

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

seamus@roscommonpeople.ie

ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY

I am an ordinary Joe Soap and I would never pretend to understand the finer details of economics. However, having listened to it night and day for the past two years, it is becoming clearer and clearer to me that our little country is on the brink of bankruptcy.

I fully realise that when you listen to one economist giving his or her view, you will hear someone else giving the opposite view ten minutes later. However, I listened to a man called Alan Sweeney on 'The Business' on RTÉ Radio 1 on Saturday with

John Murray and he frightened the life out of me. He dealt in the facts as they stand. He reckoned that our national debt is about €35 billion as it stands. We have put about €20 billion into the banks already. We are putting in the region of €60 billion into NAMA. He says that the banks will need about €15 billion more and that by the end of the year our national debt will have grown by about €10 billion. By the end of 2010 this country of ours will owe in the region of €150 billion.

According to Mr Sweeney we simply cannot afford to pay back that kind of debt. I hope he is wrong. I accept that we have to have NAMA or something similar to it, but I would be very, very fearful that the money we as taxpayers are paying for these loans are way over priced. Last week we heard of development land in the midlands that was sold for €16 million that is now worth €700,000. That doesn't add up as far as I can make out. I hope for all our sakes that Brian Lenihan knows what he is doing.



Teachers from St. Anne's School Castlerea who took part in a uniform day in the school on Friday, 29th January. A total of €1,600 was raised which is being donated to Goal for relief work in Haiti. Pic: Glynn's Photography.

Head shop protest bears fruit

Well done to the Roscommon anti head shop committee. This week the Government announced that they are going to ban a range of products that are on sale in head shops, and while it is not exactly what the committee wanted, it is certainly a start and I have no doubt that the Government action was prompted in no small way by the pressure brought on by the group in Roscommon. There are head shops all over the country but the community in Roscommon was the first to stand up and actively protest. This week's government announcement is a positive start at regulation and it will surely give the committee a boost. Well done to all concerned.

Vote for Olwyn

Young Ballyhaunis girl Olwyn Murray will take to the stage next Sunday evening in the semi final of the All Ireland talent show. A granddaughter of Sean and Mary McNeill in Roscommon Town, the vast majority of her family are from the Roscommon area and she is a wonderfully talented young woman. I hope that she qualifies for the final and she will need all the votes that she can get. I wish her the best of good luck. Give her a vote if you can.

GUBU days for the Greens

What is happening in the Green Party at the moment brings back the days of GUBU. As far as I can see, when the Greens went into govern-

ment with Fianna Fáil it was agreed that all their TD's would get a go at a ministerial post at some stage during the lifetime of the government, which is totally bizarre.

Never mind putting the best people forward, just make sure that everyone gets a slice of the cake. Anyone who thinks that The Greens are not power crazy are now wide of the mark. Senator de Burca recently resigned because she did not get a big job in Brus-

sels despite the fact that she was probably not qualified for it. Now we have the situation where John Gormley and Eamonn Ryan might have to step down to allow Kieran Cuffe, Paul Gogarty and Mary White into ministerial positions. It is madness. It is time for an election surely now because the lunatics are now running the asylum.

Oh and by the way, who agreed to this madcap arrangement, Bertie Ahern, surprise surprise!



Do more, eat less

Seamus,

I heard you recently on Mid-West talking with Dr. Greg Kelly about how hard you found it to lose weight. I would like to share with you and your readers the challenge of the DMEL lifestyle (do more, eat less.) It doesn't cost anything and is likely to save you money.

Spring and Lent being an ideal time to become healthier even if our economy remains unhealthy! Create a mini vegetable garden and start growing your own. Reduce consumption of red meat and dairy produce and help fight climate change in a practical way. Smoke two less cigarettes a day (if you are a smoker) and drink two units less of alcohol per week. Eat smaller portions of everything (you won't notice the difference between twenty chips and

twenty five on the plate).

Walk more. Use the stairs rather than the lift. Park the car and walk around town if doing business in a few premises or if practical leave the car at home altogether. Walk to Mass if there is a pavement to walk on. Walk with the children to school. Walk "the poor old dog."

Spend a half hour less on the computer or watching TV two or three times a week. Have an early night at least once a week. A few small lifestyle changes such as these will burn more energy than we take in and save a few euro at the same time. Put the savings in a jar and watch them grow as your waistline shrinks. Love your no nonsense column.

Yours sincerely,
Bernadette McQuaid Murphy.

Cinema required

Dear Mr Duke,

My name is Paul Kane. I am living in Roscommon. My good friend Robbie Dwyer and I are responsible for the 'Roscommon have no cinema....' page on Facebook.

I felt the need to reply to you regarding the letter printed in Roscommon People (26/2/2010) from Patricia Casey regarding the Roscommon Arts Centre. I feel I will not be the only one to respond.

Roscommon Arts Centre, as a lot of people already know, is a fine venue. It has a good reputation that spreads country-wide and thanks to the rebirth of the Roscommon Drama Festival, the fine reputation will continue to spread. I take real issue with the comment "sitting empty and unused". I have first hand experience of that to be totally untrue. For many years I was with Roscommon drama group and our productions filled that venue to capacity. A full house of spectators watching us tells a story. Then with the festival, Castlereagh music and Drama society, comedians, dance, music and professional touring companies, the Arts centre is always busy.

Anyone using the facility will know of the booklet/newsletter that is circulated from the arts centre and the Facebook page and website www.roscommonartscentre.ie to find out what is on. With all this said, Roscommon still needs a cinema, the Arts centre is brilliant for live entertainment but the cinema is a different prospect. The smell of baking popcorn as you enter, the carpets, the big screen and all the latest film releases. So, there is no problem with the Arts centre, we just want a cinema as well.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Kane

Paying for the actions of sex abusers

I couldn't believe my ears when I heard that the Catholic Bishops are expecting parishioners to help to pay for the legal bills and compensation incurred by the Church as a result of the action of paedophile priests and other clergy.

I have the utmost sympathy for the victims and they deserve every penny they get, but for the church to expect ordinary people to pay for the actions of child abusers is unbelievable. The Church is a very wealthy organisation and if they need money then let them sell off their many assets. If they can't do that then let the Pope take out a loan to pay for it. It's bad enough that ordinary people are being asked to pay for the actions of greedy bankers, politicians and developers, but to be asked to pay for the actions of sex abusers is a step too far.