

## ECHONEWS

# giants to regulate themselves?

# drink ads



The question is why?

Opposition party TD, Fine Gael's Dave Stanton says it is preferable to have the drinks industry on side with a voluntary code, rather than introducing legislation.

He is also mindful of introducing legislation which can only be applied to advertisements generated by the Irish media, and which will not pertain to ads generated abroad.

But he concedes that an outright ban may have to be considered.

Fianna Fáil TD, Billy Kelleher shares the same viewpoint.

"There's no doubt that there are ads out there that give the message that drink is good for you and makes you attractive to the opposite sex and it's a major concern," says Mr Kelleher.

"This is an opportunity for the industry to show whether they are going to adopt a responsible attitude towards the advertisement of alcohol. But if that doesn't work, we

will have to go down the road of legislation," he says.

Meanwhile, the drinks industry believe a voluntary code has the potential to work.

According to spokesperson for the Mature Enjoyment of Alcohol in Society (MEAS) group (which represents the drinks industry), Fionnuala Sheehan, since the Strategic Taskforce on Alcohol called for reduced exposure of alcohol marketing to children and adolescents, a number of measures have been put in place.

In 2003, the Drinks Industry Group (DIG) established a company, Central Copy Clearance Ireland (CCCI) to vet alcohol advertisements to ensure the contents of such advertisements are in compliance with the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI) and the 1995 Ministerial Broadcast Media codes.

Other measures in place since early 2005 include an agreement

that no alcohol advertisement will be shown where more than 33% of the audience is under 18 and no such advertising will be placed in any programming specifically aimed at children or young people.

However, while the drinks industry continues to thrive in Ireland and to pump money into alcohol advertising, many people believe, anything short of a complete ban is too little.

"People don't pour money into something that's not successful," says Dr Jackson.

"When they're doubling their investment (from €25 million in 1996 to €43 million by 2002), they must be on to a good thing."

## NIGHT OUT: Alcohol is often associated with glamour

Picture: Posed by models

## O'Shea on Monday



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## It's Hallowe'en, so terrify the children!

**ROBERT O'SHEA**  
*says it's time to go back to the old customs tonight...*

THE cloak of darkness descends an hour earlier and bonfires burn in defiance against the dying of the light. The winds howl, there is voodoo music spilling out of the public houses onto the cold lamplit streets of the city and the sound of firecrackers pierces the suburban night sky. It can all mean only one thing — I have no idea what to write about this week.

Only kidding! Of course I do!

The Irish have given the world two days of celebration.

We can probably feel proud that our national day is the only one that is celebrated with as much and sometimes more vigour and enthusiasm in other countries as it is in our own.

Paddy's Day, however, is nowhere near as popular as the other day that Irish people, and those they have spread the message to, have been celebrating across the world for generations now: social welfare payday.

Oh, and we also gave the world Halloween.

While this holiday's popularity was helped in North America by sharing a date with the Mexicans' *Los Dias De Los Muertos* (translated: Day of the Stolen Irish Tradition), it was emigrants during the famine times who brought the practices of All Hallows Eve across the ocean with them.

Over time though, our traditions were taken and moulded by American society to suit themselves.

Take the Jack O'Lantern thing.

O'Lantern's tale is one that dates back to 18th-century Ireland, when a blacksmith named Jack colluded with the devil and was refused entry to heaven — he wasn't wearing the right shoes.

He was condemned to wander the earth instead but he was given a caved-out turnip with a coal ember burning inside after he asked the devil for a light.

This tradition will be upheld this Bank Holiday night in towns up and down the country as young people wander up to other people outside bars and nightclubs after closing time and ask them for a light.

The pumpkin is an American innovation, because, it being America, everything had to be bigger and better.

Thus the turnip turned into the pumpkin and the piece of coal turned into a candle in 19th-century America. Then, at midnight circa 1899, the pumpkin turned into a carriage and the candle turned into a glass slipper which eventually gave birth to the fairytale *Cinderella*.

So, in many ways, it is hard to recognise the festivities of Halloween's Irish origins, because of meddling by Americans.

The most annoying thing the Yanks have done is turn the day into one that can be enjoyed by children instead of one when they are frightened.

**Warning: Interior monologue approaching.**

On Hallowe'en night, my parents — who are fair game after insisting that I desist from referring to them in my weekly column — used to scare the crap out of me and my brothers (people who know me will point out that I have only one brother but the folks used to tell us that we had an older brother who was locked in the basement after incessant talking during *Coronation Street*).

Every October 31st, our parents would dunk our heads into a basin of water and tell us to try and bite the apple.

All fairly reasonable, you may think, but there was no apple.

Then there was snap apple, where an actual apple was hung on a piece of string and hung from the cornice of a door frame.

My brother and I were then blindfolded, spun around and shoved out the back door. *Coronation Street* was usually on.

I remember one year when we were extra scared because Hallowe'en was falling on Friday the 13th for the first time in a long time.

After devouring the Barm Brack (we didn't know there was stuff in it) the folks sent us out and told us to go trick-or-treating.

We were in our pyjamas and it was 4am.

Now a lot of people may think that my parents were unnecessarily cruel but what they put us through was actually a learning curve that allowed us to appreciate what the dangerous world we were entering was like. Or so our therapists tell us.

What I propose now is some modern ideas for games at Hallowe'en to scare and annoy your own children. Trust me, it will only do them good.

● Adopt the North American version of the apple-bobbing game. Using only your teeth, you have to remove the apostrophe from the word Hallowe'en.

● Are you a parent? If you are, walk into the living room and switch on the light while your teenage kids are trying to watch a horror film.

Repeat three times.

● Hide under the bed of your child who is aged between 6 and 10. Get the other parent to put that child to bed. Wait five minutes and start making the sound "Oooooooooooooo." Then start tapping the underside of the bed. (If it is possible, get the other parent to go outside and hit the window with twigs.)

Stop when a wet patch appears on the underside of your kid's mattress.

**The above may seem a little bit cruel but remember, please remember, we are all going to die.**