

Letters to the Editor

Censor goes too far

Sir - I avidly read Jerome Reilly's brilliant portrayal of a modern film censor (*Sunday Independent*, 24/10/04), and strongly disagree with the censor's approval for the Scandinavian system, where they have no interest in whether a film causes offence to various groups.

After all, such groups may well have legitimate objections to certain films, so it smacks of high-handedness and arrogance for a censorship board to ride roughshod over the objections of such groups.

Far from being healthy, as the censor claims, I see the Scandinavian system as being very unhealthy and repressive because it stifles debate about the merits and demerits of porn, etc. Disagreements over such issues will quite naturally arise, and to sweep them under the carpet instead of engaging in mutually respectful political dialogue and debate is surely the hallmark of a lazy, politically stagnant political system.

Regarding the French rape video, which was passed by the censor, I wonder why it would be thought so necessary for any adult to see a brutal and explicit rape scene. Was any thought given to the probability of rapists watching the video?

Joseph Barry, *Morristown Rd, Donnybrook, D4*

Sir - Why have we got a film censor? I presume this man, John Kelleher, is a Government appointee and paid with public money. So what kind of creature is he if he can see no reason to totally ban the worst example of celluloid filth - the appalling *Songs* - from this country? I yield to no one when I say that, apart from seeing, live or on screen, an actual murder such as those ghastly acts in Iraq, you can watch no more obscene, revolting

sight than two people having sex. Only sad, pathetic sicks, such as paedophiles, could enjoy such pornography. I foolishly thought it was this man's job to protect us from such trash.

Surely, since we have sunk to such depths of depravity, we have no need for a censor at all.

John Bruton, *Meadow Park Ave, Churchtown, D14*

Sir - I am surprised and shocked that, in a largely Christian country, our film censor should see fit to pass the film *Songs* uncensored. In relation to its explicit sexual content, the male participant in the highly sensitive cinematic exercise, Kieran O'Brien, was reported as saying "it was only sex". I find it sad that Mr O'Brien should so trivialise the act of sexual intercourse, the ultimate physical expression of love between married couples. I feel that it is debasing and degrading that two people should sell themselves to engage in scenes of loveless copulation.

Does one use the word 'fornication' or is that taboo, too harsh for the delicate sensibilities of our easy-going society?

Brendan Shortall, *Coolmine Ln, D15*

Sir - I see that the film censor Mr Kelleher, in his opinion (no doubt well-informed) saw nothing anti-Semitic in the film *The Passion of the Christ*. He should be telling that to the 15 million Jewish people on this planet, as well as the six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust, due to an anti-Semitic film that was born out of his very story, or belief, depending on your own viewpoint.

Victor Feldman, *Meerfield Road, East Wall, D3*

Tony Quinn a positive influence

Sir - It was with regret that I read your article on Tony Quinn in *Life*, *Sunday Independent* (10/10/04). I am absolutely sure if there were more people like Tony Quinn, the world would be a safer, healthier and happier place. God bless him.

Key Bolger, *Kilbarry Road, Kilbarrack, D5*

Sir - I was saddened and deeply affected by Donal Lynch's article on Tony Quinn. It is obvious that he has no idea of the type of man Tony Quinn is.

For me, Tony Quinn represents all that is good in another human being. He is a kind, gentle, sensitive, compassionate man. I started attending the Tony Quinn Centre in Eccles Street over 10 years ago, joining in the relaxation classes.

It is amazing to think I was over 40 and knew nothing of the health benefits of relaxing my mind. I also went to one of his seminars in the Bahamas. It was the best move I ever made.

Using Tony's teachings, my life has improved beyond belief - job, family, friends, everyone I meet. Regarding your article, your teaching is always consider yourself self-employed. When dealing with family, friends and

other people, always look for the good in them. Don't feed the bad thoughts you may have about yourself or others.

It is amazing how a simple switch in your mind can change your life for the better. I was diagnosed with breast cancer three years ago. This is where Tony's teachings were really tested. I can honestly say, and so would my surgeon and doctors, that my attitude throughout treatment, surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, was always upbeat. I believe, as Tony teaches, God is always looking after you.

Martin Fordie was mentioned in the article. Let me tell you that he was outstanding throughout my treatment, advising me on diet and supplements to combat the nauseous effects of chemotherapy. I had many consultations with him and not once did he charge me for his advice regarding my recovery.

I am also a member of the Tony Quinn Centre since June. I have lost over three stone. I feel fantastic.

Tony Quinn has had a very beneficial influence on my life. I thank you for your article on this earth coincides with his.

Marie Shevlin, *Drumcra, D9*

LETTER OF THE WEEK

TYRCONNELL
1762
Single Malt
IRISH WHISKEY

The writer of the best letter to the editor of the *Sunday Independent* will receive three bottles of The Tyrconnell Whiskey, courtesy of Cooley Distillery. The Tyrconnell Pure Pot Still Single Malt Irish Whiskey has a fresh, malty bouquet, a smooth, sweet taste and a delicate, dry finish. The Tyrconnell has been nothing short of a revelation and a delight! - Jim Murray, whiskey writer.

Shopping is the new religion

Sir - On Sunday last I had occasion to go into Limerick city in mid-afternoon and was astounded by the level of commercial activity. Cars were trouble-parked as frantic shoppers dashed from shop to shop avoiding the showers. The streets were as densely populated as any Saturday afternoon. On my way home, I passed the small park and its car park was packed to capacity.

It seems shopping has become the new religion and Sunday is greatly no longer a day of rest! The fabric of Sunday has been destroyed for so many people. It is not so long ago that one would have to struggle to find a shop

open on a Sunday afternoon. A purchase as simple as a pint of milk was a challenge! Once Mass was over and the newspapers were bought, retail activity ceased. Communities came together. The sound of Radio One sports commentary lingered in the air and families sat down and shared meals together. Whether one was religious or not, andous mothers forced hung-over young adults out of their beds to "get to Mass" but the after-Mass buzz of communities coming together greatly increased the fabric of Irish society.

Unfortunately, Sunday has become another weekday and is no longer a day of rest. One can

buy a suite of furniture that does not have to be paid for until one gets tired of it, or get approval for a no-hassle 110 per cent mortgage by leaving voicemail on a free-phone number. This is not progress, in my opinion.

Perhaps the Government should look at the impact of increased retailing on Irish society and have the courage to restore our day of rest. Give us back the simplicity that we took for granted for so long - and give the credit cards a rest for at least one day a week.

Gerard Corrigan, *Oakfield, Monaleen, Limerick*

World heritage lost if Irish dies

A Chara - I refer to an article in the *Sunday Independent* (17/10/04) headed "Strictly speaking - an Irish solution to an Irish problem".

Contrary to this article, the fact of the matter is that the vast majority of the population have a positive attitude towards the Irish language. This was most recently evident in the outcry against the singing of the National Anthem in English at the Ryder Cup in America. It is true also to say that the vast majority of the people of this country believe that our ecological, archaeological and linguistic heritage should be protected particularly when that heritage is of world importance.

To put it in its world context, the Irish language is the oldest vernacular written language in Europe. It is of major importance in this context as part of our world linguistic heritage. Furthermore, in the European context, the European Union is founded on the concept of unity in diversity and on the protection and the development of the diversity and richness of European culture.

In this context it would be a major decision for the Irish people to decide that those areas in which the Irish language has been continuously spoken as a vernacular language for the last 2,000 years were not to be given special protection, particularly in view of the major threats being

faced in linguistic terms by these areas. Obviously it is the choice of the people of the Gaeltacht and also of the people of Ireland that the Gaeltacht is no longer of any importance. I will as a democrat accept the democratic wishes of the people.

However, every Government since the foundation of the state (led first by the Cumann na Gaeltachta) down to the present day has had as one of its objectives the preservation and development of the Gaeltacht.

Despite certain failings in the policy, when one considers the rate at which the Irish language was in decline at the time of our Independence, the success of this policy is evident. However, changing times bring new challenges and one of the major challenges now facing the Gaeltacht is not decline but over-rapid population shift. Not to recognise this is not to recognise some of the basics in relation to linguistic behaviour.

As Minister of the Gaeltacht I would welcome an open and honest debate in relation to the future of the Irish language in this country and also in relation to the future of the Gaeltacht. I have no difficulty with people suggesting that the Irish language, despite its national, European and world importance, should be allowed to die and that no effort should be made to preserve it;

everyone is entitled to their opinion. What I do have difficulty with, however, is those people who say that they believe the Irish language should be preserved and developed and then oppose any reasonable steps taken to ensure that preservation and development.

Finally, I wish to make clear that I have never at any time in my life had other than a very inclusive view of what Irishness is. Furthermore, I have never tried to say that knowledge of the Irish language makes a person more Irish than another.

However, what is self-evident is that the Irish language is an uniquely Irish heritage belonging to the people of this island, to be shared with the rest of the world.

On a visit to Ireland the Canadian Language Commissioner illustrated this point clearly when she said that if French were to die in Canada the French language would continue to thrive throughout the world. However, if Irish were to die as a vernacular spoken language in Ireland, a priceless part of world heritage would be lost. Certainly culture and identity is about a lot more than the *cupla focal*.

However the *cupla focal* is very much part of that identity. The difference is between exclusivity and inclusivity.

Eamon O'Cuib, TD, *Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*

Brady and success do not seem compatible

Sir - I wrote further to an article by Liam Collins in the *Sunday Independent* (24/10/04) concerning the former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Royston Brady. Now, the travails of Mr Brady do not concern me - except in so far as the obscene amounts of money spent on his European election campaign may start a worrying trend. As someone equally honoured to have served as Lord Mayor of Dublin I am, however, both disturbed and annoyed at your description "the most successful Lord Mayor in recent years". Disturbed and annoyed because I see the position of Lord Mayor as a political post which was devalued consistently and repeatedly during that year when appearing in *VIP* was more important than any serious contribution to the future of Dublin.

Was it "successful" to fail to attend most City Council meetings during his term especially as the Lord Mayor is the elected chairperson of the City Council? Perhaps you mean that it was "successful" to not even have the courage to attend the formal handing over of the Mansion House to his successor.

Maybe you consider his rantings about the Minister for Justice a "success"? Personally I would prefer the approach of the present Lord Mayor, Michael Conaghan, who three months into the job has managed to meet Minister McDowell, establish a Commission on Policing and is already making a substantial input into policing in Dublin through the art of politics and not media stunts. Maybe you consider it a "success" to simply fail to turn up at events that you had agreed to attend.

I would challenge you, or any

other journalist, to compare my diary and that of the previous 10 Lord Mayors with Mr Brady's. I would challenge you to ask yourself honestly whether his stunts in holding a wedding for two homeless people was more beneficial than championing and eventually the opening of a new Wet Foot for Homeless People. At my own expense I travelled to meet the Irish homeless community in London to try and bring back some of their stories towards the development of an appropriate response here in Dublin.

I was proud to be the first Lord Mayor of Dublin in over 70 years to lay a wreath at the War Memorial at the Somme, the first Lord Mayor to host a reception for the survivors of the Dublin Fusiliers, while at the same time accepting an invitation from Sinn Fein to attend an event marking the problems experienced by members of the Catholic community in Belfast.

On the difficult issue of the adoption of the city budget I put the needs of the city before my own personal future.

Local government needs active, committed representatives. It needs to be radically reformed, including the direct election for a five-year term of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. It never did and never will need another dose of Brady by Media and the endless desire to appear in the social columns. Dublin has had many good Lord Mayors: Gay Mitchell, Joe Doyle, Mary Freehill, Sean Loftus, John Gormley, to name but some. Your reference to the "most successful" would hardly feature in the top 100 of anyone's career.

Cllr Dermot Casey, *Beech Hill Drive, Donnybrook, D4*

Teething problems at Griffith College

Sir - I was in the same Griffith College class as Gwen Halley, and while I would like nothing more than to praise the fledgling college, she got her report fairly spot on. I am not concerned with their political leanings. All I and most of my colleagues were concerned with was learning how to be a journalist - and it was in this they fell down badly.

The course is top heavy on theory; lightweight on practical hands-on experience. All I can do is speak from experience and

throw my support behind Gwen. The staff of GCD should hold their hands up and admit they have a lot of work to do if they want to convince people they offer a better alternative journalism course to DCU or DIT.

Nell Cottar

Portrayal of the 'real Ireland'

A Chara - Just a few lines to tell you that it was great to read *The Jersey and Harvest Sunday* by Eamonn Sweeney in last week's *Sunday Independent*, portraying the real unpretentious Ireland.

Padraig S O'Shaughnessy, *Gleadow Road, Salthill, Galway*

THE WAY TOM MATHEWS SEES IT



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

TODAY
Larry Mullen, drummer with U2, is 43. Stephen Rea, Belfast-born actor, is 58. Sir Jimmy Saville, disc jockey, of *Jim'll Fix It* fame, is 78. Debbie McGee, wife of magician Paul Daniels, is 64. Tom O'Connor, British comedian and TV quizmaster, is 64. Vanilla Ice, former singer, is 36. Dennis Irwin, former Ireland and Man Utd fullback, is 39.

MONDAY
Igea Kempster, *Daily Mail* gossip columnist, is 63. Lyle Lovett, country singer, is 47. Larry Flynt, publisher of *Hustler* magazine, is 62. Anthony Kiedis, singer with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, is 42. Nick Owen, British TV presenter, is 57. Gary Player, South Africa's evergreen champion golfer, is 69.

TUESDAY
Sir John Sainsbury, former Sainsbury's grocery manager, is 77. David Schroyer, actor who played Koss in *Friends*, is 36. R.D. Lang, musician, is 43. Pat Buchanan, former US presidential candidate, is 66.

WEDNESDAY
Albert Reynolds, former

McConaughy, actor who starred in *Reign of Fire*, is 35. Laura Bush, First Lady of America, is 58. Walter Cronkite, the voice of American broadcasting for over 30 years, is 88.

FRIDAY
The Turner, of the Ike and Tina Turner 60s duo, 73. Art Garfunkel, of Simon and Garfunkel, is 62. Sam Shepard, playwright and actor, is 61. Tatum O'Neill, actress, is 41. Bryan Adams, rock musician, is 45. Daniela Westbrock, former *EastEnders* actress, is 31. Tazmin Outhwaite, former *EastEnders* actress, is 34. Steve Miller, founder of the Steve Miller Band, is 61. Lester Piggott, Britain's most famous jockey, is 69.

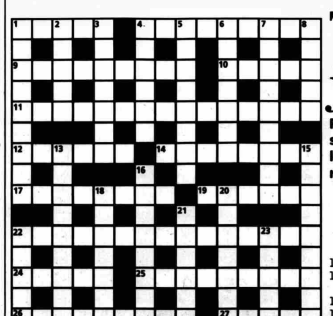
SATURDAY
Ruth Buchanan, presenter of RTE's *Playback*, is 59. Eban Hawke, actor and novelist, is 34. Griff Rhys Jones, comedian, is 51. Sally Field, Oscar-winning American TV and film actress, is 58. Nigel Havers, British actor, is 55. Neil McAndrew, English model, is 31. Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, actress who starred in the *X-Men* movies, is 32. Jim Rosenthal, TTV Formula 1 presenter, is 57.

THURSDAY
Hal Rosch, Waterford-born comedian, is 77. Sean Connery, rap artist and actor best known as P Diddy, is 35. Matthew

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD NO 441

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SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 440:
Across: 1 Spike. 4 Factious. 9 Aeschylus. 10 Avert. 11 Encyclopaedia. 14 Only. 15 Seed potato. 18 Countryman. 19 Dyme. 21 Alpha and omega. 24 China. 25 Restaffed. 27 Registers. 28 Diver.
Down: 1 Stagecoach. 2 His. 3 Ethic. 4 Fulsomely. 5 Costa. 6 Trapdoor. 7 Overanalyse. 8 Sate. 12 Cataloguing. 13 Rope-ladder. 16 Diagnosis. 17 Utopians. 20 Coward. 22 Agree. 23 Scar. 26 Foe.

This week's game is just for fun...

Problems associated with regulations force us to abandon sponsorship for a short time. However, we are hopeful it will not be long before a worthy prize will again be offered for the many readers who enjoy solving the Cryptic Crossword puzzle.

- Submerge with steering apparatus (5).
- A gentle walk out short with a qualified engineer constructing old sextant (9).
- Goddess is one in the pits with Victoria and Albert (7).
- Rub out in fit that's unexpected (6).
- Idle, superfluous bloodsucker? (4,4).
- Incomplete assassin joins army brass (7).
- Offend blonde unknown to be fanciful (4-5).
- Among the Spanish, your former alcohol base (5).
- They help one drive, keeping evils off screens (9).
- Quickly leave seat grasping sheep parasite (15).
- A little rest and seat breaks the fact (8).
- Old king confines prisoner for work of art (7).
- Refuge providing cher beyond ancient settlement (3-4).
- Be in charge with that large diminution of these tribesmen (6).
- Misled Northern political journalist (5).
- Part of step whereby one gets up? (5).