

LIMERICK LEADER

Wednesday, July 15, 2009 www.limerickleader.ie

BECAUSE LIFE IS LOCAL

RRP€1

LAST CHANCE FOR MUNSTER TITLE
Limerick U21 hurlers face Clare in semi-final tonight SPORT



FRANK MCCOURT: 'JUST DAYS TO LIVE'

■ Pulitzer Prizewinner is close to death, reveals his brother Malachy

EXCLUSIVE

By ANNE SHERIDAN

FRANK McCourt, Limerick's most famous author, may have "just days to live", his brother Malachy McCourt told the Limerick Leader from New York today.

The Angela's Ashes author had been beating the skin cancer melanoma, but is now in a hospice in New York after contracting meningitis.

"He's not too good at the moment. He was doing fine but he got meningitis two weeks ago and it turned the whole thing topsy-turvy," said Malachy McCourt, an actor, writer and politician.

He said doctors have informed him that his brother could die in a matter of days - before his 79th birthday. "It could be any time," he added.

However, he said his eldest brother

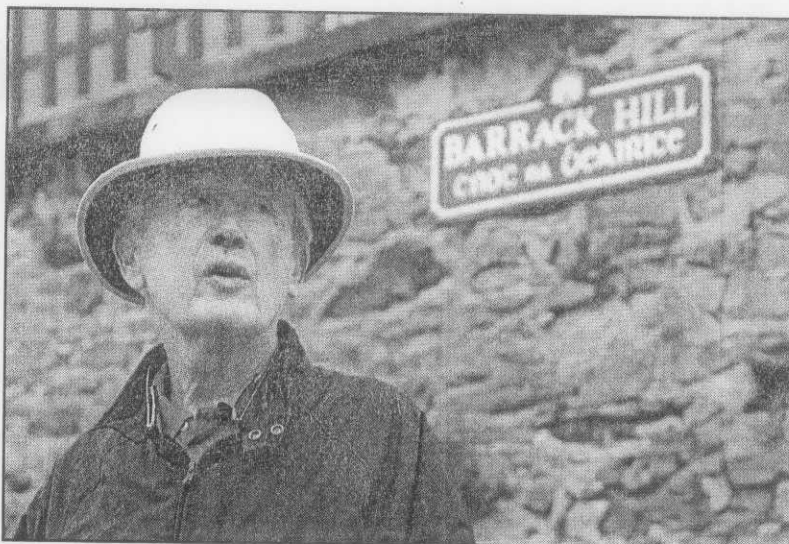
is in good spirits despite his medical condition. "He has been quite funny at times and you see his eyes lighting up when he says something whimsical. He mentioned Limerick not too long ago. He said he would like to spend more time there as he has some unfinished emotional business with Limerick. He was joking that he would have liked to annoy a few people."

Frank McCourt is now surrounded by his wide family circle in New York, who are preparing to deal with the worst in the coming days. Malachy McCourt's son, Malachy Jnr, has also travelled from his home in Bali to be at the bedside of his uncle.

"It's a very difficult time for us all. It's going to be hard," he said.

Mr McCourt said doctors believed his brother could live for another year or two as his cancer was in remission, had he not contracted meningitis.

"Other than that we would have



Author Frank McCourt, pictured on a visit to Limerick last year

had more time with him. Of all people he didn't deserve that," he said.

Malachy McCourt said he was in hospital himself recently with a broken leg and Frank had come to visit him on a few occasions.

The Southampton Review, a literary journal in New York, will also dedicate their next entire issue to Frank McCourt, which is due to be published on July 24.

On that date, Stony Brook University, a division of the State University of New York, have planned a gala to honour Frank McCourt as he has been an annual speaker at their writers conference.

Frank's name still appears as a teacher at the conference this summer. Robert Emmett Ginna, a visiting lecturer in writing and screenwriting, said Mr McCourt "is devoted to this program and is a courageous and determined man."

Throughout the past year, he had received treatment at the world-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Flash flooding hits city following torrential downpours

By DAVID HURLEY

CITY Council workers and firemen had to be deployed last evening following flash flooding across many parts of the city.

Torrential downpours began at around 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon amid the loud rattle of thunder and dark overhead skies.

Shoppers across the city centre could be seen running for shelter from the rain and dozens of office workers were soaked to the skin as they rushed to their cars while heading home after work.

A spokesman for Henry

Street garda station confirmed there were numerous incidents of flooding which resulted in some traffic delays. "We had reports of flooding in Garryowen, Castletroy, on the Dock Road and outside Scoil Ide in Corbally but it has all cleared now," said the spokesman.

Another area which was badly affected was Hyde Road near Caledonian Park. While many motorists passed through the flood waters there others decided not to risk it and turned back due to the depth of the waters.

A spokeswoman for the regional communications centre at Limerick fire station confirmed a total of four units had to be deployed at the worst affected areas to pump flood waters off the roads between 6.30 and 8.30 last night.

Two units were deployed for over an hour outside Scoil

Ide in Corbally and a two further units were dispatched to the Dromroe Housing estate in Rhebogoe between 7.24pm and 8.35pm.

While there were some delays to traffic due to last night's flooding there were no reports of injuries or buildings being flooded. Meanwhile gardai across the county say there were heavy thundery downpours yesterday afternoon but there were no reports of serious flooding as the downpours were intermittent and not sustained.

A spokesman for Met Eireann said there was a risk of further thundery showers this Wednesday but added that there would be sunny spells in most places. It will be mild today with temperatures ranging from 17 to 20 degrees.

Motorists brave the flooding on Hyde road last night



ISSN 1649-8976



9 771649 897023

Criminal Justice Bill is passed by Seanad

By MIKE DWANE
AS the controversial anti-gang measures passed through all stages of the Seanad last night, Justice Minister Dermot Ahern has said he wants to see gangsters charged the day after the measures become law.

It is understood that at least 50 senior organised crime figures are in the sights of gardai nationally and local garda sources have said they are aware of Limerick criminals who are already booking flights out of the country as the judicial net closes in.

"We are aware that arrangements are being made by criminals to flee the jurisdiction, which we believe may be linked to the proposed new laws," said one.

President Mary McAleese has seven days to decide whether to sign the new Criminal Justice Bill into law or convene a Council of State to advise on whether it should be

sent to the Supreme Court to be tested constitutionally.

There is strong speculation this Wednesday that President McAleese - who grew up in the North during the civil rights movement and is herself a lawyer - may bring the Council together by the end of the week.

Minister Ahern has said the laws - which widen the use of non-jury courts for gangland suspects among other tough measures - were a response to the "attack on the State" represented by the murder on innocent Limerick man Roy Collins in Roxboro in April.

His father Steve said the laws can't come in soon enough for his family.

In an embarrassment for the Government, the Green Party's two senators Dan Boyle and Deirdre de Burca, abstained in the vote on the bill last night.

Frank McCourt has 'just days to live'

Continued from page 1

famous Memorial Sloan Kettering hospital in New York, which specialises in cancer care.

Messages of support have now flooded in for the Pulitzer Prize winning writer, who was due to visit Limerick in April last but was forced to cancel his visit.

On that occasion, he was due to attend the opening of Leamy's Art School and Gallery - his former national school, which features prominently in Angela's Ashes.

Mick O'Donnell, the Angela's Ashes tour guide in the city, said has "done so much for Limerick that people aren't really aware."

"He has brought people here in droves and people coming on the tours are now carrying his last book around with them," said Mr O'Donnell.

He added that he feels

the city hasn't honoured him enough, and a bronze statue of Frank McCourt should be erected in the city - just as was done to commemorate actor Richard Harris.

During a revealing interview with the Limerick Leader two years he spoke of his feelings on mortality. "I wouldn't like to be incapacitated, or handicapped, or die of a slow disease."

"I don't want to be beholden to anyone or have anyone wiping my mouth if I'm drooling. I'd just like to go. I don't want funeral services or memorials. Let them scatter my ashes over the Shannon and pollute the river."

"If you live past 65 you're responsible to the rest of humanity to pass on your insights, that's why you're allowed to live a little longer. So if I'm here, there's a reason I'm here."

DEATHS

CORBETT, Distillery View, Thomondgate, Limerick. 14th July 2009. Martina, peacefully at Milford Care Centre. Very deeply regretted by her brother Robert, uncles Michael and Sean, aunts, cousins, relatives and friends. May she Rest in Peace. Reposing this Thursday evening from 6.00pm in Milford Care Centre with removal at 7.30pm to St. Saviours Church. Requiem Mass Friday at 10.30am with private cremation afterwards. No flowers please, donations if desired to Milford Care Centre

Communities crackdown on crime in City

By CATHERINE MOORE

A MASSIVE 359 anti-social behaviour reports have been passed onto the Gardai as Limerick city communities crackdown on crime.

Celebrating their third year in helping communities to control crime, six Community Co-ordinators patrol troubled areas in the city in an effort to solve social problems.

The Community Co-ordinators keep a look out for anti-social behaviour in crime blackspots, while acting as a link between the Gardai, City Council and the HSE, according to Jenny Stone, Community Co-ordinator in the Southside.

"If we see any community issues, safety or environmental, we log them with the relevant authority," Jenny said.

Residents have also been able to liaise with the Community Co-ordi-



Jessy Neilan, Jenny Stone, Catherine Andrews, Jodie Neilon and Garda Dominic Curtin celebrate the Community Co-ordinators third year helping people in the community

nators about criminal issues.

"Residents will actually approach us and pass information on without fear of incrimination. They would ask us our advice about the issue and then we would speak with the Community Guards and we would

pass the information on. It may as simple as Gardai need to increase patrols in a certain area. The residents do not want the Guards calling to the door, so we are a link between the residents and the Community Guards or the tenancy officer in the

City Council", Jenny said.

A survey conducted by The Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick has shown that residents do feel safer with the presence of the Community Co-ordina-

tors. "Residents feel that we are visible and approachable and that we can't help them, find someone that can," Jenny said.

There are six Community Co-ordinators; Jenny Stone at Catherine Andrews at Janesboro, Kenne Park, Glasgow Park, Rathbane and Sarsfield Park in the Southside.

Jean Ryan, Yvonne McMahon, Deirdre Quinn and Margaret O'Connor cover Thomondgate, Killee Watergate, John Street, Johnsgate Village at Ballynanty on the north side. There are plans to expand the service in King's Island.

The Community Co-ordinators have been welcomed by residents in the estates.

"Residents know we are a positive presence. We are there to help people; to help those that are vulnerable and make their estates safer, and they have welcomed us because of that," Jenny Stone added.

Call for task force report to be published

By MIKE DWANE and NICK RABBITS

THE chief executive of the Mid-Western Jobs task force has called for its first report to be made public - and for the region to be made an IDA priority following the closure of Dell's manufacturing facility.

Dr Vincent Cunnane was speaking after figures confirmed that, of the 6,000 IDA-backed jobs lost in the last year, Limerick accounted for more than a third.

At the start of this month, the first report of the jobs task force - which was set up in the wake of 1,900 confirmed



Dr Vincent Cunnane: wants report published

job losses in Dell, and thousands more in its downstream suppliers - was given to Tanaiste Mary Coughlan, and the Cabinet will consider it over the next week.

Its recommendations include a single local authority, plus the fast tracking of the regeneration scheme in order to

create employment swiftly. However, there have been no plans as of yet to publish the report.

Speaking this week, Dr Cunnane said: "Over the five months we have had to date, an awful lot of work has gone into it [the report]. I would say it's a comprehensive overview of the region's needs. It looks at some national and regional aspects but it is now the property of the Tanaiste. I believe it will go before Government really shortly and because of that sensitivity I really can't say too much more about that."

He also confirmed the group - which is chaired by former Kerry Group chief Denis Brosnan - will complete its remit by

April next year.

"We have isolated a number of key areas we feel need further investigation and deeper consideration, but again, I am not at liberty to say what they are," he added, before disclosing he felt the Mid-West should be dealt with "as a priority." Asked if the report should be published Mer Cunnane said "Yes".

Deputy Kieran O'Donnell, Fine Gael, backed the call.

"It is absolutely critical retraining and entrepreneurial skills are put in place with immediate effect. The report needs to be made public, and we must ensure it is actionable. People who have lost their jobs in Dell are facing an extremely

uncertain time. The critical thing now is that the workers are looked after across a range of aspects. The most important thing is they are looked after in terms of retraining, support, entrepreneurial skills, and the IDA-backed jobs are brought in on the ground."

"We are a forgotten region - we must ensure our government Ministers are committed to changing this," he told the Limerick Chronicle.

More than 800 people have now lost their jobs at Dell's plant in Raheen with a similar number from nearby downstream firms. Another 1,000-plus workers will leave the huge campus before the end of 2009.



Luttrall O'Callaghan Sheehan

EST. 1780 - Nenagh, New York 1932.
Limerick 7/7/2009

Opportunity - Student Job Experience

Event Management. Public Relations. Handcraft Design, Marketing and Selling - Domestic and Export. Tourism Development Consultancy and Implementation.

"I, my family, friends and colleagues are proud to be associated with the launch of the new Limerick Chronicle". LOCS

Bed & Breakfast, and Hotels needed for the August Bank Holiday Weekend - Ennis Road, Moyross, Caherdavin, Southill, Raheen, Corbally etc. etc.

Opportunity

Job Experience Opportunity for Marketing - Business Students - Start Immediately

Email: barneysheehan1@eircom.net

Tel: 061 329218

Tel: 086 8657494

Fax 061 329218

