



Museum of Newport Irish History
NewportIrishHistory.org

May 15, 2020

Dear Fellow Members,

We trust you and your loved ones have remained well during this unprecedented time. Late last year, as we finalized plans for a full calendar of 2020 events for our membership, none of us could have imagined what was to come. It's been disappointing, to say the least, to have to announce a series of cancelled and postponed events.

My note to you today will include some updates and some hopeful indicators. Thank you for taking a few minutes to review the below information and for providing feedback that will help inform the way ahead.

We are very grateful for your continued support at this challenging time.

Slán agus beannacht (stay well),

Mike Slein,
President, Board of Directors
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In case you missed our last e-newsletter.....

First, if you missed our e-newsletter of April 17, you may access by clicking the below link. This update was particularly well-received by the membership, as it was chock-full of helpful ideas and resources.

APRIL 17 E-NEWS

Cancellation: 2020 Annual Benefit

Shamrocks & Seashells

The Museum of Newport Irish History



In light of all the unknowns and uncertainties of the current health crisis, we are announcing the **cancellation of Shamrocks & Seashells**, the annual **benefit for the Museum's Interpretive Center**, which was to have taken place at Easton's Beach Rotunda on **Sat., September 19**.

You'll recall that this much-anticipated festive event, which attracts a sell-out crowd of Museum members and friends, generates the funds upon which we rely to cover operating expenses for our Interpretive Center, such as rent and utilities.

We would again like to express our deepest gratitude to the local business community for their amazing support of our 2019 benefit and of so many past galas. Click the below button to view the list of 2019 donors. **Please support these local restaurants, hotels, retailers and other businesses**, many of whom have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

We will secure a 2021 date as soon as possible and share.

2019 Annual Benefit Donors

Announcing: 2020 Annual Appeal

With the cancellation of Shamrocks & Seashells, we will rely heavily on proceeds of our **2020 Annual Appeal** -- *our first such initiative in nearly a decade* -- which we are **announcing today**.

As not all members are in the position to financially support the annual benefit gala, due to geography or other factors, the Board prepared Annual Appeal letters and were poised to mail them when the COVID-19 crisis hit. These letters, which were prepared in February and dated "March 2020," were originally to have been mailed at the start of Irish Heritage Month. We are now moving ahead with this outreach and you should receive an Annual Appeal letter in the mail within a week. A sample of the letter may be seen by clicking [HERE](#).

***Please consider supporting this important appeal.
You may donate now online by clicking the below button.***

Donate NOW to the 2020 Annual Appeal

DID YOU KNOW? Related to the COVID-19 CARES Act, a new IRS ruling for 2020 provides a one-time "above the line" tax deduction for charitable contributions up to \$300 per person (\$600 for joint filers). The new \$300 deduction is specifically designed for those who don't itemize their deductions, so would typically not obtain any tax benefit for donations. Since it's considered an above-the-line deduction, the IRS applies it when calculating your Adjusted Gross Income. In other words, if you donate up to \$300 in cash to a qualified organization, your AGI will be reduced by up to \$300—and you can still claim the standard deduction. Check with your tax advisor for more information.

Donations to the Museum Annual Appeal qualify, as we are an IRS-recognized 501c3 non-profit.

What's next for 2020? Your input, please.

We previously shared the cancellation of our spring Crowley Lectures, the April Annual Meeting and the May performance of Irish storyteller-singer, Helena Byrne. Our 18th annual Steak Fry fundraiser was to have been held in mid-June, but that too is cancelled.

Our intent is not to close down all activity, but find our way forward as this environment evolves. Governor Raimondo has not yet announced "Phase 2" reopening plans, and these are likely to impact attractions, such as our Interpretive Center, as well as group gatherings. Many of the events we host are considered **large events**, including our fall-winter Crowley Lectures and the annual benefit gala, which would typically attract **150+ individuals**.

We are also keenly aware that many of us are older and/or have underlying health conditions, so are more vulnerable to the virus than other Rhode Islanders.

Please rest assured we are exploring alternatives, such as live-streaming our lectures and/or holding these events with smaller audiences to achieve optimal social distancing while allowing for speaker-audience interaction and Q&A, with the event being videotaped and [shared online](#), as we currently do.

To inform our plans going forward, in conjunction with direction from the State, we'd appreciate having a sense of our members' thoughts and feelings at this time.

We understand it's early and, regardless of the Governor's direction regarding COVID-19 related restrictions, some among us may not feel comfortable attending *any* gatherings for the foreseeable future, even if such events are allowed. Some of us are eager to jump right in once restrictions are eased, and some of us may feel it's simply too early to gauge their comfort level.

To that end, below is a simple **3-choice "Poll" with Yes/No/Maybe** choices to characterize your feelings at this point in time.

Please click only 1 button.

PLEASE CHOSE 1 BY CLICKING ASSOCIATED BUTTON ON THE RIGHT.

NO_ Even if events are allowed later this year, I will need to stay home.

Select

MAYBE_ While I would love to attend a Museum fall event, it is too soon to know.

Select

YES_ I am very eager to get out & attend gatherings once restrictions are eased.

Select

To share write-in comments, please send an email to NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com with "2020 Events" for the Subject.

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME!

Museum of Newport Irish History

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