

Commodore John Barry Arts and Cultural Center

“The Irish Center”

6815 Emlen Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119
215-843-8051 • www.theirishcenter.org

24 June 2025

A chara,

As President of the Commodore John Barry Arts & Cultural Center (the “Irish Center”), I, along with the Board of Directors, am dedicated to keeping our donors informed annually about the Irish Center’s developments.

This year, the major update is the retirement of several board members. Kathy McGee Burns, Tom Farrelly, Barney Boyce and I are retiring from the Board of the Irish Center as of July 1, 2025. We will honor their contributions at the Summer Fundraiser on July 20th at Great American Pub in Conshohocken (details are posted on our website). Although stepping down from the daily operations, we will continue to offer strategic guidance as emeritus members.

The Irish Center’s mission is to sponsor and support programs and activities in the Greater Philadelphia area that teach, celebrate, and promote Irish art, history, culture, and heritage. Our vision is to honor our ancestors, showcase our history and culture and support Philadelphia’s multi-cultural beauty.

Currently, fulfilling this mission is challenging due to our high overhead expenses, including \$10,000 monthly operational costs, deferred maintenance, and notably low event attendance. The decline in participation impacts our ability to engage the community and generate necessary funds. Cultural institutions like ours face increasing difficulties in today’s world, where shifting interests, economic pressures and competing entertainment options make it harder to attract and retain audiences. Over its 66-year history, the Irish Center has faced similar challenges, which are typical for cultural organizations. As a 501(c)(3), we are positioned to navigate these difficulties and find our place in today’s world.

I am confident in the new board and officers to redefine the Irish Center’s role, mission and vision while honoring our heritage.

The newly constituted board and officers include:

- Lisa Maloney Chair of Board and President
- Alanna Barry Board Member, First Vice President
- Mary Lou McGurk Board Member, Second Vice President
- Julia Nolan Board Member, Secretary
- Carolyn Killion Board Member, Treasurer
- Rosaleen Rotondi Board Member
- Mary McCann Board Member
- Tom Higgins Board Member
- Pearse Kerr Board Member
- Heather Bendit Board Member
- Cathleen Lynskey Board Member
- John Lynskey Board Member
- Bernadette Mahr Board Member

You can support the Irish Center by doing any of the following – make a tax-deductible donation at www.theirishcenter.org; attending the Summer Fundraiser on July 20th; sponsoring the event; participating in Irish Center events; inviting family and friends; showcasing artwork; volunteering skilled trades; or sharing ideas for improvement. **Increasing attendance at our events is crucial for sustaining our mission.** Contact Lisa Maloney at lisamaloney29@yahoo.com with suggestions.

We are grateful for the support from the Irish community and our friends in the Greater Philadelphia, New Jersey and Delaware areas. Your contributions ensure the Irish Center can cover expenses and host cultural events that attract diverse audiences.

For any questions, feel free to reach out to any board member.

Sincerely,

Sean

Sean McMenamin
President
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