

# Cllr Long goes into battle with a low blow

**O**NE West Limerick-based candidate for the local elections jumped the gun by five days, others stole a few hours, hoping the powers that be wouldn't notice, or mind. Prime position on lamp-posts was the name of the game and when we woke up in the Mid-West this Wednesday morning the posters were starting to appear everywhere - though there was evidence that candidates in the south-east of the county were slower off the mark. In boxing parlance, the rival candidates have now touched gloves but will we see a 'good, clean fight'? It seems unlikely, for no sooner did the bell ring for round one than another local candidate weighed in with a blow that was well below the belt.

It is painfully obvious that these elections are being fought against a backdrop of rising unemployment and fear among many of those fortunate to still be in jobs. Economically, the Mid-West is an utterly different place than when local elections were last held, back in 2004. Back then, the Celtic Tiger was still roaring and thousands of migrant workers arrived in the Mid-West, where jobs were plentiful.

Unfortunately, Fine Gael's Cllr Jim Long now appears to see electoral capital in making the claim that jobs have somehow been stolen from under the noses of local people, as if Ireland has the option to ignore the rights of EU citizens now that times are tough. This is what Cllr Long said this week: "I see little evidence that Polish people or any other non-nationals have created jobs in the city but I will go on record and confirm they are detrimental to or are the cause of massive job losses in this city and I think that should be addressed."

Cllr Long's language is so loose that in one fell swoop he appears to condemn everyone who does not speak with an Irish accent, including - to take one just example - restaurant owners who have been serving the people of Limerick for decades. No doubt, he will pick up some votes as a result of this and other outbursts aimed at the so-called 'new Irish' - maybe enough to get him re-elected to Limerick City Council. It would be foolish to pretend that his views are not shared by others in the Mid-West, particularly with workers being laid off every day. But Cllr Long is on a Fine Gael ticket and it beholds that party to put candidates before the public who are at one with their policies. Quite clearly, the party would not in any way endorse the views expressed by Cllr Long on migrant workers, not just this week, but previously. So why, then, does the Fine Gael logo appear on the newly hung posters bearing Mr Long's face?

## Children will be the losers

## From red all over to blue in the face on rugby day

IT IS said that the colour red makes people hungry. And so with hunger in my belly and hope in my heart I turned my back on Thomond Park and set off on the rugby road to Dublin on Saturday last. How was I to know the travails that lay ahead? If I left with the red hunger of Munster I returned with a dose of the Leinster blues.

The colours around us can change our moods say the interior designers and therapists. And how my mood changed. I was uplifted as I cavalcaded through counties Tipperary, Offaly and Laois as supporters sported the red with flags, banners and bunting. Counties Laois and Kildare poked out the occasional blue - the blue I recalled is a non-threatening colour and while it enhances productivity it is also associated with depression. It was just a gentle reminder that another team would also be there on the day but we all knew that Munster had nothing at all to worry about.

Near Naas a more organised blue campaign raised its head for a mile or so and then fizzled out. All the while Munster fans knew they were on the right road as one observed a proliferation of lost car window flags.

Nearing the capital the yellow road signs advertising open show houses were comforting. I love yellow as it indicates optimism, intelligence and summer.

One was distracted by blue banners draped from flyover bridges. A Pallas Foods truck was inching along, a Cork bus was all bedecked in red and a Tipperary car wished us well. We knew we were fine - headed to the holy land in the footsteps of Mackey, Grimes and Stokes.

And then the scene was changed alas - the colours no longer sang our song. The blues descended on us from all sides. Blue everywhere - what is happening? Blue Tesco trucks, blue bus and cycle signs and patrol cars with flashing blue light. We seemed to have wandered into unfamiliar country - even the Red Cow roundabout was missing. These however were not ominous signs - just indications of a different culture, a different way of life. Rugby however was our way of life and we would soon let them know.

Oh the comfort of Croke Park. Lots of blue indeed but so much red I had never seen before. Red, the enhancer of excitement, speed and aggression. Let the game begin - let us show them. We were relieved when half time beckoned, and we enjoyed a pint of the black. And then - oh dear me. This wasn't supposed to happen.

I will never forget that colourless journey home. Every road sign from Dublin to the end of the M7 near Portlaoise was big, bold and blue. How come I had not noticed these earlier in the day? Did they erect them after the game just to annoy Munster - or was it perhaps that we never read the signs?

When next a street vendor shouts to me, "Buy your colours!", I think I'll have to point out to him that I am colour blind.

**JOSEPH O'CONNOR**  
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## Limerick information day for Parkinson's sufferers

THESE are exciting times for people with Parkinson's, with research advancing and new treatments coming on board that are improving the lot of many affected by this neurological condition.

However, daily life for those living with advancing Parkinson's can be a little short of ideal, and to that end we are arranging an



What to wear? Michael McI one of the 94 dresses she has

## Holy Communion is taking

A FEW years ago my son took his first Communion. He learnt his first confession, did a few and got an outfit that he liked and he hated and has. The afters were held at the house and friends and the thought it was an open house.

The occasion came and I was stressed out by the lead-up or after. I didn't have to pair house, no carpets had to be no one cared there was a s that there might be a vegeta - and would we have anything from potato salad and coleslaw. Three years later it is my son to celebrate her Holy Communion. Her book has been thrown out to have a week to go and I seriously I'm going to make it. My hankies have increased and deep weight that I don't have to permanent taste of matt emu mouth.

The house has had to be completely on the inside, the garage "re-designed", the carpet on the floor to be shampooed, vacuumed again. Furniture has to be new or replaced. The gutters

the latest treatment practices Topics covered will include management, depression in Parkinson's with falls, non-motor symptoms and language therapy. Speakers: neurologists Dr Peter Boers and Prof. Declan Moore, geriatrician Prof. Declan Moore, Parkinson's nurse specialist Ms. Son.

This is an important opportunity to get the latest information and there will be question and answer sessions in the afternoon.

Registration is from 1.15pm with talks starting at 2pm and ending at 5pm. The cost is €10 euro per person. Places can be reserved on 1800-359359.