

Commodore John Barry Arts and Cultural Center *"The Irish Center"*

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May 11, 2023

A chara,

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 Irish Center has accomplished so much since the last President's letter and we had a few setbacks (see last bullet point below) – but as always, we celebrate the good times and manage the setbacks together as a community.

- Celebrated 100 Irish Women
- Hosted monthly senior lunches, providing a quality meal and time for community members to socialize
- Hosted Philadelphia Ceili Group Festival over three days
- Hosted monthly Irish Society meetings
- Screened "Remembering Mychal, Priest of 9/11" film & conversation
- Celebrated the largest Hall of Fame celebration since covid
- Held monthly Ceili Set Dancing with John Shields & Friends
- Enjoyed twice monthly music sessions & Ceili dance lessons sponsored by Philadelphia Ceili Group
- Showcased the art of local artists, James Boyle, Marianne Lerro, Patrick McElroy, Jill Monahan
- Hosted GAA coaching classes and monthly board meetings
- Welcomed back the Contra Dancers
- Hosted the Ancient Order of Hibernian (AOH) Conference
- Presentation on the historic Lost Valley in Mayo
- Hosted on a self-defense class for college students
- Hosted and promoted Daltai na Gaelige Irish Language Immersion Day
- Welcomed Nathan Carter and Michael Londra, among others, for live concerts
- Added new lighting in gallery area of second floor
- Renovated bathroom on second floor
- Replaced garage door
- Replaced HVAC unit in the ballroom to meet new HVAC code requirements, thanks to grant secured by the Contra Dancers
- Survived burst water pipes, damaged sewer line, and roof leaks

We are truly grateful for the Irish community, and the Greater Philadelphia, Delaware, and New Jersey communities who continue to partner with us to bring Irish history, culture, and heritage to this area.

Normally, at this time of year, the Irish Center is planning its summer fundraiser – but for 2023, something different is happening. Between COVID, inflation, layoffs and the possibility of recession, people have less disposable income and job security. The uncertainty caused by all these issues is making Americans, and our donors, look twice at what they can afford to give to nonprofits like the Irish Center. We understand. We have listened to you. As a result, the Irish Center will not host a summer fundraiser in 2023. The Board felt that we have asked a lot from the same individual donors over the last few years and a break was needed.

Please do not be alarmed or concerned with this slight adjustment for this summer - the Irish Center will continue to bring you Irish history, culture, and heritage events. Our calendar is on the home page of our website – www.theirishcenter.org. We will carry on making improvements to the facility using in-kind contributions of our supporters' time and talent. We will remain steadfast in our ultimate fundraising goal to have reserves large enough to cover any setback without pain or fear of closure. We will resume coordinated individual fundraising with an Open House on January 21, 2024. Mark your calendar for this fun event for the entire family.

In the meantime, the Board is actively and diligently researching opportunities to diversify our funding sources and strengthen partnerships with foundations, corporations, and governmental entities. If anyone has information or connections to share regarding this manner of fundraising, please reach out to Lisa Maloney, Vice President, at lisamaloney29@yahoo.com.

While the summer fundraiser has been put on ice for 2023, we will ask that you be on the lookout for the Society's membership renewal reminder. As we noted last year, renewal reminders will go out annually each July, starting in **July 2023**. We selected July as renewal date because traditionally it is the slowest time of the Irish Center calendar and membership dues received then will help with general cash flow. Membership dues will remain \$15/individual and \$25/family. Society membership will allow you to continue to receive the Irish Center's newsletter calendar of events.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your continued support of the Irish Center. 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

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President
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