



• UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER •

Fostering Irish Heritage: Enriching Experiences and Musical Milestones

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

DURING THE PAST MONTH, I have been fortunate to witness and participate in a diverse range of programs hosted at the Center. These programs have received an overwhelmingly positive response and active involvement from various members of the Irish American community. While our current facility may have limitations, the signs are clear that a larger building would enable us to offer a wider variety of programs, enhance participation, and cater to the needs of all sections within our community.

Irish Summer Camp Success

Our highly anticipated 2023 Irish Camp commenced on Monday, June 12th, and concluded on June 30th, marking three weeks filled with enriching experiences and exciting discoveries. First established in 2021 with 30 campers, the camp has now grown to 75 kids in 2023. Led by the talented Máire Clerkin and supported by a dedicated team of instructors, and assistants, our campers delved into a diverse range of Irish arts, physical activities, and even computer coding. The kids even got to try Gaelic football and hurling this year. Throughout their journey, they not only developed new skills and passions but also formed lasting friendships. The grand finale of the Camp took place on Friday, June 30th, where the campers' collaborative efforts were showcased in a mesmerizing performance titled "Tír na nÓg."

Emerging Irish Musicians

The ongoing music classes in fiddle, tin whistle, banjo, and bagpipes are demonstrating clear indications that our commitment to music education is poised to yield remarkable results in the future. Each week, students in these classes immerse themselves in the rich traditions of Irish music, honing their skills and nurturing their passion.

Among the talented participants, our young pipers have an exciting milestone to look forward to in July. After devoting a year and a half to mastering the intricacies of chanters, they will finally have the opportunity to graduate to playing real bagpipes. This progression marks a significant accomplishment in their musical journey, showcasing their dedication and perseverance.

By investing in music education and providing a platform for young musicians to flourish, we are sowing the seeds for a vibrant future filled with the enchanting melodies of Irish music. With each passing week, these emerging talents are cultivating their artistic abilities and embracing the rich cultural heritage of Ireland.

As we witness their growth and development, we are confident that these passionate individuals will go on to become accomplished Irish musicians, contributing to the legacy of Irish music and delighting audiences both near and far.

Belfast Photographic Exhibition

We had the privilege of supporting and promoting

Sean McKernan's powerful exhibition, "Belfast: Conflict to Peace," which offered a captivating visual journey through the tumultuous history of the city from 1969 to 2023. Over the course of five days, the exhibition drew an appreciative audience, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended.

The opening night of the exhibition was a resounding success, attracting over 80 attendees. McKernan, a talented photographer hailing from Belfast himself, provided a firsthand account of life in his native city over the past four decades. His collection of photographs, taken from a bipartisan approach to documentary photography, served as a testament to the resilience and strength of the Belfast community.

Riveting Talk

One of the highlights of the exhibition was the formal talk held on Sunday, June 25th. McKernan captivated the audience with his enthralling narratives and stunning visuals. Through his photographs, he vividly depicted the various stages of Belfast's transformation, shedding light on the struggles, the pain, and ultimately, the path towards reconciliation and peace.

From the early years of the Troubles, marked by violence and division, to the gradual efforts towards peace and reconciliation, Sean's photographs painted a powerful picture of Belfast's journey. Each image told a story, capturing the emotions, the resilience, and the hopes of a community torn by conflict but determined to heal its wounds.

Through McKernan's lens,

we were able to witness the impact of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, which laid the foundation for peace and political stability in the north of Ireland. The photographs showcased the gradual healing of the city, the rebuilding of shattered neighborhoods, and the fostering of cross-community relationships. They reminded us that despite the scars of the past, Belfast has emerged as a symbol of resilience, unity, and the power of reconciliation.

Conflict and Reconciliation

The exhibition served as a testament to the importance of acknowledging and understanding the history of conflict and reconciliation in Belfast. It highlighted the need for continued efforts to foster understanding, promote dialogue, and support initiatives that contribute to a lasting peace. Sean McKernan's photographic journey provided a platform for reflection, dialogue, and appreciation of the progress made in Belfast, while also reminding us of the challenges that still lie ahead.

By supporting and promoting the "Belfast: Conflict to Peace" exhibition, we aimed to honor the resilience of the Belfast community, to educate our audience about the complex history of the city, and to inspire conversations about the importance of reconciliation in our own lives and communities.

Through the lens of art and photography, we were able to engage with the powerful story of Belfast, gaining a deeper understanding of the human spirit and the possibilities that emerge when we strive for

peace and understanding.

Boxing Partnership

On June 12th, Fire in the Ring boxing club joined up with the local San Francisco Youth GAA and brought us another successful night of amateur boxing. The bouts included boxers from Ireland, Bay Area based boxers and the local GAA community. Even one of our own board members, Mark Gorman participated in what was an enjoyable evening, which was to raise awareness about the Continental Youth Championships taking place in the east bay city of Dublin at the end of July.

Paul Byrom Returns

Irish tenor Paul Byrom (Celtic Thunder) returns to the Center on Saturday July 15th at 7pm for an intimate concert in the St Francis room. Paul's "Songs and Stories" US tour has sold out in some locations already. Get your tickets early.

All-Ireland Final Broadcast

The Center will broadcast the All-Ireland hurling and football finals on July 23rd (hurling) and 30th (football) at 7.00am. 16 Foot screen. Tickets at IrishCenterSF.org

Safe Travels

If you are traveling, please do take care, and we look forward to hearing about your trip when you return!

Get Well Wishes

Sending warm wishes for a speedy recovery to Marie Gavney, who recently experienced a fall and injured her leg. May you heal swiftly and be back on your feet in no time!

Belfast Documentary Photographer Sean McKernan's Captivating Exhibition

Over the last weekend of June, the Center was thrilled to host Belfast documentary photographer Sean McKernan and his captivating exhibition titled "Belfast—Conflict to Peace." This remarkable collection showcased a series of stunning images that depicted life in Belfast, spanning from the Hunger Strikes era through the Peace Process and beyond. McKernan's photographs encapsulated his personal documentation of the city's deeply

divided state over a period of 40 years, capturing its tumultuous journey towards peace and transformation into a resolute and thriving metropolis. Having recently exhibited at the London Irish Centre as part of the 25th Anniversary Year celebrations of the Good Friday Agreement, this remarkable collection came to San Francisco in collaboration with the Irish Consul General's Office.



Sean McKernan and Vince Keehan.



Karen Laffey and Don Walker.



Catherine and Seamus Kelliher.



Valerie McGrew and Maggie Overbay.



Adrian and Donna Driscoll.



Teresa and Pat McLoughlin.

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Irish Government Officials Explore Future Vision Of The UICC

ON JUNE 14TH, UICC President Liam Reidy, Vice President Anne Cassidy Carew, along with members of the Board and 2025 Project Building Committee, warmly welcomed a group of special guests from Ireland to the Center. The guests included a delegation of Irish government officials and San Francisco Irish Consul General Micheál Smith, who were eager to gain insights into #Project2025 and the exciting new vision for our Irish Center.

During their visit, the guests had the opportunity to explore various areas of the Center, including the Dowling Library. They were also able to witness the vibrant atmosphere of our summertime Irish Camp, which was in full swing. The sight of children immersed in Irish dance and song throughout the building added to the uplifting energy that permeated the Center during the officials' visit.



Laura Pathe, Anne Cassidy Carew, Liam Reidy, Senator Malcolm Byrne, Niamh Smyth, TD, Consul General Micheál Smith, Suzie Sheedy, Redmond Lyons, and Leo Cassidy.

The presence of our esteemed guests provided them with a firsthand glimpse into our commitment to building a Center that caters to the needs and aspirations of the next generation of Irish Americans. The enthusiasm and passion displayed by the children and the

overall atmosphere of the Center showcased the vibrant spirit that lies at the core of our mission. As conversations unfolded during the workshop, the Irish government officials were able to gain a deeper understanding of 2025 Project and the transformative impact it will have on

the future of the Irish Center, not only in San Francisco but on the west coast of the US. The visit fostered an exchange of ideas and a strengthened sense of collaboration between our local community and our friends from Ireland. There was an acknowledgment from the visiting

party of future Irish government funding for the project.

The occasion served as a testament to the collective efforts and vision of UICC's leadership, Board members, and Project 2025 Building Committee. Together, they are driving the evolution of the Irish Center, ensuring its continued vitality and relevance for generations to come.

The visit from our special guests concluded with a shared sense of excitement and inspiration. It reinforced the belief that the Irish Center is not only a place of cultural significance but also a dynamic hub that nurtures the talents and passions of young Irish Americans. With renewed energy and purpose, the UICC remains committed to its mission of creating a Center that serves as a beacon for Irish culture, fostering connections, and providing a platform for the next generation to thrive.

Thrilling Success of the 2023 Irish Camp: Unleashing Passion and Creativity

OUR HIGHLY ANTICIPATED 2023 Irish Camp commenced on Monday, June 12th, and concluded on June 30th, marking three weeks filled with enriching experiences and exciting discoveries. Led by the talented Máire Clerkin and supported by a dedicated team of instructors, assistants, and helpers, our campers delved into a diverse range of Irish arts, physical activities,

and even computer coding. Throughout their journey, they not only developed new skills and passions but also formed lasting friendships. The grand finale of the Camp took place on Friday, June 30th, where the campers' collaborative efforts were showcased in a mesmerizing performance titled "Tír na nÓg." Stay tuned for a detailed report on the show next month.

In the meantime, let's take a moment to enjoy some delightful snapshots captured during the vibrant morning of our Camp's first day. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the UICC members whose generous contributions through the Annual Appeal Campaign, as well as the support from the Emigrant Support Program by the government of Ireland, made this camp possible.



Aibhlinn and Niamh Cassidy, with Michael McKeon.



Cecily, Ciaran, and Josie Wallis.



Bree Moylan, Annabelle and Hazel Kearney.



Grace and Neve Devlin with Eoin and Eithne Clancy.

UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER,

JULY 15TH,
7PM

IRISH TENOR
PAUL BYROM
LIVE

TICKETS AND INFORMATION AT
WWW.PAULBYROM.IE

UNITED IRISH CULTURAL CENTER of SAN FRANCISCO

Céad míle fáilte

Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Judith Ellen Allen	Marcos DuBon	Cheryl Lynn King	Brian Pendergast
Andrew Oliver Ames	Ross Edward Dykes	Rose Kingston	Kelly Stanton Pisciotta
Marc Bargary	Siobhan Farr	Shannon Nelson Kissinger	Mary E. Powers
Carolyn Bass	Joseph Patrick Fox	Debra Kleinfeld	Steven Donald Quinlan
Toni Batchelli	John FP Gavney	Robert Lacy	Tim Shea
Caity Marie Beard	Jeanne C. Haugh	Deborah (Debbie) Lynch	Danny Francis Sullivan
Paul Boyle	Colleen Riley Haupt	Daniel Colin McCarthy	Therese Marie Swan
Nora Marie Brennan	Adrienne Herro	Dr. Chris McCarthy	Caitlin Gillespie Taffe
Geoffrey Caldwell	Laura M. Holland	Tina M. McNeal	Dan Twomey
Liam Caldwell	Kirsten Dawn Hutchinson	Christina Sutherland Mockler	Edwina Tynan
Eileen M. Carabine	Declan Ivory	Candice Morrissey	Martin Tynan
Logan Samuel Caraway	Adam Keenan	Danny Patrick Murphy	Catherine Valentine
Caitlin Connolly	Loryn Joan Kehoe-Ross	Michael Neveu	Alan Wald
Joseph Michael Costanzo	Katie Elizabeth Kelly	Claudia O'Callaghan	Kathleen Grace Weckenman
Bles Simon Costello	Sean P. Kelly	Rory Joseph O'Connor	Ryan Mark Weible
Erin M. Dowling Custer	Siobhan Kelly-Tuvo	Lauren O'Neil	
Daniely De Souza	John T. Kerins	Mary Owen	
Dr. Jay Le Roux Dillon	Lauren Doyle Kerins	David S. Parrish	

We are so grateful for our members. Did you know that a membership makes a great gift? Interested in learning more about the benefits?
Questions? Maggie Overbay at 650.892.4050

www.irishcentersf.org

Names listed became members between January and June 2023.

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SFYGAA Fight Night: A Resounding Success!

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE to all those who turned up at the Irish Center on Saturday, June 10, to show support for the San Francisco Youth Gaelic Athletic Association. The event showcased both the talented members of the SFYGAA community and esteemed guest boxers hailing from Ireland. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Fire in the Ring Boxing, our

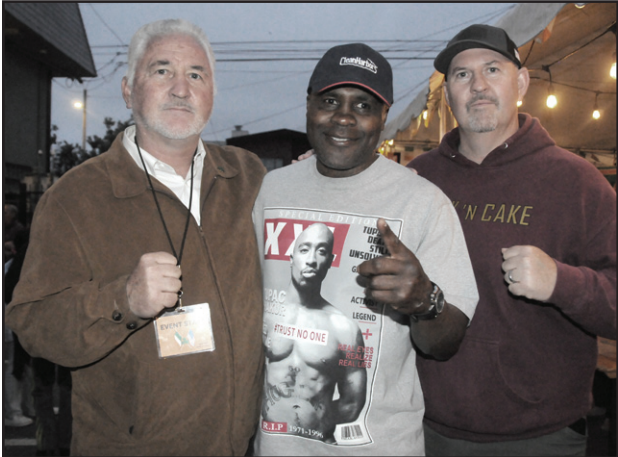
event partners, as well as the extraordinary dancers from the Whelan School of Irish Dance who mesmerized us with their captivating performances. SFYGAA is proudly hosting the Continental Youth Championships from July 27 to July 30, in the East Bay city of Dublin. The next Fight Night at the Center is Saturday August 12th, 2023.



Team Ireland. Back row L-R: Cahir Gormley, George Gormley (coach), Donagh Keary, Mollie Sheppard, Sean Keary (coach), Liam Grant, Eamonn Duffy (coach) Front row L-R: Matthew McCole, Aodhán Byrne, Peter McDonagh.



Fight night organizers and coaches from Inside The Rings: Ian Buckley, George Gormley, Sean Keary, Eamon McCusker, Eamonn Duffy, Jimmy Ford, and Seamus Collins. In front boxer of the night Aodhán Byrne.



Dan McGuire, James Page, and Tom Maguire.



Edel, Mark and Evin Gorman.



Brendan and Patrick Mullen.

Third Birthday Party For Wawona Gates!

OUR outdoor hospitality space, Wawona Gates, turned 3 last month. It was this space (formerly the Center's parking lot) which extended an economic lifeline to the Irish Center throughout the pandemic. People could safely gather together outside, meet up and talk with catch up with one another. We added a small stage in one corner, that allowed us to bring music, singing and Irish dance back—all of which were heavily impacted by the episodic lockdowns. Wawona Gates brought the community together then and still does as evidenced by the 300

people that came by on June 24th for the celebration. What a party it turned out to be—fun, musical, family-friendly, festive—so fitting for this special place. Thanks to musicians Dan Dectis, Dave and Ray's Sound Machine, the Irish Pipers Band of San Francisco, and The Gas Men. Thanks to all our volunteers for making it a great day. And thanks to all who joined the celebration! We are blessed with such a wonderful community.



Cormac Gannon and Vince Keehan.



Anne Cassidy Carew, Jeanne Connolly, Aileen Dulovery and Kathleen Kraus.



Heidi Ward and Ray Wilcox.



Anne Cassidy Carew and Liam Reidy.



Joe O'Leary, and Mike Bowler.



Katie Talbot and Ann Marie Carr.