



JANUARY 2023

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# IRELAND-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## LOOKING BACK....

For two years we were masked, quarantined, locked down, infected but eventually vaccinated. At the beginning of 2022, my wish for the year was only that it would be better than the two that preceded it. But was not to be! 2022 was the year of labour shortages, inflation, stock market decline, high oil prices and, of course, the Ukraine war. But in spite of all that, the year marked a return to normality following the extended lockdown in 2022.

## HERE IS WHAT WE GOT UP TO:

### FIRST EVENT - FEBRUARY 2022 "HOW COVID BROKE OUR SUPPLY CHAIN"

Our first event was virtual and will set the pattern for some of our future events. The format permits us to access presenters who would not normally be available to visit in person because of tight schedules, distance and available time. Specifically, we will be inviting experts from Ireland in the political and business fields to share information of interest to our members.

This presentation was by Charles Fallon, president of LIDD Consultants who are corporate members of the chamber and experts in supply chain matters. I encourage you to listen again to his presentation which is available on our website here <https://www.icccmtl.com/past-events/>



### VISIT WITH FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONERS IN DUBLIN

While in Ireland in March, I took some time to visit the Canadian Embassy and to meet with Meena Bhullar and Suzanne Drisdale who manage trade relationships between Canada and the Republic of Ireland. Their primary mandate is to assist Canadian investors who wish to establish a foothold in the Irish market. There are numerous assistance programs available from the Canadian government which could be of interest to our network in Montreal.

More about the visit here:  
<https://www.icccmtl.com/chamber-president-meets-with-trade-commissioners-at-canadian-embassy-in-dublin/>

## OP-ED MONTREAL GAZETTE

In March Lydia Rogers, Enterprise-Ireland country manager for Canada and I (with the not inconsiderable assistance of Communications Director, James Fitzgerald) co-wrote an op-ed which was published by the Montreal Gazette on March 16th. This was terrific exposure for the chamber.

Read the article here

[https://z6tcfd.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/March\\_April\\_Newsletter\\_.pdf](https://z6tcfd.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/March_April_Newsletter_.pdf)

### ENTERPRISE-IRELAND EVENT

Enterprise-Ireland is the only Irish Government agency boasting a presence in Montreal. On March 23rd, we organized an event in McKibbin's Irish pub ably hosted by past-president Vivian Doyle-Kelly and attended by our members and friends in our network. Lydia Rogers presented on behalf of Enterprise Ireland. The event was very well attended.

### JIM KELLY FUNERAL MARCH 25TH

While in Dublin I took the opportunity to represent the Montreal Irish Community at the funeral of ex-Ambassador, Jim Kelly who died suddenly and tragically in New York where he was Irish deputy head of mission to the UN. It was a sad but uplifting occasion attended in person by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

## THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



We were founded in 1991 but did not get to celebrate our birthday until the middle of 2022 – COVID oblige! But it was worth the wait. Ambassador McKee made his first appearance at a chamber event and it was the best attended of our events since before the pandemic. Many thanks to VP Michelle Sullivan and Carol McCormick for the considerable effort it took to organise. We were honoured by the presence of co-founder Peter Kirby but current board member and co-founder, Paul Loftus was unable to attend due to illness. The event itself was a fitting tribute to the founders and those who contributed to the success of the organization for more than 30 years.

See here a collection of pictures taken at the event <https://www.icccmtl.com/past-events/>



**PUB QUIZ**

Our first Pub Quiz since prior to the pandemic was held in Hurley's on October 26th and was extremely well attended. Credit for the organization of the event and for the brain-exploding questions goes to the master of this dark art, director Sean Murphy. These kinds of events are an effective and fun way for the chamber members to socialise with other members and the many non-members who also participate. There will be more of these extremely popular events in 2023.

**XMAS PARTY**

Our final event of the year took place on December 9th at the McGill University Faculty Club and was attended by Ambassador McKee and his wife Mary. The turnout was excellent and credit again goes to Sean Murphy for the success of this fabulous event. During his extremely interesting discourse, Ambassador McKee celebrated the opening of full consulates in Vancouver and Toronto but bemoaned the fact that none was planned for Montreal. You can read James Fitzgerald's article on the event and the Ambassador's speech...

Here: <https://www.icccmtl.com/exclusive-ambassador-calls-for-irish-consulate-to-be-set-up-in-montreal/>



**EMIGRANT SUPPORT GRANT**

During the year the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Government awarded a grant of \$7100 to the chamber which funds are used to build the capacity of the chamber to pursue its mission over the long term. Credit goes to past-president, Conor Barry who has retained this portfolio since stepping down as President. We are extremely grateful to the Irish Government for their generous support of the work we do.

**ICBC**

After a number of unsuccessful attempts over the years, the Ireland Canada Business Council was registered in 2022. It is headed by Jackie Gilna, who recently retired as President of the Ottawa chapter and I am acting as Treasurer. The ICBC brings together representatives from the five chambers across Canada (Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver) into a single organization which is empowered to speak for these chapters at a national level.

**IN STORE FOR 2023...**

**2023 IS PROMISING TO BE EVEN MORE ACTIVE THAN 2022. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INTERESTING EVENTS IN THE PIPELINE BUT DATES AND DETAILS HAVE YET TO BE FIRMED UP IN MOST CASES. KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR INBOX FOR NEWS.**

**INTERVIEW AND Q&A ON IRISH UNITY**

In early Spring we are planning a virtual event which will feature an Irish-based expert on the newly-hot topic of Irish Unity and to answer the burning questions that this issue raises. When might there be a referendum? What will a unified government look like? Will Ireland keep its flag and national anthem?

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**OP-ED DURING IRISH MONTH**

Last year we collaborated with Lydia Rogers of Enterprise Ireland (EI) in having an op-ed published in the Montreal Gazette. This is important exposure for the chamber and we intend to continue the practice to the extent that the Montreal print media is interested in publishing what we write. As well as EI, we can also collaborate with other partners such as IDA Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland, CanExport and Investissements Quebec. We will also approach the French language print media to increase our exposure to the French-speaking majority in Quebec.



### JOINT EVENT WITH IDA AND CCMM

As members of the Chambre de Commerce de Montreal Metropolitain, we have access through their AcclR arm to a team who will organize a webinar or in-person conference on our behalf and publicize it to the 42000 contacts on their mailing list. We have been in discussion with them and with IDA Ireland who have expressed an interest in participating jointly with us in an event in Spring or Fall 2023. The proposed theme would be to showcase Ireland to Quebec businesses as a portal for expansion into the European Union.

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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be scheduled before June 30. For the first time this year, members must have paid their 2023 dues by May 31 to be in good standing and entitled to vote. We are always looking for talent to join us on the board of directors so those of you who are interested should contact Conor Barry, head of the nominating committee at [cbarry@researchoninvestment.com](mailto:cbarry@researchoninvestment.com)

### BRINGING A CONSULATE TO MONTREAL

First a tribute to the outgoing Honorary Consul General of Ireland to Montreal. During his more than twenty-year tenure in that position, Dr. Michael Kenneally has been a very close friend of the chamber and we have much to thank him for. I will ensure to have a more fulsome tribute penned in an upcoming edition of the newsletter. Thank you for everything, Michael and we wish you a happy retirement.

The question of whether Ireland should open a full consulate in Montreal has been close to mind since the Irish Government announced the opening of such consulates in Vancouver and Toronto. Ambassador McKee confronted us with the stark reality that the Irish Government has no plans to do anything equivalent in Quebec and encouraged us to launch a campaign to persuade those who decide these things that the status quo makes very little sense. After all, Quebec is the second province in Canada in terms of both population and wealth. Where it does lag behind, perhaps, is in the number of Irish natives making it their permanent or temporary home. If this were the only criterion in deciding whether it merits full-time diplomatic representation, the decision not to open a full consulate would be understandable. However, the trade benefits to Ireland of having diplomatic representation in Quebec are potentially enormous.

At the next board meeting in January we will discuss setting up a task force to lead the effort to have full-time Irish diplomatic representation in Montreal.

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### NETWORKING EVENTS

More quizzes, meet and greets and networking opportunities will be organized. We are also focused on expanding our network to include as many people inside and outside the Montreal Irish community who share an interest in our mission and who will participate in the events we organize.