

# *The Museum of Newport Irish History*

## **2022 Annual Meeting - Recap**

May 22, 2022, 4:00 pm. Supper and entertainment followed.  
Ancient Order of Hibernian Hall, Newport, R.I.

### **the following reports were presented:**

#### MEMBERSHIP

- Grew 10% since 2019
- Some of the growth is due to offering our lectures via Zoom
- Standing at about 900 members
- 80% Rhode Islanders

#### INTERPRETIVE CENTER

- Reopened last year on a limited basis and by appointment
- 338 visitors with the 3 day schedule!!
- Back to full schedule this season
- Received donations from members to the archives
- Booklet detailing the Golden jubilee of St, Mary's
- Effects of Mary Farrelly
- Digitized yearbooks from DeLaSalle
- Steve has been busy behind the scenes cataloguing the library and uploading it to the computer plus uploading some videos and oral histories
- Introduced the 3 Walking Tour of Irish Newport self-guided– big hit!
- Interesting visitors – students from Salve, Kinsale delegation and UK folks

#### LECTURE SERIES

- First -Thank you to some of our members and local business who were sponsors for our lectures.
- 2019/2020 season – had 3 lectures, 2 were cancelled
- 2020/2021 season – 5 lectures via Zoom, average over 200 attended
- 2021/2022 season – 5 lectures, 4 hybrid, 1 via Zoom, average near 250 attended – reached over 1,300 people that season
- Important source for new members
- Keeps the museum relevant in the off season from when the Interpretive Center is not open.

#### BARNEY STREET CEMETERY

- Organized cleanups of the cemetery with many members helping – pride of the neighborhood
- Installed new historical interpretive signage donated by the Lepley family that makes the cemetery come alive in its history
- Introduced tours with our own Steve Marino during Irish Heritage Month – maybe continue
- Visit – it's peaceful and interesting!

#### INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

- Reviewed status since its establishment in 2017
- Decided to increase quarterly investment

**CONTINUED**

Board President Deanna Conheeny's remarks included updates that the museum is strong in its membership, its financial position, and offerings. A new website was developed that continues to be expanded and has become a central source of information. We continue to look at our operation with respect to a new location for our lecture series to accommodate greater attendance, a refreshed museum space to encourage visitation activity and new docent recruitment and training. We also plan to engage in strategic planning so we can sustain the organization and the Interpretive Center long into the future.

Again, due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and shortages, the board decided to cancel our gala, "Shamrocks and Shells," this year, which has been our major fundraiser to support the operation. That is the reason we launched our **2022 Annual Appeal in June**. This appeal will not only support our mission, but also support our efforts to revitalize the Interpretive Center. The Center opened in 2011 and we now need to make it more relevant to telling the story of the Irish in Newport County. There are so many stories to be told. The Interpretive Center should be a portal to understand the Newport Irish experience, telling the stories of the Irish immigrants and their descendants. This Irish experience portal should also tie our other offerings together, such as the cemetery, the lecture series, the points of interest on the walking tours and the new website.



Photo of gift presented on behalf of the entire membership to immediate past President, Mike Slein:



The gift, imported from Kinsale Crystal, was a whiskey decanter set with a tray and two tumblers, and engraved with the following:

*Mike,  
From your friends at the  
Museum of Newport Irish History,  
many thanks to you for your passionate leadership  
and never-ending good humor.  
Sláinte*