



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

# Blockbuster March Program Of Events Planned for The Irish Center

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

THE RECENT COLD SNAP AND wintry weather indicates that we are still in winter mode, and we look forward to a return of warmer springlike temperatures. However, blooming daffodils and cherry blossoms are a sure sign that spring is in the air and that St Patrick's Day is just around the corner. March has historically been the busiest month of the year for our community, and this year's St Patrick's season is no different with a jam-packed host of offerings for the community to enjoy—it's REEL March Madness.

## 2023 Grand Marshal

A capacity crowd of 400 people attended the United Irish Societies Grand Marshal dinner on Friday, February 24, here at the Center which marked the official kick off of the St Patrick's season. Galway native Pat Uniacke is this year's St Patrick's Day Grand Marshal—a well-deserved honor indeed for a man that has given so much to the Bay Area community over the years. Congratulations to Pat and his wife, Úna, and family. We also congratulate the families of the Honorary Grand Marshals; Nicole Killegrew, Jerry Keohane, Katherine (Katy) O'Shea, Mike Alvers, and Barry McGrath.

## Irish Ministerial Visit

Consul General of Ireland Micheál Smith will be busy around the St Patrick's season as Irish government representative Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science will be hosted here in San

Francisco. Minister Harris plans two visits to the Irish Center during his time here. He will attend the Post Parade Party with the community on March 11 and will meet the Irish Center Board on March 12 to discuss the 2025 Project.

## Entertainment Galore

Hats off to the St Patrick's Board subcommittee who have spent the last several weeks preparing for the festivities during March. Pre-planning began in January, led by Events lead, Aileen Duloher, and a team of board members and volunteers. There is something for everyone who is Irish (or Irish at heart) this month at the Center. The Black Brothers (Michael and Shay), along with Felim Egan and Eamonn Flynn kick off the musical entertainment with a show in the Emerald Pub on Friday, March 3. We have a multitude of local musicians performing on March 11, 12, and 17. I must highlight the music concert featuring County Wexford, Ireland group The Green Road with soprano Clodagh Kinsella on Sunday, March 12 (after Green Fest). Not to be missed. Then we have Runa, a Celtic American roots band performing on March 19—their guitarist is fresh from the red carpet having received a Grammy nomination. Not to mention all the local dance schools and pipe bands that will be sharing their talents throughout the season.

## Green Fest Block Party

We host the annual Green Fest block party on March 12 with our partners the United



Irish Societies, Java Beach, and Cooley-Keegan Comhaltas. Ivor Collins, the Irish pipers, and Irish dancers are just some of the entertainers lined up for the day. We will have face painting for the kids as well. Enjoy a classic car show on Wawona Street during the festival, and wander into Wawona Gates for a respite. Party starts at 11am and runs until 5 pm. Entertainment will continue in the Emerald Pub after.

## Be Proud to Be Irish, and Look for Us in the San Francisco St Patrick's Day Parade

This St Patrick's season proudly hang an Irish flag from your home or business. This year tell the world you are Irish and show how proud you are of your "Irishness." Celebrate your Irish heritage by coming out to the parade and "wearing the green" on Saturday, March 11 and on Friday, March 17. Cheer on the UICC parade bus along the route—classic cars, youth music program students, and live music by members the The Green Road touring band from County Wexford.

## Leo T Walsh Scholarship

Applications for our annual scholarship program are now open for 8th Graders and High School Seniors entering the next level of their education. Completed applications are due on March 17, delivered to the Irish Center. You can also sponsor a scholarship in your name or in the name of a loved one.

## Irish Camp—Youth Summer Program

Drama, sport, art and music will feature again in this year's summer camp. We will broaden our computer offerings to include website development, digital animation, and computer programming. Registration is now open for early bird pricing. The camp turns from June 12 and June 30. Sign up before March 30 for the Early Bird Special of \$300/week. [www.irishcentersf.org/irish-camp/](http://www.irishcentersf.org/irish-camp/)

## Lá Fhéile Bríde

February 1, 2023 marked the inaugural year of a national holiday for St Brigid in Ireland. We celebrated the occasion with a week-long line-up of events and activities highlighted by a St Brigid's Cross Weaving Workshop on Saturday, February 4. A collaboration between Irish Marvels and the UICC brought together an inter-generational crowd for a delightful afternoon. From reeds and rushes to pipe cleaners and more, nimble fingers of all sizes followed their guides and made their crosses.

## Rumble at the Beach

Boxing returns to the Center on March 18 featuring

USA and Ireland amateur boxers. Irish boxers from counties Cork, Down, Meath, and Westmeath are traveling to the Bay Area to participate. This is the third boxing card at the center since April 2022. The earlier two sold out; Boxing is popular in the outer Sunset. This event is being held as a partnership with Fire in the Ring Boxing based in Brisbane, and the UICC.

## Hibernian of the Year

Congratulations to long time Irish Center member and supporter Roger Gargano who is being honored as the 2023 Hibernian of the Year downtown by the San Francisco Hibernian Newman Club on March 17.

## March Charity Feis

We host our second Feis of the year on the weekend of March 25-26 here at the center. Patricia Kennelly and Michael Dillon School of Irish dance are the organizers.

## Kids Movie Pizza Night

Our second kids movie night of the year will be held on Friday, March 24 from 7-9pm in the St. Francis room. We look forward to watching The Secret of Roan Inish.

## New UICC Members

We continue to add new members to the UICC member roll, many of those joining are first timers. Welcome aboard! The spring is an important time for renewals so check your email for your dues payment request.

*Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh!*

*Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

## St Brigid's Cross Weaving Workshop

A HIGHLIGHT OF THE UICC week-long St Brigid's Day Celebration, marking the inaugural year of a national holiday in her name in Ireland, was the St Brigid's Cross Weaving Workshop on February 4.

This wonderful collaboration between Irish Marvels and the UICC brought together an inter-generational crowd for a delightful afternoon. Filling up the St Francis Room on a cold winter Saturday, guests were warmed by tea and

brown bread while they kept their hands warm with weaving. From reeds and rushes to pipe cleaners and more, nimble fingers of all sizes followed their guides and made their crosses.

All were treated to some fine music to add to the day thanks to Eamon Flynn, Vince Keehan and Kenny Sommerville. In addition, we had jazz singer Edel Meade who shared a couple of songs. Edel is a Fulbright scholar (UC Berkeley).



Logan Caraway.



Caitie O'Shea and Jo Coffey.



Edel Meade, jazz singer.



Tommy Noonan.

## Ulysses Abridged Talk

by Aiden Stone



Professor Michael James Fallon.

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2023 marked James Joyce's 141st birthday plus the 101st anniversary of the publication of Ulysses.

To ring in the occasion, as part of its weeklong St Brigid's Day Festival, the UICC welcomed Lecturer Emeritus Michael James Fallon (San Jose State) to discuss his abridgement of Joyce's complex novel.

The dynamic, far-ranging discussion was well attended. The conversation focused on Professor Fallon's method for abridging Ulysses, plus whether such a project was possible—or

even desirable. Comparisons were drawn between Professor Fallon's abridgement and the Argentine author Jorge Borges's short story "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote." Highlights of the evening included an appreciation of two first American editions of Ulysses, volumes which attendees brought to the discussion from their personal collections, as well as readings from the text, and finally, an enthusiastic comparison between episodes of Ulysses and tracks from The Beatles' album Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.



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Dance Art Tells A Story



OUR KEEPERS OF THE STEPS Committee members are thrilled to reveal a recent acquisition to the growing “Keepers” dance costume collection. This beautiful, early 90s Threads of Green dress belonged to Healy Dance alum Meghann Elsbernd. Meghann shared her recollection of acquiring her beautiful solo dress from the “it” Irish dance costume maker of the day.

“My family and I went to Kilkenny to pick it out at Threads of Green. A very memorable trip for sure! Picking out the patterns, threads, and silk,” enthused Meghann.

She noted the then-new exciting trends of a bright, fluorescent color scheme and lovely scalloped cape.

“I can picture (my teacher) Ann Healy’s face when she first saw my dress. A little mix of emotions on my new trendy dress. Couldn’t quite

tell if she loved or hated it,” she recalled.

When she retired from dancing, Meghann’s father had the dress lovingly framed, and it hung in their family home for years.

This piece of the collection is now on display in the 2nd floor elevator lobby adjacent to the St Patrick’s Room, and will, no doubt, be enjoyed by all who pass by.

Thanks to the efforts of UICC Librarian and Keepers Committee member Jennifer Drennan for organizing the installation.

Please be sure to take a peek next time you are at the Center.

And, if you have any old dance costumes (they do not need to be framed!), Keepers of the Steps wants them! Reach out to Eileen Mize at [emize@irishcentersf.org](mailto:emize@irishcentersf.org) to make arrangements.



THE UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER presents

# IRISH CAMP

## Youth Summer Program

2700 45th AVE @ WAWONA in SAN FRANCISCO'S OUTER SUNSET



**Register Online**

[IrishCenterSF.org](https://IrishCenterSF.org)

[@IrishCenterSF](https://IrishCenterSF.org)

**Ages 8-20**

Irish Camp is offers a wide range of Irish cultural activities in a safe environment with professional teaching artists and support staff.

- 3 one-week sessions
- creative, educational, & fun
- skills building; social

**Sign up today!**

**June 12-30, 2023**

Welcome New Cultural Programmers

THE UICC’S COMMITMENT to expand cultural programs and increase opportunities for youth engagement is stronger than ever. Thanks to the financial support from the Irish government sponsored Emigrant Support Program and the 2022 UICC Annual Appeal, we are excited to add to our team to ensure a robust calendar of offerings. Join us in welcoming two new (but not unfamiliar) faces to the team. Meet Eileen Mize who heads up our “Keepers of the Steps” program and lends her graphic design and social media talents, and the accomplished actor, teacher, writer, storyteller, choreographer Máire Clerkin who has been involved with several UICC youth programs from Irish Camp to Zoom storytelling events.

Eileen Mize



Eileen Mize is a veteran communications professional with a passion for Irish arts and culture. Her toolbox of creative skills including graphic design, writing, storytelling, social media, and marketing communications, coupled with a lifelong passion for Irish culture and arts that began at a young age with her involvement in Irish step dancing, make her an asset to the Irish Center. Eileen is a third generation San Francisco Irish American and enjoys giving back to a place that has been at the heart of many events in her life—from feiseanna, the Rose of Tralee, and dance-outs, to concert going and special events.

Eileen’s professional career with non-profits in Catholic and independent schools, and currently with the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, give her the broad experience of managing projects and programs as well as fundraising and events. Eileen is a builder—she builds community, creates interest, develops relationships, and is adept at creating and cultivating social media engagement.

Eileen is a proud alumni member of the McBride School

of Irish Dance having enjoyed many years of competition and comradery in the San Francisco Bay Area Irish dance community—including a couple of visits as a solo competitor to Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne. She was an active performer in various festivals and stage shows featuring Irish step dancing including the California Revels’ production of “Christmas in an Irish Castle,” the Northern California Renaissance Faire production of “Shanachie, the Challenge of the Sidhe” (for several seasons), and The Great Dickens Christmas Fair, as well as providing dance accompaniment for several Irish musicians and bands including The Black Brothers, Melanie O’Reilly, Avalon Rising, Cat Taylor and Fiddler’s Fancy, Ellery Klein, and many others. Her work with these musicians sometimes extended into marketing and communications and even album cover design! Eileen loves supporting Irish artists and attending feiseanna and supporting our local dancers and dance schools in any way she can.

As a member volunteer, Eileen leaned on her relationships within the local Irish dance community to play an integral role in creating “Keepers of the Steps”—a UICC special collection of stories and ephemera collected (and still being collected) that tell the history of Irish step dancing in the San Francisco Bay Area. Embracing “Keepers” as her passion project, Eileen continues to develop new and exciting ways to expand the program and the collection and is currently working on the script for a virtual tour of the exhibit to be launched on International Irish Dance Day, September 17. “Keepers of the Steps” is planning a summertime Pop-Up Exhibit at the UICC in August, and is investigating other venues in the Bay Area as well.

Máire Clerkin

Máire Clerkin is a choreographer, director, teacher, actor, writer, storyteller, voice actor, performance coach, and former Irish dance adjudicator with An Coimisiun le Rincí Gaelacha. Máire was recently appointed external examiner for Irish Dance Performance at University of Limerick. She is a Master Teaching Artist with Los Angeles Music Center, Segerstrom Center for the Arts and LA Arts Group.

Máire specializes in Irish dance and drama, with a background in theatre and journalism, designing programs for California’s arts curriculum. Teaching credits include Loyola Marymount University, University of Limerick, Royal Festival Hall, Weekend Arts College (Youth Program), Yorkshire Dance, Cois Céim, Blás Summer School, United Irish Cultural Center San Francisco Summer Camp, The Players Conservatory, Aman Dance Educators, and Santa Monica College.

From London of Irish parents, Máire’s dance theatre companies have performed throughout Ireland and the UK since the 1980s. Her award-winning solo show The Bad Arm—Confessions of a Dodgy Irish Dancer toured North America, Dublin, Edinburgh Festival and London’s West End and culminated at Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2019. Máire has created numerous dance dramas which enjoyed regional, national and international success. Other credits include Telling LA on PBS TV; World City at Walt Disney Concert Hall; Music Makers Schools on BBC TV; Revolver on BBC World Service; Dancing on Dangerous Ground, Radio City New York and Theatre Royal Drury Lane; Unconnected Soundings, Royal Opera House; Centenary Knees Up, South Bank; Fennels, Flannels & Funnels with John Hegley, The Place; collaborations with DV8 and Peter Sheridan; artistic director/ co-founder The Hairy Marys and Clerkinworks.

Máire’s program Once Upon a Time in Ireland—Irish Storytelling for Children, is performed in schools and libraries, and online.

Her screenplay, The Jig is Up is currently in development for production.



Youth Music Classes In Full Swing This Spring

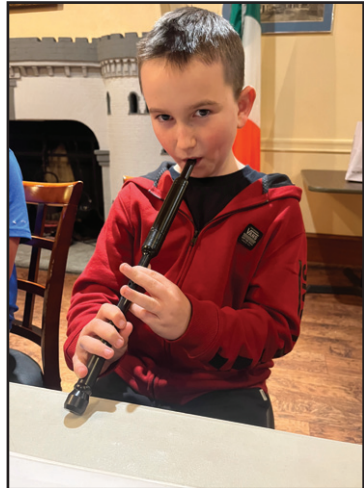
Thanks to all those who graciously supported the 2022 Annual Appeal to support our spring music classes for kids in the community. A special thank you to Irish pipers, John Carlin, Tom Harvey, Alex Lentz and Mike Bowler who are providing tutoring in the Irish pipes. Here are a few pictures of the students who benefit.



Brendan Mullen.



Fintan Reidy.



Tommy Harvey.