

Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Report

2006 – A Year of Growth & Success

by Ken Tracey

Building on a great 2005 the ICCC moved to yet another level in 2006. The year started with a fantastic luncheon speaker “Captain Canada” himself, the Hon. Brian Tobin. There was a brilliant atmosphere in the room and many wonderful questions asked including, of course, would he step back into politics. Ever the politician, he replied “never say never”. In February we partnered with the Ireland Fund of Canada and held a most successful dinner event to promote the University of Limerick with guest speaker Kevin Roberts worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi who entertained the audience with his philosophy of marketing and advertising. All the Limerick faithful were out for the evening including Irish Person of the Year Gerry Crowe. In March a great crowd turned out for the Irish Person of the Year to celebrate with Gerry. This was the Chamber’s second year to partner with the IPOY committee and we look forward to many more successful years ahead.

One of our own provided excellent content for our next luncheon when we had Professor Benny Drumm speak to us at the Ontario Club on the Irish Health Care system and his plans to revamp it. Prof. Drumm provided excellent insight into the tough task ahead for him and laid out his plans for the next five years. We wish him well and look forward to having him back to give us an update.

In June it was time to hit the fairways for the 13th Annual Golf Tournament – the 7th Annual Brian Dolan Invitational. Paddy Ellis and his committee ensured the weather cooperated and the sellout crowd thoroughly enjoyed the day at Cambridge Golf & Country Club.

After our summer recess September proved to be a busy month with our Oyster night held to raise funds for Ireland Park Foundation. No less than four world champion oyster shuckers including Ireland’s Michael Moran were on hand that evening and the current Canadian champion entertained us with their speed and finesse. The event was covered by the National Post and a big thank you to Smitty for all the wonderful photographs. Also in September we were pleased to host representatives from the Irish Senate and Government at a reception in PJ O’Brien’s. The group included the Ceann Comhairle and six T.D.’s.

In October the long awaited opening of the Enterprise Ireland office occurred with a visit from Minister Michael Martin. Over \$40 million worth of deals were closed during the week. The evening event was a tremendous success with over 200 showing up. After many letters, phone calls and back room meetings, the Chamber is delighted to have Enterprise Ireland open their office in Toronto and firmly believe this will go a long way to increasing trade between Canada and Ireland. We extend a gracious welcome Nick Marmion and his family to Toronto and wish Nick and Julie at the EI office all the success in the future and look forward to building a long lasting strong relationship.

November saw another “Brains of the Community Pub Quiz. Our emcee and organizer for the evening, Cormac Monaghan and his cohort Anita Sands ensured the proceedings went off without a hitch. More general knowledge questions were a big hit with the

crowd but Dublin Auto for a 3rd successive year took home the beautiful Waterford Crystal prizes.

Our connection to the European Union Chambers remains at an all time high. I had the honour to serve as Chair for the EU Diplomatic Lounge in February of this year. Over 600 people attended the event including Ambassador Burke who made the trip from Ottawa. The event garnered press on TV in Toronto and even made it in a local paper in Ireland thanks to reporter Desmond Devoy. I have been asked to Chair the 2007 event which will happen in May. Aideen O'Brien was our representative for the EU film festival in May with sellout crowds for the Irish movie Adam & Paul. In June Ireland played host to all the EU Chambers at the monthly European Business Club held at the Delta Chelsea. All our events are covered on our website wish we invite you to visit at www.icccto.com

We would also like to wish Ambassador Burke and his wife Mary a Bon Voyage as they head to their new home in Luxembourg. Ambassador Burke has been a great supporter of our Chamber during his tenure in Ottawa. We also welcome to our shores, Ireland's new Ambassador to Canada, Declan Kelly and his wife Ann. We look forward to their upcoming visits to Toronto.

Overall an outstanding year, our membership broke through the 200 barrier and we welcomed new Pillar sponsors including KPMG, IDA Ireland and British Airways. Our new board looks forward to continued growth in 2007 where we intend to remain ***Involved*** in our community, ***Connected*** to business and ***Connecting*** People. I would like to thank outgoing Board Members Eddie Brett, Eamon Cummins & Aideen O'Brien for their tremendous efforts as we welcome on board Ronan Clohissey, Damian Dupuy & John O'Dwyer.

To all our members and friends please invite your colleagues to join our Chamber and become part of an outstanding Irish Canadian organization. As Paddy Ellis would say "We are open for business"

We wish all in the community a safe and happy Christmas and all the very best for 2007