

## ECHOOPINION

AS ALWAYS it was a great triumph, and, as always its success exceeded that of previous years.

According to official statistics, more than 7,000 people participated in the 2004 Evening Echo Cork mini-marathon yesterday.

Up to 50 charities — local, national and international — took part in the five-mile run, the biggest-ever mini-marathon in the event's 23-year history.

And, while it was hoped that the

## WE SAY

The Echo's viewpoint

event would raise hundreds of thousands of euro for these organisations, it is now believed the sum raised by the five-mile mini-marathon should reach €1.5million — and that's a conservative estimate.

It is a colossal sum, which, even when divided up and distributed to the

# We salute brilliant marathon runners

various charities involved, will form a very significant portion of their annual income.

So a special thanks to the thousands of women who dedicated so much time

and effort training for the event in the past few months.

Tribute should also be paid to the hundreds of men who donned spectacular wigs and dressed in drag to

run, adding an extra dash of colour and fun.

This hugely popular run is now a major event on the Cork social calendar — a fact highlighted by the ever-increasing number of participants.

But don't put those running shoes away just yet — the *Limerick Evening Echo* marathon is now looming on the horizon — the starting whistle will be blown in just three weeks' time on Sunday, October 10 at 2pm in the grounds of the University of Limerick.

## TALKING HEAD

# Paddy's day should walk the plank

**Y**ESTERDAY, nestled on the Sunday between the All-Ireland finals, was a day of celebration that is often overlooked by the people of Ireland.

I refer, of course, to Talk Like a Pirate Day.

I first learned of the day when the previous incumbent of this Monday page mentioned it in his column earlier this year. Well since he's jumped ship and I've taken over, I hope he won't mind me plundering some of his ideas as well. All in the pirate spirit, you know.

September 19 is observed worldwide, by millions of people perhaps, as they introduce pirate terminology into their vocabulary for one day of the year.

It was the brainchild of two men from the US, John Baur and Mark Summers, and they enlisted the help of the American Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Dave Barry to help promote the important cause.

Barry wrote in 2002: "(Baur and Summers) were playing racquetball, and, as so often happens, they began talking like pirates. And then it struck them: Why not have a day when EVERYBODY talks like a pirate? They decided that the logical day would be September 19, because that is Summers' ex-wife's birth-

day." Baur says: "We've talked like pirates, and encouraged our several friends to, every September 19, except for a couple where we forgot."

With Barry's help the day has received popular coverage in America, but despite my predecessor's discovery of it a few months back, it seems to have skipped over the Cork public's imagination like a cannonball skims over the water and not one person I met yesterday partook in the festivities.

Now I know this may seem like a radical idea in some quarters, but I was wondering if we shouldn't replace St Patrick's Day with Talk like a Pirate Day as our National Holiday.

Patrick's Day is old hat by now. It's the same every year. You go out to get drunk, or you stay in and switch off the telly when the parade comes on. The parade sees giant Macnas-created dragons, or such, floating down main streets every year, and, quite frankly, why?

"But it's bloody good for the kids," you may argue. Well Talk like a Pirate Day is



*New columnist*  
**ROBERT O'SHEA**  
*has some news for you landlubbers*

a day that can be enjoyed by kids and adults alike. Avast, don't think women would feel excluded from it all: let's not forget that our most famous pirate was Grace O'Malley.

And the man who brought Patrick, and hence Christianity, to Ireland — Niall of the Nine Hostages, or as he is known to primary school-children countrywide, Niall and the Nine Sausages — was a pirate.

Yes, Ireland has a rich history in piracy, and it is still popular here. Look at our last two reality shows on RTE, *Cabin Fever* and *Treasure Island* — both to do with pirates. OK, we have no reality show this year, but if Dana joins the presidential race and starts wearing an eye patch, tell me she won't get your vote. Maybe 'X marks the box' could be her slogan if it wasn't for the pirate-discriminating PR voting system we have here that has scuppered any chance of her getting to the Park.

One of the problems might be that the public identifies pirates with nastiness. Yet I remember reading a book review earlier this year that



**GLOBAL CELEBRATION: Sunday, September 19 is Talk Like A Pirate Day.**

said the historical book in question illustrated how many of the buccaneers really had hearts of gold. No, wait, not hearts, teeth.

But it is not pirates, per se, that interest us here; it is piratespeak.

It got me thinking what would have happened down through history if the day had been observed.

Nothing of much interest seems to have happened on September 19 though; scientists found the world's biggest rodent fossil (size of a buffalo) on the day last year; St Kitt's and Nevis, the islands in the Caribbean, did gain independence from the UK on the date in 1983, perhaps or perhaps not with the help of pirates.

But, what's this, George Washington gave his Farewell Address on September 19, 1796. Let's imagine he used piratespeak when his father asked him if he cut down the cherry tree: "I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I cut it down with my hatchet." With piratespeak he could have added. "But dead men don't tell tales, Pa. And I still got the hatchet."

Or what if Neil Armstrong had used it on the moon: "This is one small step for a man, one giant leap of a plank."

But the basic idea of Talk like a Pirate Day is that everybody can join in the fun. I'm not advocating that people get dressed up in jolly roger hats or anything silly like that, just slip the odd bit of pirate language into the day. So don't be a landlocked lubber next year, address your boss with an "Aye, aye Cap'n."

It's an ideal excuse for bad chat-up lines too. Ask someone out to lunch: "Polly wanna cracker?" A drink: "Share a bottle o' grog?" Finish every sentence with "me beauty" lads, and I guarantee you will hook (pun intended) up with any woman you want.

Finally, while checking a web site to see what famous things happened on September 19, I discovered a Shakespearean actor named Porter Hall was born on this day. What was the last film he appeared in? *The Return to Treasure Island*.

Gar! It shivered me timbers.

## YOU SAY

# Strategic groups are vital

● I REFER to an article by Mary Smithwick on Saturday, September 11, last.

The agreed programme for local government services for the forthcoming term of Westmeath County Council between Fine Gael and Labour, known as the "Mullingar Accord" was drawn up in response to the needs and concerns of the electorate as the campaign progressed.

Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) on Local Authorities are formed to perform duties on subjects such as the environment, roads, transport, recreation and amenity, etc.

Despite widespread misconception, these committees are comprised of elected members and professionals with expertise relevant to each particular subject matter. They are by no means a minor element of the local government system.

Fine Gael are well disposed with their allies in the Labour Party to form further similar alliances, but only at the behest of the people.

No amount of re-arranging of personnel at Government level can undo the damage that has been done to the public trust by years of dishonourable and despicable conduct.

**Mark Wakefield, Mercier Park, Turners Cross, Cork.**

● I WOULD like to take this opportunity to thank the general public for supporting the work of Enable Ireland in their community.

This year, Enable Ireland inaugurates a special Action Week on Disability from September 20 to 26.

The theme is 'Support for Families.' Support from your readers will ensure that the families of over 3,000 children and adults will benefit through additional and new services.

Our unique new emblem, which is a button badge, will be for sale nationwide for just €2.

**Fionnuala O'Donovan**  
**Chief Executive, Enable Ireland**

*\* All letters must include a full name and address, which may be withheld on request. We reserve the right to edit letters. Our contact details are at the foot of the page.*

Log on to our website at [www.eveningecho.ie](http://www.eveningecho.ie)

## HOW TO CONTACT US

### PHONE

**Newsdesk:** Cork: (021) 4802142 or 4802154  
**Limerick:** (061) 414495

**Sportsdesk:** Cork: (021) 4802228. **Features:** (021) 4802162

### WRITE

Evening Echo, Academy Street, Cork or 89 O'Connell Street, Limerick.

### E-MAIL

[echo.ed@eecho.ie](mailto:echo.ed@eecho.ie)

### FAX

(021) 4802135

### THE LAST WORD

"It is a wise father that knows his own child."

**William Shakespeare**