



There's always something happening at the Irish Center!

July 6, 2022

Dear Friend,

As President of the Commodore John Barry Arts & Cultural Center (the “Irish Center”), I am committed, along with the Board of Directors, to communicate directly to you, our donors, on an annual basis to share news about the Irish Center.

The coronavirus pandemic has exerted enormous pressure on American society and expedited a host of changes to how we live and work. Those same pressures affected the operations of the Irish Center. Thankfully, the Irish Center was able to reopen in July 2021 and we are hopeful that the future will be better than ever. I intentionally use the word “hope”, instead of wish. Hope encompasses action – it is the belief that we have the power to make the future better. To the Board and me, “hopeful” thinking means understanding the operational misfortunes of the pandemic as temporary setbacks and reframing them in a way that empowers us to direct a positive course forward for the Irish Center.

As the Irish Center reopened, the community came back with renewed energy and enthusiasm. We are eternally grateful for your support. We recently purchased new membership software and are in the process of updating with names and email addresses of people who have supported us through these hard times. This membership software will allow the Irish Center to send out membership renewal reminders via email on an annual basis. We are setting up the renewal reminders to go out annually each July, starting in July 2023. We selected July as the renewal date because traditionally it is the slowest time of the Irish Center calendar and membership dues received then will help with cash flow. Membership dues will remain \$15/individual and \$25/family. If you gave us your email address as part of the membership application or made an online donation or purchased online tickets to an event, we have your email address. If you are not sure that we have your email address, please send it to irishcenterphl@gmail.com with a request to be added to our mailing list.

The Irish Center has accomplished so much since the last President’s letter. Here are some of the highlights:

- Resumed our monthly senior lunches, providing a quality meal and time for community members to socialize
- Resumed Ceili Set Dancing with John Shields & Friends
- Resumed Music sessions & Ceili Dance Lessons sponsored by Philadelphia Ceili Group
- Hosted an Open House featuring local artists Noreen McMenamin Diehl, James Boyle, Tom Keenan, and Denise Foley
- Installed a new computer, webcam, and printer in the Library
- Installed room divider in Barry Room to create much-needed storage space for event table/chairs
- Showcased the art of local artists, Janet McShain, Barrie Maguire, and Oscar Vance Jr.

COMMODORE JOHN BARRY ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

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- Ran a children’s art contest asking them to depict “Springtime in Ireland”
- Hosted “Ireland’s Future – USA 2022; Preparing for a New and Shared Island of Ireland
- Hosted a self-defense class for seniors
- Hosted and promoted Daltai na Gaelige Irish Language Immersion Day
- Hosted Kevin Flynn – one-man show about an Irish kid’s phobias, family life, and rise to success
- Hosted award-winning Irish playwright, David Gilna’s brilliant true story of being struck by lightning – an experience of laughter, recovery, and the gift that changed everything.
- Re-started email communications with our community
- Started a new Instagram account to share exciting event photos and videos (search [@irishcenterphila](#)).

You can view a video highlighting the improvements made over the previous year on the Irish Center’s [Facebook page](#) (search Commodore John Barry Arts & Cultural Center "The Irish Center"). Many thanks to the Building Trade Union, contractors, and community volunteers who donated their time and talents to make these improvements possible!

To accomplish the above and more, the Irish Center must continually update its operating and capital improvement plan and budget. As a reminder, it costs approximately \$9,000 per month just to operate the 112-year-old building. In 2022-2023, as part of the continuing capital improvement plan, the Irish Center intends to finalize building fire and evacuation alarm systems, kitchen code upgrades, and update the exterior of the facility.

In addition, we must start rebuilding the cash surplus that we had accumulated pre-COVID. The cash surplus helped sustain us during the shutdown. For good financial stewardship, a cash surplus is required for healthy financial planning and for the “unexpected” – like when our building was struck by lightning on June 16th! The lightning caused two electric boards that operate the elevator to short circuit. We are still assessing the damage and cost. This is the hard part of owning real estate – and we need to always be prepared.

As we do every year, we are asking for your continued assistance in sustaining the Irish Center. This letter launches our 2022 fundraising efforts. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation of any size to the Irish Center either by mail at the above address ATTN: Carolyn Killion, Treasurer, or through our Paypal account on our website www.theirishcenter.org.

Every donation makes a difference. The Board of Directors truly appreciates each and every donation and your continued support. If you have any questions about anything at all, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the Board members.

Very truly yours,



Sean McMenamin

President

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