan Connolly, Executive Director, New York Irish Arts Center.

## The Rebel Cork Ladies Recruitment Drive

The Rebel Cork Ladies Association (RCLA), celebrates 110 years in existence this year. The ladies club have been busy recruiting new members since late last year and held an informational afternoon here at the Center on Sunday January 22.

President Kathleen Manning is eager to hear from any member of the community who has Cork ancestry who wishes to join the club. You can reach Kathleen via email: rebelcork90@yahoo.com

*Pictured right: Imelda Daly, Jennifer Chadwick, Vice-Consul of Ireland, San Francisco, Kathleen Manning and Hannah O'Donovan.*



Margaret O'Sullivan, Jennifer Drennan, Shannon McAuliffe, and Mary Fitzgerald.



Mary O'Leary, Chris Kelly, Sue Spillane, Margaret McAuliffe, Carolyn Ervin, Joan Guiney.

## Youth Music Classes Underway

THE CENTER IS ALIVE WITH IRISH MUSIC CLASSES four evenings a week as young kids are busy getting to grips with the tin whistle, banjo, fiddle, guitar, Irish pipes, drumming and singing. It is great to see the young children being so enthusiastic about learning the instruments.

We are thankful for the Irish Pipers support

of tutoring the young pipers. A big thank you to all those in the community who provided support to the 2022 Annual Appeal which dedicates financial support for the Youth Music Program.

Seeing the young kids so happy playing music reminds me of the old Irish proverb (se-anfhocal) -Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí - Praise the youth and they will flourish.



Tin whistle students Fintan and Roisín Reidy.



Roisín Reidy and Hazel Kearney with fiddle teacher Valerie Rose.

UNITED IRISH SOCIETIES

UISSF.ORG

GRAND MARSHAL DINNER

FRIDAY FEB 24TH, 2023

HONORING PAT UNIACKE

HON. GRAND MARSHALS

Mike Alvers, Jerry Keohane

Nicole Killigrew, Barry McGrath, Katherine (Katy) O'Shea

DOORS OPEN AT 6.00PM -- DINNER AT 7.00PM

Tickets \$125/each - After Feb 14th \$175

Chris Del Carlo 415 648-4522

Mgt McAuliffe 415-334-7212

St. Patricks Room at the

UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER

St. Patrick's Day Tour of the U.S.

IRISH CENTER 2025 PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

United Irish Cultural Center of San Francisco presents

GREEN ROAD

with special guest soprano

Clodagh Kinsella

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Doors at 6:30 pm | Show at 7 pm

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

2700 45th Avenue | San Francisco, CA 94116



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# The Irish Center Welcomes Three New Board Members

THE UNITED IRISH CULTURAL Center welcomed three new members to its Board of Directors in December last. The new members are: Suzie Sheedy, Rebecca Harrington and Anne Cassidy Carew.

**Suzie Sheedy**



Suzie Sheedy is a highly skilled fundraising professional with more than 20 years of experience in philanthropy, relationship building, and marketing. During the course of her career she has helped raise more than \$70 million for Bay Area organizations including Catholic Charities, Hamilton Families, Sequoia Hospital, Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep and St Anthony's. Suzie's experience includes capital campaigns, annual giving, planned giving, fundraising events, major gifts, donor stewardship, and foundation and corporate grants procurement.

Suzie's grandparents, Jim and Helen Fitzpatrick, were founding members of the United Irish Cultural Center. She is married to Declan Sheedy and they have two children: Erinn, a teacher at St Thomas More School, and Connor, a senior at Marquette University. Suzie also sits on the board of The Hibernian Newman Club and is the Club Secretary of Pearse Óg Football and Hurling Team.

**Rebecca Harrington**



Rebecca Harrington is Co-Founder and CEO of The Leadership Institute (LI). She was responsible for the original planning and launch of LI in 1991 and has overseen strategy, product development, growth and executive management of all operations since its inception. LI is a national member organization comprised of 65+ of the most preeminent health systems in the country, represented by their CEOs and senior executive teams, who

come together through a variety of services to share insights, learnings, and best practices. In addition, LI established the LI National Behavioral Health Forum for member systems to collaborate in treating addiction and mental illness.

Prior to launching LI, Rebecca was Vice President of Operations for Diabetes Treatment Centers of America, part of American Healthcorp, a publicly traded company specializing in chronic disease management. Before joining DTCA, she served as Assistant Director of Operations at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center where her responsibilities included ambulatory, ancillary and inpatient areas, and management of a statewide healthcare program. She also served as Special Assistant to the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies where she was responsible for the development of health-related regulatory initiatives including lobbying at the state and federal levels on a variety of health policy issues.

Active now as a healthtech startup mentor, board advisor and investor, Rebecca is passionate about supporting and advising Founders creating the future of health care. She is energized every day by the passion, curiosity, optimism, and commitment of amazing leaders with whom she is privileged to work.

Rebecca has a Master of Science degree in Health Ad-

ministration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst where she was awarded a two-year US Public Health Fellowship. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Wellesley College. She currently is a member of the Business Leadership Council of Wellesley College and the Advisory Board of GuardaHeart. She has several published interviews and articles relating to healthcare, lives in San Francisco and is the co-creator of three amazing human beings.

**Anne Cassidy Carew**



Anne Cassidy Carew born and raised in the Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. Anne attended Holy Name and Mercy High School, married at Saint Anne's and baptized her children at Saint Cecilia's. Anne was raised by Sally from

Sligo and Jerry from Cavan, who taught her to be a strong Irish woman and to not stand idle when there is work to be done. She was married at Saint Anne's with the reception at the United Irish Cultural Center.

Anne's father Jerry was a part of the original crew that built the United Irish Cultural Center in the early 1970s and was a board member for the UICC. Anne followed in his footsteps starting in 2005 and got involved with the UICC.

During the last 17 years Anne served on the UICC board as President, Treasurer and Secretary. And when she was not on the board she volunteered where she was needed, event planner for the Mad Hatter Tea Party, Brick campaign coordinator, and engineer of the Keepers of the Steps Exhibition.

Anne has a great love for her community and education. For the last 17 years Anne has found her purpose working with high school students, as a school counselor and vice principal. Living and raising her children in Pacifica, Anne has worked with great parents supporting and collaborating on Parent Teacher Organizations and parcel tax campaigns designing creative ways to raise funds.

Anne has many loves in life: gelato, Irish chocolate and travelling with her husband Ed and her children Ryan and Shannon—not necessarily in this order!

## Honor Ireland's Patriot Dead

The Annual Easter Commemoration at the grave of Fenian Thomas Desmond is on Easter Sunday, April 9th, 2023, at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma. Assemble at Main Gates 11am.



Leading Irish Republican Guest Speaker:  
Music by:  
The Pearse and Connolly  
Fife and Drum Band

## Crossroads Story