



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

New Year With New Goals And Aspirations For 2023

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

AS WE TURN THE CORNER into another new year, the Irish Center will mark forty eight years as the hub of all things Irish in the community. During the past five decades since the Center opened on March 8, 1975, many wonderful events and gatherings have taken place here. We are fortunate to have the Center as a resource for the community. The longevity of the Center has been made possible over the years by supporters in the community, and this has been very evident in the past few years as the Center encountered some economic headwinds. The future is much more positive now, as we exit the Covid era and look forward to writing the next chapter in the Irish Center's history. 2023 will be a significant year for the 2025 Project as we move into the next phase of the redevelopment process. Watch this space!

We rounded out December at the Center, on a high note across all sections of our operations. While our event staff were kept busy with many holiday and community events, philanthropy dominated the last month of the year with a tremendous response to our 2025 Project pledges, annual appeal, Leo T Walsh scholarship and library fundraisers. This year's appeal campaign focused on continuing to expand our Irish culture and programming

footprint in 2023 with proposed expansions in library offerings, theatre, summer camp, and Irish music classes for kids.

Looking Ahead to 2023

We can look forward with renewed optimism for a full year of uninterrupted activity at the Center. It's been a number of years since we have been able to do that. The SF Rose committee will select a San Francisco rose for the International Rose of Tralee competition on January 28. The 2023 Grand Marshal's Dinner (honoring San Bruno resident Pat Uniacke) will take place on February 26. A jam-packed St Patrick's season will see full houses at the Center on the Parade Day, March 11, and the annual Block party on March 12. The following weekend will be epic as March 17 falls on a Friday. One of the biggest boxing nights of the year takes place the following day on March 18 in association with 'Fire in the Ring' boxing club. It promises to be a great first quarter of the year.

2025 Project

Many thanks to all those members who funded their second pledge towards the 2025 Project, and to our new first time donors who stepped up to support the dream for a new building. The 2025 Project is moving along nicely and the building group team is chipping away each week on various tasks. The bi-weekly

meetings with the planning department continue to drive the project forward. We anticipate being before the planning commission sometime by early summer.

New D4 Supervisor

There has been a change in the local neighborhood political landscape since the November elections. Joel Engardio won the District 4 supervisors race against incumbent Gordon Mar. Joel will now be the supporting voice for the 2025 project at City Hall and we look forward to working with him to get the new building in place. Joel is hosting his District 4 community celebration here at the Center on Saturday January 7. In recent communication with Joel, he mentioned that he would like to have his re-election party in the new building in 2026! I told him we would do everything in our power to honor that request!

Board transitions

After almost four years on the Board here at the Center, Mark and Molly Burke are stepping away for some well deserved rest and relaxation. They leave the Board as Vice-President and Secretary respectively. The dynamic duo have put in an incalculable amount of time and effort into the Center. The Burkes bravely stepped up to re-open the Center in the spring of 2019. Since that time they have helped to drive the rescue and recovery of the Cen-

ter's operations. While they will always be synonymous with Wawona Gates, they also gave us incredible St Patrick's Day season festivities, Fight Nights, Oktoberfest, and a host of other great entertainment events at the Center.

We have three new Board members stepping up. Anne Cassidy Carew returns for her third spell on the board, and will embark on her 17th year of service to the Center. The other additions are Suzie Sheedy and Rebecca Harrington who are coming onboard with a strong record in fundraising and will dedicate much of their efforts to the 2025 Project. We are delighted to have each of you as part of the team going forward.

Christmas Céili

I took my wife and girls along to the Christmas Céili last month and had an absolute blast. I took part in some of the set dances and was left breathless by all the dancing. Michael Murphy is a patient and dedicated teacher and all levels are encouraged to participate in the céili dances. It was also good to meet many of the dancers during the break in activity. Set dancing classes restart on Thursday, January 17, at 7.30pm. What a great way to stay fit for the new year!

Festive Shows

We had two traveling Christmas shows during December here at the Center. To kick off the festive season we

had the Kerry Productions "An Irish Christmas" on December 1. The following week we hosted the Fires "Scottish Christmas" complete with wonderful singing, highland step dancing, reed organ, guitar, fiddle, flute and bagpipe playing a whole host of Christmas tunes and songs.

Cork Rebels Shine

Hats off to the Rebel Cork Ladies and Mens club for a wonderful Christmas dinner dance celebration last month. Martin Connolly was honored by the Rebel Cork Benevolent Association as Corkman of the Year. Mary O'Leary was honored for her twenty seven years of service to the Cork Ladies.

Wonderful Boutique

Forty local vendors and artisans participated in the annual Holiday Boutique in December. Many community members were able to secure some excellent gifts for loved ones, as there was something for everyone on the day.

Kids Music Lessons

Music lessons for kids return on January 7. Sign up online at irishcentersf.org

Father Daughter Dance

We will hold the first ever Father Daughter Dance at the Center on January 21. Should be a great night! Tickets online.

Happy New Year!

All the best for a happy New Year in 2023. See you at the Center soon!

UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER of SAN FRANCISCO

2022 by the Numbers

128

NEW MEMBERS

3

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
(Keepers of the Steps, Annie Holland, and Irish Veterans); and 2 travelling exhibits

Digital Data

37,000 WEBSITE VISITORS

3,503 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWS (659 NEW)

6,364 FACEBOOK FOLLOWS (690 NEW)

717 TWITTER FOLLOWERS

3,840 NEWSLETTERS MAILED

62,400 EMAILS SENT

65

PARTICIPANTS ON OUR 1ST PLACE PARADE BUS IN THE SF ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

2

COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVES

54

STUDENTS AWARDED \$44K IN LEO WALSH SCHOLARSHIP MONEY

450

PATRICK J. DOWLING LIBRARY HOURS

32

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS SERVED

58

YOUTH IN 3 WEEKS OF SUMMER CAMP

3

COMHALTAS CÉILÍS

8

IRISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

18

CONCERTS/SHOWS

AMATEUR 2

FIGHT NIGHTS

1K

IN ATTENDANCE AT OUR 1ST SUMMER FLEADH-ROCK THE GATES 8 BANDS ON 3 STAGES + PIPERS AND DANCERS

6

IRISH DANCE SCHOOLS OFFERING CLASSES + 2 FEISEANNA

278

VOLUNTEERS

57

YOUTH MUSIC CLASSES OFFERED

IrishCenterSF.org

2700 45th Ave | San Francisco, CA 94116

'Thank You' To Mark And Molly Burke!



Liam Reidy, UICC President presents a token of appreciation to Mark and Molly Burke from the UICC. A photo book compiled by volunteer graphic designer Eileen Mize captures fifty years of Irish bread making in the Murphy and Burke households that Molly had talked about putting together for a long time. Molly said upon the receipt of the book: "They are my Dad's hands on the front cover. I love it, I absolutely love it. Thank you."

MARK AND MOLLY BURKE stepped away from the Executive Board last month after almost four years of service on the UICC Board. Most recently Mark served as Vice-President while Molly served as Secretary. The dynamic duo have been at the forefront of the huge turn around in fortunes at the Irish Center during the past four years. Since the spring of 2019, it is incalculable how many volunteer hours both have logged in an effort to reopen and reinvigorate the Center as a focal point for the commu-

nity. While it has been a team effort from all across the board, there is no doubt that Mark and Molly helped to stabilize the Irish Center "ship" and have set the Center up for continued success going forward.

On behalf of the UICC family and Irish American community we thank Mark and Molly for their herculean efforts over the past four years. We are delighted to know that they will not be going far from us in 2023, as they plan to return to help out with some of the our regular volunteer events during the year.

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The Fire's Debut Show At The Center Strikes A Very Festive Chord

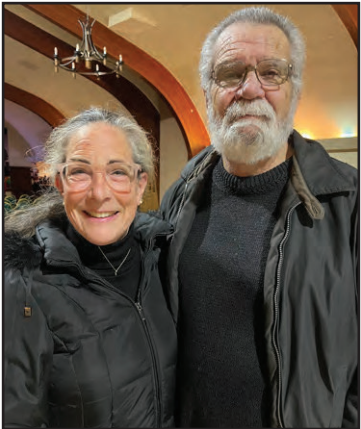
THE FIRE'S VERY SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS show filled the St. Patricks Room with festive cheer, song, and dance last month. The audience was mesmerized from the beginning and were kept entertained all evening until the standing ovation had the applause ringing in one's ear long after the curtain came down. It was high energy traditional music all evening long, combined with world class performances of blazing Scottish music with a distinctly Californian flare. Hats off the amazing musicians Rebecca Lomnicky (fiddle), Adam Hendey (bouzouki, guitar, reed organ and vocals), and David Brewer (bag pipes, percussion, flute and whistle). Overall, it was a wonderful unique performance showcasing the spirit of the holiday season.



John and Jeanne Connolly.



Leslie and Joe Conaghan.



Nancy and Michael Sanchez.



Matthew and Peter Samkauskas with Ben and Erica Whaley.



The Fire's very brilliant musicians: David Brewer, Rebecca Lomnicky and Adam Hendey.



Nicola and Brian Finnerty with Jeremiah O'Shea.



Kara and Vern Deason.



Carolyn and James Coe with Maureen Revel.



Kathy Jackson, Lisa Holme, and Patti Traktman.



Cathy McGarvey, Joann Prior, and Anne McGarvey.

The Bonanza King Talk

WE HAD A WONDERFUL TALK BY GREGORY CROUCH on gold and silver miner Jack Mackay following the Holiday party on December 14. The Bonanza King is an engaging rag to riches story of the life of John Mackay an Irish immigrant who leaves New York City and travels west during the Gold Rush era. It's a fascinating story.



Above: Gregory Crouch with UICC President Liam Reidy.
Below: Maggie Overbay, Kathleen Kraus, Shannon McAuliffe and Anne Cassidy Carew.

Holiday Boutique Draws Large Crowds

SO MUCH CHRISTMAS CHEER! With nearly 40 vendors, plenty of eager shoppers, live music, and festive libations, the Holiday Boutique and Artisan Craft Fair was a great way to spend the Saturday before Christmas! Thanks to all of our vendors and to all who shopped to support local and independent businesses, makers, and artists!

Clockwise from top right:

Eileen Mize and Megan Mize Albright at the Neddlebright booth.

Marion Broeker, Anne Cassidy Carew and Sally Cassidy.

Volunteer extraordinaire Renee Lazear.

Kathleen McKeon at the KOTS booth.

Long time Feis vendor Mary Ann King.

