



TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

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Taking A Stand



MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF TUI, ASTI, IFUT AND INTO AT CROKE PARK ON OCTOBER 19TH 2009.



GENERAL SECRETARIES JOHN CARR (INTO), PETER MACMENAMIN (TUI), JOHN WHITE (ASTI) AND MIKE JENNINGS (IFUT) SHARE A LIGHT MOMENT BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOUR UNION MEETING.



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A Word from The President



TUI PRESIDENT, DON RYAN

Since the last publication a number of extremely significant events have taken place. These include:

- The huge turnout in support of the ICTU Get Up, Stand Up demonstration on November 6th
- The overwhelming mandate given by our members in support of industrial action
- The massive participation of TUI members in all centres on the first day of strike action, November 24th.

The picketing of workplaces by TUI members was an outstanding success. Members manned pickets from early Tuesday morning until late that evening in second level schools, colleges of further education and Institutes of Technology.

The importance of full participation by each and every member in workplace pickets cannot be overstated. There is a public dimension to taking strike action and strike days are not days for hiding away. There is above all a need to show solidarity amongst our own

members and with our colleagues in other unions.

It is timely to issue a reminder as to why we, as teachers and lecturers, along with other public service workers, took strike action and are prepared to take more if necessary. We have been hit with a pay cut and various drastic attacks on the education system over the last twelve months. The Government has made clear its intention to target public service workers again in the forthcoming budget. We are prepared to pay our fair share but not prepared to be singled out for solutions to the economic mess inflicted on us by the inept governance of the country.

At the time of writing, public service unions are engaged in critical talks with Government but unless the official side offers meaningful alternatives a second day of strike action on December 3rd appears inevitable. A core part of these alternatives is a progressive taxation system that would ensure that those most able to pay take the most pain, and those who cannot are protected.

The targeting of the public sector by Government has been aided and abetted by sectors of the national media which have mounted a sustained campaign of black propaganda. Public servants have been demonised and attacked repeatedly by numerous commentators. Serious questions must be asked about the political

and commercial interests of many of these media outlets owned by tax exiles and tax dodgers. They are indicted by their refusal to provide a balanced debate on current events and their failure to set out the alternatives to the Government's slash and burn economic policy.

Visiting pickets on November 24th, it occurred to me that if these difficult times have taught us anything, it is the importance of taking a stand. TUI members were hugely supportive of the various demonstrations and lobbying campaigns organised against the education cutbacks over the last twelve months by TUI itself, and as part of the greater trade union movement. This surge of anger resulted ultimately in a reversal of some of the worst cutback in the revised Programme for Government. Our action succeeded in protecting vital elements of the system that benefit the most vulnerable in society.

The ground has changed now from marching on Government Buildings to demonstrating outside workplaces, but the fight continues. It now enters its most critical phase. When it comes to protecting our members, TUI will not be found wanting



Where We Stand

The first general strike by public service workers in over two decades has just taken place and it may not be a once-off event. TUI members, along with their colleagues in the other teacher unions, ASTI, INTO and IFUT, and fellow public service workers in a range of other public service unions engaged in a one day stoppage on Tuesday, 24th November, 2009.

Why was it necessary?

The reason for this stoppage was the continuing threat to the pay and conditions of service of TUI members at all levels. The unions had collectively sought to engage with representatives of Government in order to seek to eliminate the threat to pay and conditions. Hardly a day goes by without a Government Minister verbalising a threat to the pay of members. In addition to this, threats have also been made to conditions of service suggesting that there may be an attempt to make teachers and lecturers teach a heavier timetable load or to withdraw other elements of agreements which exist in relation to conditions of service.

Unprecedented Mandate

TUI members balloted in huge numbers in opposition to these threats. An unprecedented 70% of

members voted, and the Union received a staggering mandate for strike action, with 77% voting in favour. This, in effect, means that significantly in excess of half of TUI's members actually voted to engage in strike action. This is unprecedented in the history of TUI and confirms as an absolute lie the spin from Government and likeminded commentators who have suggested that this strike action is driven exclusively by union leaders and does not have the support of the general membership.

Tuesday November 24th

The lie is also confounded by the turnout of members on the picket line. Officials of TUI and Executive members/Area Representatives, as well as Branch Officers throughout the country, visited virtually every picket line in the country. The universal report back was of a strong determination of members to oppose what this Government is seeking to do and strong support for TUI action, while at the same time bitterly regretting the necessity of the action when they would rather be inside teaching their students. The Union and its members have been criticised for not seeking alternative means of resolving this issue. In response, we say that you cannot resolve something unilaterally without capitulation and TUI is not about to

capitulate. One can engage in discussion if the other side is prepared to engage but up to the strike there was no serious engagement. There were meetings which endlessly went round in circles, with one proposal after another, each one more unacceptable than the last. Without fail the official side reverted back to the mantra: "If you don't agree with these, we'll just simply cut your pay".

The Alternatives

The Union has also been criticised for not putting forward alternatives. This is blatantly untrue. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, through a well considered proposal, has said that the answer lies in taxation. But for reasons unknown the Government refuses to countenance any move in the direction of taxation. Independent economic commentators have suggested that Ireland is significantly under taxed in direct taxation (and direct taxation is the most equitable and most progressive form of taxation). It has been suggested that if the Irish direct taxation rates increased to European, United Kingdom or United States levels, a further €4 billion would be raised in direct taxation. This coincidentally is the gap that the Government is seeking to close between income and expenditure in 2010.

The unions have been criticised for

selfishness, for only looking out for themselves. Public service unions, in particular, have been singled out for this constant accusation. Indeed, many members of TUI continue to be misled into believing that the action by TUI and other public service unions is only in self interest. The action by the public service unions is part of the overall ICTU policy which continues to call for an equitable means of addressing the economic difficulties. The ICTU Plan, available on its website (www.ictu.ie), has a prime focus on the maintenance and the creation of jobs. In the main these are jobs in the private sector. In addition, Congress has suggested the taxation route as a means of closing the gap between income and expenditure and has also suggested a more extended period of time to bring about the necessary adjustment. To those Ministers and spokespeople for Government who say that the union side has not put forward alternatives we say this is untrue and they know it is untrue.

Latest Talks

After the plans for the 24th November strike had been put in place and all parties, including Government spokespeople, had recognised that the strike would go ahead and nothing could stop it, the Government belatedly brought forward a document on the transformation of the public service

- its so-called Vision Document. While its direct applicability to teachers and lecturers is at best unclear, the unions at the time of writing have agreed to engage in discussions in relation to this document and to explore what it means on a sector by sector basis. TUI is participating in these discussions and will do so conscientiously of all of the mandates given to it, particularly those set out by the most recent Annual Congress. Contrary to the belief of some, these mandates have not been forgotten.

Even if agreement can be reached in relation to the transformation document referred to above, this will not address the issue demanded by Government of a reduction in the public service payroll bill for 2010. Government is requiring that this be addressed separately and a variety of short term cost saving measures have been put forward and are being considered.

Strike – Thursday 3rd December 2009

Prior to entering the discussions referred to above, those unions, including TUI, who had a mandate for more than one day's strike, decided upon a second day of strike action and announced the date of 3rd December. The purpose of this is to ensure that Government remains serious in its discussion and

remains focussed on the necessity of coming up with a solution acceptable to the unions.

The entire focus of these discussions and of the present strategy is focussed on the Budget which is scheduled for 9th December. Depending on the content of that Budget, TUI along with its colleague unions will consider the situation in considerable depth and seriousness. The Union will consult with its members through Branch structures and all members are invited to contribute in the discussion of any subsequent phase to this battle should that be necessary.

One by-product of the current situation has been the enormous inflow of new members of teachers and lecturers supporting the Union's action. It is very welcome and heartening to have this level of support, even if in some cases this support is somewhat belated. To these new members we say you are very welcome and we look forward to your participation in the Union in full in the coming years. To those that have seen fit to resign, we say we respect your decision with regret. To those others who disagreed with the strike and who broke the strike by crossing the picket lines we say there is no greater offence for a member of a trade union than to cross the picket line of his or her colleagues and to break a strike. For these members there is no place in TUI.

Invest now or pay later

TUI conference offers compelling arguments for investment in education

Ireland finds itself in unique circumstances in terms of how it is affected by the global economic crisis. International experience shows that, now more than ever, the Irish government needs to sustain, not reduce, investment in education. TUI's recent symposium addressed the two related issues of quality of provision and equality of access. It brought together a number of highly esteemed speakers from the education, academic, research, business and community spheres who delivered a series of interesting perspectives on the personal, social and economic arguments for improving investment in education at all levels.

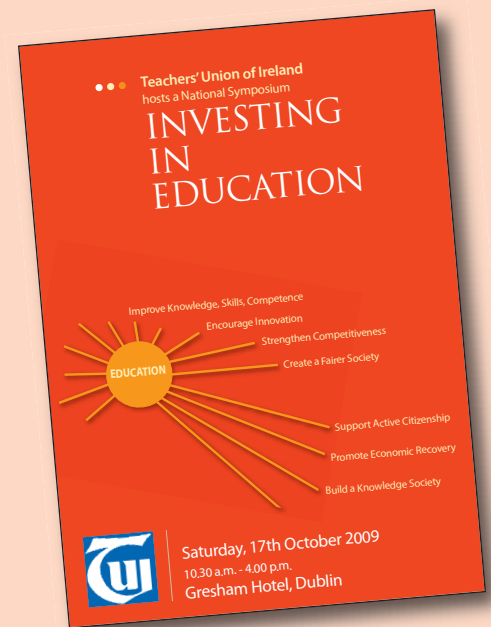
Crucially they all contended that improved investment in education is absolutely vital to position Ireland strategically to take advantage of opportunities for economic recovery and social development as the global recession recedes.

The speakers provided critical evidence of the connection between education levels and employment status, long term earning potential, dependency on social welfare, poor health and involvement in crime emphasising that improved investment in education must be one of the key elements of a strategy that dares to hope for a more just and equitable society. In this regard the symposium especially emphasised that support to directly protect and benefit the most marginalised in our communities must be maintained and strengthened.

Don Ryan President, TUI opened the symposium after which challenging questions were posed by all the speakers – questions that were addressed to the government, policy makers, teachers and

their trade unions. Dr Emer Smyth (ESRI) warned that we will 'pay much more later' if we do not invest appropriately in education now, because the long term cost of poor health and welfare will far exceed the cost of good quality education for all. She emphasised the impact of a wide range of issues including school organisation and processes, smaller class size and high support on those who experience social, economic, cultural and educational disadvantage. In tandem, speaking from the heart of a parent, Jackie O' Callaghan described how the current cutbacks are causing considerable financial problems for families. She highlighted that the overall effect on quality provision and the real cost to individuals society has yet to be realised. Tony Donohoe (IBEC) warned that we must concern ourselves with outputs as well as investment inputs. Highlighting continuous professional development for teachers as a priority, he drew attention to an urgent need to introduce curricular reforms which will ensure excellent outcomes and effective expenditure of exchequer funds.

Emphasising major inequalities in our education system and how it is experienced by the various groupings, Professor Kathleen Lynch (UCD) examined the immortality of inequality in the Irish education system. She challenged the audience and the wider public on our inadvertent complicity with a system that is essentially immoral because we accept it as 'educationally inevitable' that students with more economic resources will do better in education than those with fewer resources.



Sally Anne Kinahan (ICTU) noted some of the achievements of our European neighbours through investing in education and up-skilling (from early childhood development to workplace learning). She claimed a fairer tax system and stimulus package that includes education and training measures are among the features that will bring Ireland through the current crisis. The Government, she suggested, should be creative and innovative as opposed to oppressive and regressive.

Finally, questioning whether we care enough about the future generation, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, Fergus Finlay (Barnardos) provided damning evidence that the operation of Thornton Hall will cost the taxpayer €1 billion to run and operate in its first decade because we failed to invest a fraction of this in the children who will fill it in the crucial early intervention and prevention measures.

Closing Remarks were made by Peter MacMenamin, General Secretary, TUI who committed to maintaining a strong focus on the issues considered in the symposium in the coming months.

The quotes presented here give a flavour of the issues and ideas raised by the speakers. Presentations can be downloaded at www.tui.ie



EDUCATION

Peter MacMenamin, General Secretary TUI

"It is greatly encouraging that so many high profile speakers from such varied backgrounds share a vision of how we need to progress to secure a high quality and completely equitable education system for all. While the concessions in the latest programme for government are to be cautiously welcomed, it must be remembered that even with their full implementation, our education system will still be in a worse state than it was this time last year. Last year's cuts are still in place and even when commitments are implemented schools and colleges will operate with seriously depleted resources.

The message from the contributors to the TUI symposium is a clear one. We cannot afford not to invest appropriately in our education system at all levels. If we fail to invest now, the economic and social costs to the country will be immeasurable."



Peter MacMenamin



Fergus Finlay

Fergus Finlay, Chief Executive Officer, Barnardos,

The Future Generation – Do We Care Enough?

"Very soon we will start operating a new prison in Ireland called Thornton Hall. In its first decade of operation, Thornton Hall will cost the taxpayer €1 billion to run and operate. In its second decade, Thornton Hall will be full of kids that we neglected while we were spending that €1 billion. If we

want to build a society that doesn't need Thornton Hall any more, we should be investing a fraction of that €1 billion in early intervention and prevention in the lives of some of our children.

We know where they live, we know what their circumstances are and what the future holds for them but it seems we'd rather spend €1 billion picking up the pieces after the damage has been done rather than spending a fraction of it preventing that damage."

Tony Donohoe, Head of Education and Social Policy, IBEC

Education – An Economic Priority... But How and Why?

"Education and training at all levels of progression have an essential role to play in putting our economy back on a growth path. They provide the key to enabling us to be both competitive and prosperous.

Economic return from investment in this area tends to accrue mainly in the medium to long term, but it is vital that we treat it as a priority area for investment, even during this time of acute fiscal stress.

"However at a time when we need to spend public resources with maximum efficiency, it is not sufficient to consider investment inputs alone. There is an urgent need to introduce reforms which will ensure excellent outcomes and effective expenditure of exchequer funds, as well as



Tony Donohoe

providing opportunities for teachers and others working in education to use their skills and commitment to maximum effect. Curricular reform and continuous professional development for teachers remain a priority."



Jackie O'Callaghan

Jackie O'Callaghan, National Parents' Association for Vocational Schools & Community Colleges

The Cost of Education - The Parent and Community Experience

"We welcome the u-turn in relation to education issues in the programme for government, but extra vigilance is now essential to make sure that other vital elements of the system are not attacked in the upcoming budget. Schools are still straining under cutbacks already imposed. The change to the pupil teacher ratio has resulted in a loss of subjects in many schools and has also had serious repercussions for students with special educational needs. Typically, it is the poorest families who suffer as a result.

Education costs for parents have rocketed at a time when families are already under unprecedented economic strain. With this in mind, it is vital that the third level registration free be frozen for the foreseeable future to allow parents to budget for education provision. "In many ways referring to money spent on a day-to-day basis on education as 'current' spending is a misnomer. Students represent the future of the country and all spending in education should be looked upon as capital investment."



Dr. Emer Smyth

Dr Emer Smyth, Research Professor, ESRI

'Pay Now or Pay Later' - Investing in Education

"Early school leaving has very striking consequences for the individuals themselves but also for the broader society. Those who leave school before the Leaving Certificate are more likely to be unemployed, earn less if they have a job, and have poorer health and high crime levels. Studies within our prison service clearly indicate that only a tiny proportion of prisoners had progressed to Leaving Certificate or beyond. Investment in education is therefore vital to promote the educational and social development of children and young people.

The current recession is likely to disproportionately impact on disadvantaged children and their families. If we do not provide appropriate educational supports,



we are losing huge potential among our young people and we run the risk of having to pay much more later on in terms of spending on social welfare, health and prisons, while tax revenue will also be greatly decreased. Investment in education is an investment in the future of the country.



Kathleen Lynch

Kathleen Lynch, Head of Equality Studies, UCD

The Immorality of Inequality in Education: Moving Beyond 'Common Sense'

"Inequalities in the outcomes of education in Ireland are all too often taken as a given. We accept as 'educationally inevitable' that students with more economic resources will do better in education than those with fewer resources. The Government has allowed institutionalised injustices in education to persist over generations: it expects schools to supplement basic educational services with so-called 'voluntary contributions' that they know

poor parents cannot afford; it allows schools for the privileged to charge fees in addition to being funded by the State; and most recently supported the introduction of non-curriculum based tests for entry to higher education, the HPAT (Higher Professional Aptitude Test) for medicine and the MSAP (Mature Student Aptitude Test) for mature student entry in UCC and UCD. These tests are of dubious educational value and are a new barrier for lower-income students for higher educational entry. Proficiency on the tests requires practice and insider knowledge that is only available to those who can buy it. The HPAT is also highly problematic in gender terms.

To create a more equal educational system we need not only to eliminate inherited inequalities that actively promote injustices in access, participation and outcomes within education, we also need to avoid compounding existing injustices with new ones. And we need to recognise and own the immorality of inequalities in education that consigns so many students to a sense of failure on leaving school.

To have equality in education, we need to have equality in the wider society. There is a need to challenge the belief that people have entitlements to incomes or wealth that are several multiples of what other people have, and to have schools and educational resources that are far superior to what are available to others. Data from many countries shows that the lower the level of income and wealth inequality, the lower the level of educational inequality in a given society. To claim that one is promoting equality in education without addressing economic injustices is to engage in an act of educational and political delusion."



Sally Anne Kinahan

Sally Anne Kinahan, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU

Education: A Human Right; A Personal Entitlement; A Social Responsibility?

"The Government is reducing the prospects of recovery by its failure to introduce effective measures to preserve jobs and protect those most vulnerable to long-term unemployment, particularly workers with low education attainment. Congress has consistently pointed to the achievement of countries such as Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and France, which have intervened to save jobs whilst at the same time investing in educating and up-skilling workers to prepare for economic recovery and future growth. Investment in education – from early childhood development to workplace learning – is the most effective panacea to overcome social disadvantage and inequality, improve life chances, employment prospects and earning power."



New figures show student numbers to spiral by 30% in coming years

Numbers released by the TUI ahead of its education conference show that student numbers at second level are due to spiral by 30% in the next twenty years. The total at second level will steadily increase from around 340,000 to 440,000. The union believes the education system is not equipped to support the most vulnerable students now and that this situation will be greatly worsened going forward unless the correct interventions are made.

Demographics show that our education system will come under unprecedented pressure, with an increase of at least 5,000 additional students in the system every September for the next twenty years.

It follows that considerable additional investment in our education system will be necessary to give every child the best possible chance to, at a very minimum, obtain the Leaving Certificate.

Student drop-out currently runs at a rate of about 20% nationally, and 30% in the Dublin city area. There is a real risk that this already unacceptably high rate will increase substantially unless the programmes, supports and frameworks that protect vulnerable children in the education system have full funding restored and are enhanced immediately.

TUI General Secretary Peter MacMenamin praised the Green Party for their concessions forced as part of the revised programme for government and urged them to monitor the implementation of the concessions.

"We must however remember that even if all promised measures are implemented, our education system will still be in a considerably worse state than it was prior to this year at a time when student numbers are about to increase at an



unprecedentedly rapid rate. TUI welcomes these steps as being in the right direction but the situation is far from satisfactory," he said.

"The increase in numbers at second level will subsequently result in an increase in numbers seeking access to Further Education and Higher Education courses. There has already been a huge increase in numbers looking to access 'second chance' education as a result of increasing unemployment over the last twelve months. The potentially huge role that these sectors can play as part of the government's employment activation policy has yet to be appropriately acknowledged."

At the very least, the Department of Education and Science needs to:

- Significantly increase the number of places in Further Education. Specifically, the artificial cap on student numbers in Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses needs to be lifted.
- Remove the moratorium on appointment of managers in the Adult Education field. These provide a vital service, especially in rural areas where community based provision is

paramount. With the staggering increase in the number of newly unemployed people, this is of an even more critical importance now.

- Provide appropriate funding for third level colleges and maintain staffing levels to allow us to develop the skillbase that will keep us competitive internationally
- Commit to a freezing of the college registration fee to allow families to budget for the coming years.

Ultimately, failure to invest appropriately in education will result in the Department being in clear breach of its mission statement of enabling individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society and to contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.

We urge government to take on board the consistent message from employers, educationalists, economists, parents and trade unionists and commit to increasing investment in our education system.

TUI in the media

A small sample of recent TUI coverage in the national media. See www.tui.ie for full details.

Irish Independent, 1st September 2009

Meanwhile, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) has called for an assurance that education will be insulated from further cutbacks in the coming months. General Secretary Peter MacMenamin said they would continue "to appeal vigorously" for a rolling back of some of the most savage cutbacks.

Irish Times, 3rd September 2009

A TUI survey shows long waiting lists of applicants in almost every county who have little hope of obtaining a place on a PLC course. On average, there are two applicants for every place.

TUI president Don Ryan said PLC courses were a "very cost-effective way of upskilling the population and restrictions on places make no economic, social or educational sense

Irish Examiner, 9th September 2009

Teachers' Union of Ireland president Don Ryan said students should celebrate responsibly and urged those in the drinks trade to be particularly vigilant, while encouraging those who get their results today to stay on and finish school. "In the current climate there is little chance of a student entering the workforce without at least completing the senior cycle so we urge them to stay on and complete the Leaving Certificate," he said.

Irish Independent, 19th September 2009

However, at second level, he now puts the figure at 509, compared with 240 last year. The allocation of teachers to schools is still being finalised, but the minister said he did not think the final position would be significantly different.

Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) general secretary Peter McMEnamin said: "Once again this highlights that considerably more teaching posts will be lost at second level than the Department of Education and Science has claimed on several occasions."

Irish Times, 29th September 2009

Second level teachers have expressed anger about new Department of Education figures that appear to show they enjoy a relatively light workload compared to their OECD counterparts.

Teachers' Union of Ireland president Don Ryan yesterday labelled the department's figures as a "mischievous attempt to undermine a frontline service already under severe strain".

RTE Radio 1 Drivetime 8/10/09

TUI President Don Ryan speaks of his 'astonishment' at the Department of Education and Science's captil budget surplus on RTE Radio 1's Drivetime



Irish Examiner, 10th October 2009

Any cuts to teachers' pay or further education cutbacks look almost certain to trigger industrial action by 15,000 members of the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI), who are to be balloted for possible strikes.

The executive of the union – with members in second-level schools, further education colleges and institutes of technology – decided yesterday to ballot members for action up to a series of strikes.

Sunday Business Post, 11th October 2009

Peter MacMenamin, the general secretary of the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI), called the new developments in the Programme for Government "a step in the right direction".

"There has been a clear recognition of the importance of education by the Greens. However there's a long way to go - the education system was underfunded before the cuts were made. We have already lost around 1,000 jobs in second level this year, so while 500 new posts is nowhere near adequate, it does help to address the situation."

Irish Times, 17th October 2009

The number of pupils in second-level schools is set to surge by 30 per cent over the next two decades, placing further strain on the education budget.

New Department of Education figures show the number at second level will increase from 340,000 to 440,000 by 2029.

The projections reveal that the education system will come under unprecedented pressure, with at least 5,000 additional students in the system every September for the next 20 years.

The figures were released by the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) at a conference on investment in education.

Irish Examiner, 17th October 2009

Student drop-out numbers will soar if the Government does not start investing to cater for a spiralling student population, a teachers' union leader will warn today.

Department of Education projections suggest the numbers attending second level could rise from current levels, of around 340,000, by up to 8,000 a year between 2010 and 2015, and could reach 440,000 by 2030.

Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) general secretary Peter MacMenamin will tell a conference that the inability of the education system to support the most vulnerable students will be greatly worsened unless proper interventions are made now.

Irish Examiner, 19th October 2009

At a weekend conference on investing in education organised by the Teachers' Union of Ireland, Prof Lynch said Government has allowed institutionalised injustices in education persist over generations: "It expects schools to supplement basic educational services with so-called voluntary contributions that they know poor parents cannot afford. It allows schools for the privileged to charge fees in addition to being funded by the State."

Jackie O'Callaghan of the National Parents Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges said: "The change to the pupil teacher ratio has... had serious repercussions for students with special educational needs. Typically, it is the poorest families who suffer as a result.

Irish Examiner, 2nd November 2009

Any changes to the Junior Certificate should only be for reasons that would benefit students rather than save money for the Exchequer, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) has claimed.

Annual Congress 2010 – Ennis

Congress will once again be in Ennis in 2010. It will be held in the town's West County Hotel.

Reservations for accommodation during Annual Congress can be made with the following hotels:

The West County Hotel and The Clare Inn

Tel: 065 - 682 3000 Email: cro@lynchhotels.com (Central Reservations Office) B&B €55 per person sharing €79.00 single. Children sharing Up to 3 years – free accommodation with two adults: 3 to 16 years - €15

There are a limited number of rooms available in the West County Hotel for delegates.

The Old Ground Hotel, Ennis (30 rooms)

Tel: 065 - 682 8127 Fax: 065 - 682 8112
B&B €55 per person sharing €80.00 single
Children sharing Up to 3 years – free accommodation with two adults: 3 to 16 years - €15

Templegate Hotel, Ennis (30 Rooms)

Tel: 065 - 682 3300 Email: info@templegatehotel.com
B&B €55 per person sharing €80.00 single
Children sharing Up to 3 years – free accommodation with two adults: 3 to 16 years - €15

B&B Accommodation:

There are a number of B&B Houses close to the Hotel. The West County Hotel will be happy to give you names and contact numbers should any members require B&B accommodation.

Reservations

Reservations should be made directly with the hotels. There are no booking forms required.

Bookings must be made before 31st December 2009 to avail of the above rates.

CONGRESS CRECHE

A Crèche under professional supervision will be provided at Congress 2010 in the West County Hotel.

Children up to 10 years of age may avail of the Crèche.

Copies of the Crèche Form are available from:

Sheila MacNamara, St. John Bosco Community College, Kildysart, Co. Clare
Mobile: 087 629 3892 Work: 065 683 2300
Email: sheilamcnamara1@hotmail.co.uk

Copies of the form are also on the TUI website – www.tui.ie

Completed forms should be returned to Sheila before Friday, 26th February, 2010.

Due to HSE regulations there are a limited number of places available in the Crèche, so early booking is strongly advised.



▶ IMPORTANT DATES TO CONGRESS 2010

▶ 29th December 2009

Last date for receipt of motions from Branches to Head Office for submission to Standing Orders Committee.

▶ 19th January 2010

Last date for receipt of nominations for positions of Vice-President and Area Representatives for the following areas:
Area:

1. Wicklow, Kildare, Laois and Carlow
3. Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Meath
5. Tipperary N.R., Clare and Limerick City
7. Kerry, Limerick County
9. Cork City and Cork County
11. Galway City, Galway County and Mayo
13. Community & Comprehensive Schools in Counties Cavan, Dublin, Kildare, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Wicklow.
15. Third Level Colleges – Dublin (excluding City), Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford.
17. Third Level Colleges – Cork, Tipperary and Waterford
19. Third Level Colleges – Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Galway, Mayo

▶ 2nd February 2010

Preliminary Agenda will be issued to Branches

▶ 10th February 2010

Issue ballot papers for elections.

▶ 16th February 2010

Last date for receipt of:
• amendments to Preliminary Agenda
• order of priority for motions in each section
• names of delegates to Congress.

▶ 9th March 2010

Last date for receipt of annual election ballot papers.

▶ 16th March 2010

The Final Agenda will be issued; also the General Secretary's Report; Balance Sheet and Financial Statement; names of delegates to Congress and the Branches represented.

▶ 30th March 2010

Last date for receipt of questions on the Annual Report and Annual Accounts.

▶ 6th April 2010 CONGRESS OPENS

Note: Rule 13 (ii) which reads as follows determines the number of delegates:

"One delegate from each Branch of which the members in benefit do not exceed thirty and one delegate for each fraction of thirty, as per the following table:

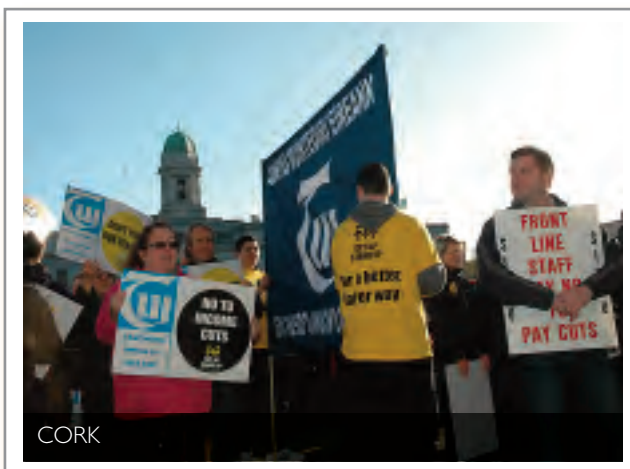
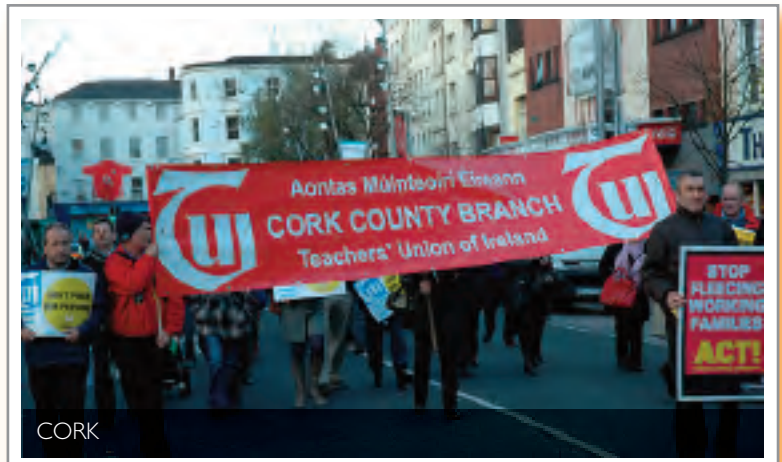
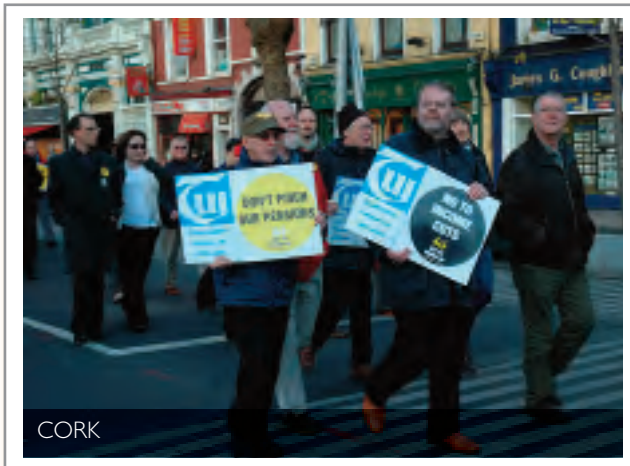
Members	Delegates
1 - 30	1
31 - 60	2
61 - 90	3
91 - 120	4
121 - 150	5
151 - 180	6

and so on".

In-benefit members for the purpose of arriving at the number of delegates to the Annual Congress are fully paid-up members for the month of December whose subscriptions have been received by the General Secretary on or before the last Friday in February, i.e. Friday, 26th February 2010.

Get Up, Stand Up

TUI members turned out in huge numbers all over the country to take part in the eight regional Get Up, Stand Up demonstrations organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) on November 6th to highlight that there are alternatives to the course being chosen by the government to remedy the nation's economic problems.





DUNDALK



DUNDALK



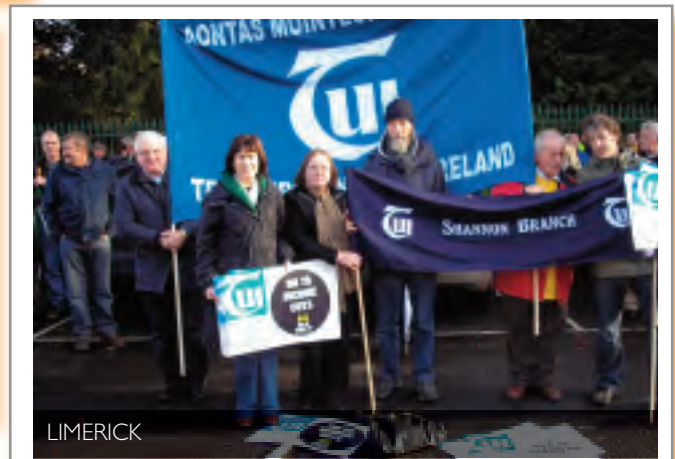
GALWAY



GALWAY



GALWAY



LIMERICK



LIMERICK



TULLAMORE

NCCA Updates

Teachers, keep up to date with what's going on in curriculum and assessment at the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)!

Keep abreast of developments in your subject!

Find out about Project Maths!

Read about the rebalancing of subjects in junior cycle! Learn all about the NCCA's plans for consultation about proposed developments in senior cycle education.

Info@ncca includes news, features and regular columns concerning these and other curriculum and assessment initiatives in early childhood, primary and post-primary education. You can subscribe to info@ncca at www.ncca.ie/subscribe or www.ncca.ie/liostail for the Irish edition. Back issues of info@ncca may also be viewed at www.ncca.ie/en/news_press/newsletter, or www.ncca.ie/ga/nuacht_preas/nuachtlitir.



TUI is supporting the online anti-racism competition 2010 being organised by the Show Racism The Red Card. TUI members are required to register by the 11th December 2009. The deadline for entries by students is 12th February 2010.

Junior Certificate Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) have just launched 'Think Before You Click', a new teaching resource for the Junior Certificate CSPE curriculum which will shortly be rolled out to second-level schools nationwide.

Jointly developed for the Junior Cert CSPE curriculum by the NCTE and the ICCL, 'Think Before You Click' explores the question of privacy online, and the rights and responsibilities of young people to ensure they take steps to protect their privacy, and that of others.

Developed with the cooperation of the Second Level Support Service and the Curriculum Development Unit, 'Think Before You Click' is the first educational resource of its kind in the Junior Certificate CSPE curriculum, empowering students to be effective, safe and autonomous users of the internet and other new media.

For further details contact ICCL, the Second Level Support Service or the NCTE.

AONTAS – Adult Learner Festival February 2010

The Adult Learners' Festival is a nationwide celebration of adult learning coordinated by AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation. The festival takes place from 22 – 26 February 2010. Now in its fourth year the theme of this year's Festival is 'Better Together'. It will showcase collaborative practice amongst stakeholders in the sector and also highlight the role of community and adult education in combating poverty and social exclusion as part of the 2010 European Year. In the last three years, the festival has become a firm fixture on the adult learning calendar with events taking place nationwide, including anything from information sessions, taster workshops, sample lectures to small gatherings of people who love to learn. The Adult Learners' Festival 2010 is supported by the Department of Education & Science, FETAC, ICTUs Union Skills Network, TUI, ASTI and www.BlueBrick.ie. For more information, please visit www.adultlearnersfestival.com.

Improving the representation of women on the TUI Executive Committee



An article on improving the representation of women in the TUI in the last edition of TUI News made the case for the union to do more to ensure that women get onto the Executive Committee. Although over 60% of TUI members are women, there are currently only two female Area Representatives out of a total of 19 Area representatives on the TUI Executive Committee.

In order to work towards improving the representation of women on the Executive Committee the TUI is carrying out a consultation exercise with TUI members. We want to find out what members think could be done to improve the representation of women. We would like to identify the barriers and to explore how these barriers which seem to prevent larger number of women getting onto the Executive Committee can be overcome. To better represent the views of all members it is important to bring a sense of balance to the gender representation on the executive committee.

Focus groups have been organised around the country to get the views and perspectives of members. If you would like to attend one of the focus groups, you will find the details below. Places are limited to

between 12 and 15 people on each focus group. If this something that you want to have a say about and feed into TUI policy then book early to ensure that you get a place.

The focus groups will be held in Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Cork and Donegal and are open to all TUI members:

- Limerick: Monday 7th December at 7.30pm
- Galway: Tuesday 8th December at 5.00pm
- Cork: Monday 14th December at 5.00pm
- Dublin: Thursday 7th January, 7pm, Gresham Hotel
- Donegal Town: Wednesday, 13th January at 7.00pm

In addition, a separate focus group made up of women TUI members will also be held in Dublin on Friday 18th December at 11.30 at TUI Head Office.

A focus group meeting with the TUI Executive Committee members will also take place.

In the focus groups we will be look at the main reasons why there are so few women on the Executive Committee and

what the TUI can do to improve the representation of women. We will be presenting you with some options that could be considered and different methods of improving the representation of women.

The information from these focus groups will be extremely valuable in helping the TUI proceed with its commitment to improve the representation of women on the Executive Committee.

The focus groups will be facilitated by Dr Jane Pillinger, who has worked with trade unions across Europe in improving the representation of women in decision-making positions. Jane will also be drawing up a report with recommendations for the TUI.

If you would like to attend a focus group please reserve a place by contacting Lesley Conville in TUI Head Office 01 4992122. lconville@tui.ie. Further information about the venue and the format of the focus groups will be sent to you with a confirmation of your reservation. Refreshments and sandwiches will be available at the start of all of the focus groups.

TUI LGBT support group

TUI wishes to invite lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) teachers to a meeting on Saturday December 12th 2009, with a view to setting up a TUI LGBT support group.

The meeting will take place in a city centre hotel in Dublin at 2pm.

If you wish to attend, please contact Annette Dolan, Deputy General Secretary TUI, by telephone, email adolan@tui.ie or by post for details of venue etc.

Teaching Council Research Bursary Scheme

On October 5th 2009 the Teaching Council announced its fourth scheme of research bursaries. The bursaries highlight the Teaching Council's commitment to the continuing education and professional development of teachers and to facilitating research in the area of teaching, learning and assessment. The Council is confident that the research carried out will have the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Ireland.

Under the latest scheme, €75,000 of the bursary fund will be reserved for applications from registered teachers and an additional €25,000 will be available to persons other than registered teachers, where the focus of the research is on teaching, learning and assessment. The maximum bursary remains at €5,000.

Deadline: Persons interested in applying for a research bursary should note that the deadline for receipt of applications is Monday, 14 December 2009 at 12 noon. Online Application Process Applications must be made using the online application form. Further information on how to apply and the application form are available on the Research pages of www.teachingcouncil.ie

Education = Health

This article was originally published in the health supplement of the Irish Times on October 20th 2009

The relationship between education and health has not been investigated to any great extent in this State, but studies carried out in other countries show a clear correlation between average education and health/life expectancy, writes DON RYAN

Counter arguments against cutbacks in education provision have focused almost exclusively on the benefits of the retention and development of a high quality and inclusive education system in stimulating a revival of the economy and contributing to the social cohesion of the country.

However, an equally, if not more, important argument is the detrimental effects these measures will have on the health and life expectancy of individuals and the population.

The relationship between education and health has not been investigated to any great extent in Ireland, but studies carried out in other countries show a clear correlation between average education and health/life expectancy. As average education increases, life expectancy improves.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that a large and persistent association between education and health has been well documented and has found that:

Better educated people have lower morbidity rates from the most common acute and chronic diseases, independent of basic demographic and labour market factors.

Life expectancy is increasing for everyone, yet differences in life expectancy have grown over time between those with and without a college education.

Health behaviours alone cannot account for health status differences between those who are less educated and those who have more years of education.

The mechanisms by which education influences health are complex and are likely to include (but are not limited to) interrelationships between demographic and family background indicators, effects of poor health in childhood, greater resources associated with higher levels of education, a

learned appreciation for the importance of good health behaviours, and one's social network.

Worryingly, given the level and extent of education cuts in Ireland, a group of researchers noted in a 2008 Health Affairs article that the education-related gap in life expectancy has grown considerably in recent years.

Between 1981 and 2000, the difference in health outcomes between individuals with a second-level education or less and individuals with any college education increased by about 30 per cent.

People with more than a second-level diploma can expect to live up to seven years longer than their less-educated counterparts, according to a study from Harvard Medical School.

There are multiple reasons for this association, although it is likely that the health differences are in part the result of differences in behaviour across education groups.

Studies in Ireland and other countries have investigated the relationship between education and various health risk factors – smoking, drinking, diet and exercise, use of illegal drugs, household safety, use of preventive medical care, and care for hypertension and diabetes – and results suggest very strong gradients where the better educated have healthier behaviours.

Those with more years of schooling are less likely to smoke, to drink heavily, to be overweight or obese, or to use illegal drugs.

The better educated report having tried illegal drugs more frequently, but they gave them up more readily.

Health behaviours explain some but not all of this association. Education may improve health simply because the better educated have more resources and greater access to healthcare.

There is also an important psychological dimension contributing to the association between education and health. School and teachers, along with parents, play an important role in developing an individual's



perceptions of their own ability and worth, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Negative manifestations of these concepts impact greatly on individual's mental and physical health and on health behaviours.

Inequalities in mortality mirror socioeconomic inequalities, with research showing that by improving educational outcomes, the most disadvantaged groups have the potential to address health and life expectancy inequalities.

Our Government, in attempting to rectify the country's economic mess, punished the most vulnerable, the most educationally marginalised and the most disadvantaged in our society, and in doing so condemned a large cohort of marginalised young people to both educational and health disadvantage.

Expenditure on education and health are the two most fundamental and important investments that this or any country can make on behalf of its citizens. There is clear evidence that increasing educational attainment leads to decreased healthcare costs, and that increasing expenditure in education can be hugely effective in improving both the level of education and the health status/life expectancy of the population.

Our policymakers appear unimpressed by the educational and social arguments being made against cutbacks to education; they cannot, however, ignore the compelling correlation between education and living longer.

Don Ryan is president of the Teachers' Union of Ireland and holds an MA in Health Promotion from NUIG

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NYP2 Habitat Global Village Project Paraguay



After a hectic year of fund-raising which received wonderful support from trade unions, projects, local communities and individuals the NYP2 Habitat Paraguayan project group set off from Dublin on Saturday 4th July 2009. The group was truly an international one as it consisted of eight people from Ireland and one from each from the following countries, Spain, Italy, Austria, South Africa, Poland, Romania, Armenia, Zimbabwe, Vietnam.

We left Dublin at 5 pm and travelled from Dublin to Madrid, Madrid to Sao Paulo in Brazil, Sao Paulo to Asuncion in Paraguay and then ten hours by bus, arriving at 10 pm at our base near Encarnacion! During the long and tiring bus trip we got to meet up with our fellow volunteers from Canada who were to be with us for a week and an Australian couple who were to be with us for the whole two weeks and who became honorary NYP2 volunteers! Getting there was a tiring experience but we did not get much time to rest as we were up next morning at 6am and on our bus to the building site at 7am where we worked until 5pm. This was

the daily routine Monday to Friday for week one and Monday to Thursday on Week two.

The area was the municipality of Jesus and it was an area of extreme poverty with people living in what were just wooden sheds with sanitation just a hole in the ground, water supplied from wells with a bucket, roads just dirt tracks that became nearly impassable with rain, and most of the families very poor and lacking basics such as clothes, shoes and of course adequate income.

Despite all of this the families and the children were wonderfully resilient and really friendly and during the work breaks our group had terrific fun playing football and marbles, teaching them new games, playing music, dancing and singing songs. Our work on the site consisted mainly of labouring work and assisting the skilled local masons and the families in the building of what were very basic two and three roomed housing units.

We achieved our target of building nine houses over the two weeks despite

some bad weather which meant that we had to work on a Sunday. It was great credit to all the group that everybody was so willing and eager to volunteer for the Sunday work despite being tired and in need of a rest. At the end of the week there was a formal handing over of keys of the houses to the families. This was a very moving ceremony attended by all the families from the local community with speeches by the local mayor, the volunteers –including ourselves, and representatives of the families. It was an opportunity too for us to acknowledge the generous contribution made by organisations and individuals back home in Ireland such as TUI, without which we could not have taken part in this project.

Whatever we gave to the local people was little to in relation to the wonderful experience they enabled us to have - an experience we will remember for the rest of our lives. We want to acknowledge here the generous support we received from TUI without which the whole project could not have taken place and to again thank you for helping this initiative take place.

“Multiculturalism is here to stay and we should embrace it positively.”



Opening the English Language Support Teachers' Association (ELSTA) third annual Conference in Marino Institute of Education on Saturday October 17, the Minister for Integration, John Curran TD said that it is not simply up to newcomers to adapt to our society; as hosts we can create a sense of belonging which will benefit all of us economically, socially and culturally. He spoke about the work done in the Department of Integration, in particular the collation of all available resources relating to newcomers and their education. This was done under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science having consulted with parents, students, teachers, lecturers, researchers and other key stakeholders, including ELSTA. The pamphlet entitled AIM (Accessing Intercultural Materials) is available on www.education.ie and www.integration.ie.

Also from the Department of Integration, Principal Officer Ms Breda Naughton delivered the results of the OECD Report “Thematic Review of Migrant Education in Ireland” and the ESRI Report “Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students”.

Her talk emphasised the importance of mainstreaming newcomer students, having provided them with language support. She also stressed the positive effects of multiculturalism. She said that it is desirable that schools should have teachers from the migrant communities in order to provide positive role models for newcomer students.

Responding to Breda Naughton, ELSTA's Cathaoirleach Mary Ryan said that ELSTA has great respect for what the Department of Integration is doing to promote interculturalism and language support. However, ELSTA and the Department part ways on a number of issues: the cap of two years' language support for newcomer students, the cuts in EAL teacher allowance and terminating language support at the B level. She said that when students have reached this level, they are still not ready for mainstream education.

Delegates attended two workshops out of a menu of seven and slides of those slides will be available for ELSTA members in the next few weeks on www.elsta.ie.

One of a number of highlights of the day was the Speed Exchange. Led by National

Executive member Sarah Boehm, teachers formed two circles à la Paul Jones and exchanged EAL ideas which really worked for them in the classroom. Delegates moved on to new partners every three minutes. Some of those will be available on ELSTA's website.

Dr Jim Cummins of Toronto University ended the day with a talk on “Supporting International Students' Language Needs in Mainstream Classroom”. He said that newcomer children are incredibly vulnerable and can only achieve their potential when they can express who they are; school classrooms and corridors should reflect all students. A video of Dr Cummins' talk will be available on ELSTA's website shortly.

This year saw ELSTA's first international delegates when four Norwegian members of ELSTA attended the conference. At a special meeting after Conference, discussions were held between ELSTA and the Norwegians about establishing an ELSTA sister association in Norway, so perhaps in ten years' time EAL teachers will be travelling abroad for their annual congress!



TUI Professional Development Programme PRE-RETIREMENT TRAINING

The following pre-retirement seminars have been scheduled.

DATE	LOCATION	VENUE
4th & 5th March 2010 5:30pm – 9:00pm 9:30am – 4:00pm	Limerick (1½ day)	Strand Hotel, Limerick

PLEASE NOTE:

There is an upper limit in terms of numbers for attendance, so early booking is strongly advised. Please complete this form **clearly stating the course of your preference.**

APPLICATION FORM

Name	
School Name and Address	School Telephone
Home Address	Home Telephone
Fax Number	E-Mail Address
Have you previously attended a TUI pre-retirement seminar? If so please indicate where/when:	

Please send completed form to:

Jane O'Sullivan, TUI, 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
Telephone: (01) 492.2588, Fax: (01) 492.2953, E-mail: josullivan@tui.ie

Obituaries



Don Nicholl An appreciation

In July, it was with deep regret and sadness that we learned of the untimely death of our beloved colleague and friend Don Nicholl.

Don joined the staff at Lucan Vocational School in 1975, having previously taught in Clondalkin Vocational School. From the beginning Don showed enthusiasm and creativity. When the new school Lucan CC opened in 1987 he commissioned a film to promote the school and its ethos. In this and his insistence on standards of excellence, Don was one of the chief architects in the building up of the school to the great success it has become.

As a teacher of English Don was inspirational. Many students who went on to study at Third Level attribute their love of English and English Literature to Don. As a Career Guidance Counsellor Don was equally inspirational. He urged his students to aspire to higher things, nothing was out of their reach, nothing too big, nothing they could not achieve.

Over the years Don was involved in many issues. He cared deeply about issues of Human Rights and Equality - the cause of the Palestinians was particularly close to his heart.

Much as Don is missed by his colleagues and students, it is his family that will most feel the sadness and desolation on this the saddest of times, but his wife Ann and his sons, Cathal, Ruairí, Barra and Donal must find consolation from the life that Don led, from the great good that he did and from the influence of good that he had on so many lives.

We are now back in school and life goes on but there will always be a huge vacancy left behind that will never be filled. As a loyal colleague and as a friend he will be missed.

Paddy McDermott

Paddy Foley 1951 – 2009 An appreciation

It was with much sadness and shock that we learned of the sudden and tragic death of our friend and colleague Paddy (Pat) Foley in February of this year. Paddy was a member of the teaching staff in Coláiste Pobail Móinín na gCíseach, Gaillimh, for 33 years. A highly popular and lively member of staff, Paddy was originally employed as a teacher Maths and Science. His scientific and enquiring mind led him to develop a keen interest in computing technology, and he was to the forefront of the introduction of same into Móinín. It is reported that Paddy was the first member of staff to own a computer; travelling to the North to acquire it! Paddy was also a committed member of the Galway City branch of the TUI, and represented his colleagues in Móinín as School Representative many, many times.

Paddy devised many NCVA (now FETAC) courses, and was initially responsible for introducing the highly successful Post Leaving Certificate Desktop Publishing course into Móinín. His role in promoting and devising Post Leaving Certificate courses in our school cannot be underestimated. This expertise did not go unnoticed outside of the school, and Paddy was subsequently seconded to FETAC as Regional Representative, organising and developing new courses, and training, for Post Leaving Certificate teachers. He also worked with European schools in the Netherlands and in Belgium on the successful Petra 1 and Petra 2 Desktop Publishing Projects in the early 1990's. He returned to full time teaching as an Assistant Principal, and he was a highly valued senior member of the teaching staff.



Paddy loved to travel, and holidayed with his family abroad, especially to France, as often as possible. Travel, for Paddy, was an opportunity to experience other cultures. Food, wine, dance, and music were occasions to celebrate life, and Paddy

certainly celebrated life to the full! A keen lover of all kinds of music, and a devoted singer, Paddy was a dedicated member of the Galway Choral Association for many years. He was also a loyal member of the Bushy Park Church Choir, which sang so beautifully in tribute to Paddy at his funeral Mass in February. He also was a lover of fine foods, and was a keen cook. Paddy was a true 'gentle' man, who had a serious sense of humour and possessed, what the French would call, a definite and obvious, 'joie de vivre'. His love of life and fun touched all of us who were privileged to work with and to know him. Paddy genuinely loved 'the craic'. He made loyal friends no matter where he was, and no more so than in Móinín. Tá ár gcroí briste ina dhiaidh.

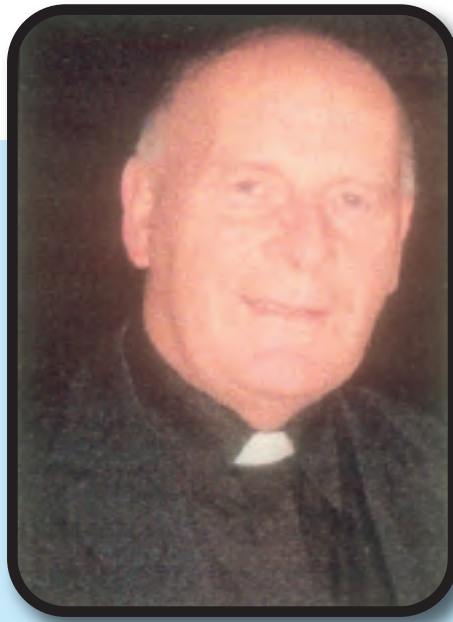
A native of Kerry, Paddy typically displayed a proud love of his home county, and no more so than on the third Sunday of every September, when he wore the Kerry jersey with much pride when required. In recent years, we all know of the successes of the Kerry teams, and we in Móinín remember fondly how Paddy wore his Kerry jersey into school after each and every Kerry All Ireland Football victory. We are confident, and comforted, that Paddy is, yet again, celebrating this year.

Paddy is survived by his wife Pauline, loving daughter Niamh, and son Brian.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Colette Maher –

Coláiste Pobail Móinín na gCíseach, Gaillimh.



Fr. Michael McNamara **An appreciation**

There was no experience in life that prepared us for the devastating news of Fr Michael McNamara's untimely call to his reward. Maybe God recognised his huge contribution to this planet to-date which was more than most of us would ever achieve. It is difficult to understand such a Divine plan.

Fr Mac was chaplain/teacher in St. Patricks Comprehensive School, Shannon from 1974 – 2001. I was privileged to have spent almost a quarter of a century working with him in the above school where he was everyone's friend. His calm, pleasant and supportive manner influenced us greatly. His presence in the school was like a warm summer breeze constantly blowing, delighting both staff and students. He was an extremely intelligent man which he personally did not acknowledge but was often apparent at staff meetings when his quiet wisdom diffused an outburst of nonsense from the floor! Fr Mac was a committed TUI member. At the meetings of the Shannon Branch of the TUI his wisdom, guidance and desire to improve teachers' pay and conditions was always evident.

Like all of us Fr Mac had four sections in his heart, comprising of deep faith, serenity, compassion and love. It is ironic that that same heart so pure should be his downfall in the end. With a smile I say he had not an aggressive rib on his head. I never saw an expression of frustration, stress or weariness on his brow, he was constantly in control with enviable ease.

The number of students whose weddings he officiated at is evidence of their affections for him and his popularity in the classroom and as their mentor. I have warm memories of his Masses in the lecture theatre where he always added a most appropriate personal thought. A very reassuring spiritual experience as his soft Clare accent and his pleasant speaking voice soothed us into a feeling of tranquillity.

Fr Mac loved Gaelic sport and his input into same was admirable. He was a driving force in the promotion of camogie, hurling and gaelic football in the school and was central to the annexation of camogie and hurling titles at Senior All-Ireland levels as well as many titles in Clare and Munster Colleges level. No doubt it pleased him greatly to see many of his students reaching the Clare Senior Team and Croke Park when Clare were on the crest of the GAA wave. Mulaim thu.

This is an appreciation of Fr Mac in "The Comp". The local papers elaborated on his uniqueness, good works and his input into sport as a pastor in the diocese of Killaloe. His popularity was evident by the people queuing for hours to bid farewell to a man they obviously cherished.

To Fr Mac's family, his many friends, the GAA community, his clerical fraternity, my own teaching colleagues and Shannon Branch of TUI, I express my heartfelt sympathy.

Solas na Bhflaitheas ort, a Mhichil, ni bheidh a leithead ann aris.

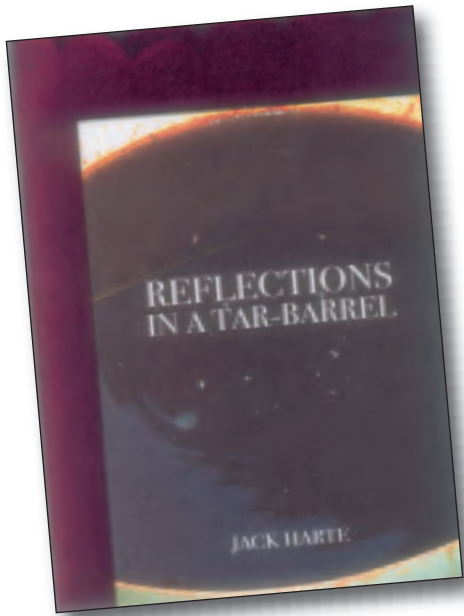
Monica Kavanagh RMA

Book Review

Reflections In A Tar-Barrel *By Jack Harte*

SCOTUS PRESS. S.B €11.95

Reviewed by Frank O' Carroll



Jack Harte's latest novel –Reflections In A Tar-Barrel - heralds an exciting new direction in the work of this accomplished writer. The much-acclaimed short story writer turned novelist revisits Tireragh, his familiar, fictional terrain in the person of Lofty – surely one of the most memorable characters to emerge from recent fiction.

For this once dim-witted, later street-smart survivor who began making his livelihood by selling religious items to the farming community and subsequently catering for the sexual needs of its bachelors, life and death are vexing conundrums he tries to unriddle, extracting from the ripples and reflections in a tar-barrel a raft of meditations that bring to mind the epiphanies inspired by Plato's mythic cave.

To the big metaphysical questions he poses, feasible by his own, sometimes esoteric criteria, are his conclusions. A flawed world he attributes, not to the

blind watchmaker of Dawkins' Evolution, but to a Creator who has more in common with the Gnostic demiurge than with the Christian God.

Nor does he entertain the possibility of a Fall. Instead he engages in an on-going feud with the "jealous, homage seeking," Creator who "probably made us all... with some deficiency so we could never be happy in this Garden of Eden", heaping upon him a catalogue of grievances for the hand he was given. "A Halloween turnip of a head, small, fat, awkward and with a defective friggin' brain." His rejection by his mother (a teacher) and the recurring trauma of his father's suicide add up to a grim CV that would have crushed lesser spirits..

In curious contrast are his sympathy for Jesus and his reverence- a reflection of the community's- for his mother whom he envisages one day "calling a halt to the Creator's wilful games."

The Tireragh that an anti-clerical, semi-literate Lofty initially does business with reflects in many ways the Ireland of the moving Statues and an earlier one of the Redemptorists' fire and brimstone missions. A gullible culture, with a disproportionate belief in miracles and a scepticism about science, it provides a fruitful outlet for Lofty's profitable ploy for the promotion of Marian worship, using his van as a mobile shrine.

To the one-time, local yokel is soon attributed unwittingly the miraculous curing of cattle and a thriving farming worthy of the Greek goddess Demeter.

To this unsuspecting community bereft of young women, Lofty introduces at the

suggestion of a friend, the pretty Michelle, a prostitute he rescues from Paris where she was being brutally exploited. "Jesus, Lofty, if you can work miracles, you'll get us a woman...just for one night."

To his credit, Lofty's venture comes with some moral baggage. "My scruples would not have allowed me to involve married men...What I feel was right was to bring the warmth of a woman to those who never experienced it."

Torn between his love for her and having to share her with a clientele she positively transforms, his brief, rapturous experience of love is cut short by clerical intervention. Her departure and his resultant, tragic end is the stuff of high if unusual romance.

In this, his second novel, Harte engages with many of the pressing issues besetting contemporary Ireland. The problems of suicide, sex-trafficking, the changing face of religion and the decline of communities like Tireragh, come within his radar. The drawbacks arising from illiteracy and the fall-out from a seriously dysfunctional family like Lofty's underpin a stark reality for many.

Written in a pacy, colloquially catchy style, this thought-provoking novel with its well-drawn characters, and its lyrical evocation of Sligo's stunning scenery, makes for a compulsive read that is not without its hilarious moments.

A benchmark for Scotus Press.

Jack Harte is a former principal of Lucan Comprehensive School.

Curriculum and Assessment at Second Level

Earlier this year the Minister for Education and Science, Mr Batt O’Keeffe, highlighted a number of priorities for development in post-primary education. In particular, he emphasised that the junior cycle curriculum and assessment are in need of review and reconfiguration to reflect the fundamental principles of education and to take account of best practice internationally. He also indicated that some developments that had been underway at Senior Cycle (new subjects and curriculum frameworks etc) may be delayed due to the current crisis in public finances. However, he committed to advancing the programme of reform in maths, science and Irish.

Junior Cycle Reform

While a number of subjects in the junior cycle programme have already been rebalanced and others are undergoing this process, to address overlap and overload, this initiative will involve a much more fundamental and strategic reform of the junior cycle programme, the associated curriculum and syllabuses and the assessment of students.

The TUI broadly welcomes this initiative and sees it as an opportunity to make the junior cycle experience more relevant to the educational needs of young people in a modern society. However, the union believes that any reforms proposed must be driven by an educational perspective, preserving the intrinsic value of education and keeping the personal and public good to the fore. Any reforms proposed must not be an opportunistic exercise to save money in the short-term. Some decisions about the future shape of the junior cycle may indeed lead to savings, while others may or may not require a higher level of investment. This might especially be the case if the national commitment to promoting inclusion and retention, at what is a critical time of transition for young people, is to be strengthened - an issue high on the union’s list of priorities.

In keeping with its core role to advise the Minister on curriculum and assessment the NCCA (on which the three teacher unions participate alongside other stakeholders in education) is currently developing an initial discussion paper. This will be submitted to the Minister by December of this year and form the basis for wider consultation early

next year with all the stakeholders - teachers, parents, students, business interests, community interests, educational management bodies and organisations and the teacher unions.

At the Council meeting in November a number of ideas and issues for inclusion in the discussion paper were identified. These fall under broad areas such as curriculum, assessment, qualifications and the actual experience of the junior cycle by students. When one begins to delve into the idea of reform and reconfiguration a plethora of questions emerge, some more challenging than others!

Maths and Science

Under Project Maths the 24 pilot schools are continuing to advance changes to the curriculum components and syllabus. Resources for Strand 1 - Statistics and Probability and Strand 2 - Geometry and Trigonometry have now circulated. The State Examinations ran a trial of the new Leaving Certificate Paper 2 in the 24 schools in October. A report of the trial will issue shortly including examples of student work. Following the report sample papers at each level will be published. In the meantime in preparation for the extension of the pilot to all schools

The Junior Cycle Reform: some questions floating around at the moment

- What is good about the current system that we should keep?
- Is the current junior cycle still fit for purpose - is it relevant enough for the 21st century and beyond?
- Is there too much emphasis on content and not enough on skills and knowledge?
- What aspects of the current system are not working well and why?
- What kind of change would make the junior cycle experience better?
- What should or could change in the programme, the curriculum, each subject?
- What will happen to the current suite of subjects; will an unhealthy hierarchy emerge or is that already with us?
- Why do students need to take so many subjects in the junior certificate examination?
- What is the main function of the current junior certificate examination; is the exam crowding out other 'more useful' things; is it having too much influence on what is taught and how it is taught?
- Would a different model of assessment be more appropriate, better, fairer?
- How could students be assessed differently?
- If there was different models of assessment used what additional skills could be assessed?
- What is it young people need to know when they finish junior cycle -what basic skills and competencies are essential at this stage of life and why?
- What are the risks and opportunities involved in a radical overhaul of the junior cycle and how can these be managed?
- When might changes be agreed and implemented?
- How will teachers and other staff be supported to implement any changes agreed?

AND

- Whose idea is this anyway -why change what’s working for most students?

Let us know what you think – via your branch or directly to head office.

See www.ncca.ie for other details on this important work. You might also find it helpful to check out the reports from the longitudinal study conducted by the ESRI tracking some 900 students as they moved through second level and mapping their experiences. Details can be found on the NCCA website and also on the ESRI website.

professional development support is rolling out to maths teachers in all schools during 2009 and 2010.

Teachers' feedback has been mixed. On the one hand the majority are positive and enthusiastic about maths becoming more accessible, relevant and interesting given the strong emphasis on problem solving and interactive teaching/learning methods. On the other hand many have concerns about the lack of access to appropriate ICT and other general facilities. They are also concerned that those with 'more resources' will have access to 'better supports' – ultimately this will place some students at a disadvantage vis a vis others. Of particular concern is access to sufficient in-service and the general pace and extent of change.

The NCCA has commenced work with the 12 schools selected to examine possible approaches to introducing a second assessment component in science subjects (leaving certificate). The work will consider the potential of a number of methods exploring the pitfalls and strengths as well as resource and logistical issues. More details will become available early in 2010. Again many teachers are positively predisposed to the introduction of a second assessment component into the leaving certificate science examinations. But concerns abound. The experience of the junior certificate has left many teachers concerned that an adequate level of resources (technical support, facilities, planning time) will not be provided to ensure a model of assessment that is most appropriate to the learning to be tested and the nature of the leaving certificate examination.

Irish

Circular Letter 0042/2007 (Department of Education and Science) sets out changes to the examination of Irish in the State Examinations in the Junior Certificate from June 2010 and the Leaving Certificate from 2012 (see www.education.ie). The TUI, among other stakeholders, objected to the unilateral nature of the decision taken by the then Minister for Education and Science. However, it supported the principle of aligning a greatest proportion of marks to oral skills and sought formal engagement with the Department on a wide number of issues relating to the implementation of the new arrangements.

In May 2009 representation was made to the current Minister (Minister Batt O' Keffe) advising that plans to implement the new arrangements should be delayed due to the lack of progress on agreeing how implementation could proceed and the general lack of resources available.

Notwithstanding this plans to implement continued.

It is imperative that members abide by the union directive not to conduct oral tests until arrangements acceptable to teachers and adequate resources are agreed. The directive issued to all schools in October and is also posted on the TUI website.

With particular reference to the junior certificate examinations in 2010 changes to the proportion of marks to be aligned to the various exam components (oral, aural, written) did not require significant change to the junior cycle Irish syllabus. However, as the Minister has decided to proceed with implementation despite lack of agreement with the teacher unions changes to the examination instruments are required. Schools were notified in mid October of changes to the written paper to reflect the revised weighting aligned to written, aural and oral skills.

A number of members have been in contact with this office to indicate that the changes set out in the sample examination papers and accompanying circular are significant. In particular, some feel that the manner in which grammar is being emphasised was unexpected and may run counter to current classroom practice in addressing the aims and objectives of the syllabus. Consequently they believe teachers should have been made fully aware of the extent of the changes, and provided with sample papers, at a much earlier stage, in order to adjust their classroom practice in the best interest of students.

The TUI has already raised this matter with the State Examinations Commission and the Department of Education and Science and correspondence has issued to all branches and schools/centres. If you have concerns in relation to the sample papers please provide immediate feedback to the State Examinations Commission (Chief Examiner for Irish) and to this office for the attention of the Education and Research Officer.

All of the above developments are significant as are others that will continue to move along albeit at a slower pace. It is important that the teacher unions engage in the widest possible discussion with their members on these issues to ensure the views of the professional educators are to the forefront as debate and developments proceed. Accordingly, a Discussion Seminar will take place on Saturday, 16th January 2010 to which all TUI representatives on NCCA Committees will be invited. Members involved in the pilot phase of

Curriculum and Assessment Discussion Seminar

All Union Representatives on NCCA Committees
Members involved in NCCA Maths and Science School Networks

**Saturday, 30th January 2010,
10.00am – 2.00pm**

Watch out for the written notice which will carry final detail of the venue and programme which will issue by post shortly.

project maths and the exploration of the second assessment component for science subjects will also be invited. This seminar may take place jointly with our sister union the ASTI and written notice will issue shortly.

Vacancies on NCCA Committees

Each year a number of vacancies arise on NCCA Committees. It is important that the TUI always has its full complement of two representatives on these committees so that the views of practising teachers and the union are heard. Current vacancies are as follows:

Junior Cycle Course Committees

Subject	Vacancies
English	1
French	2
German	1
Italian	1
Spanish	1
Irish	1
Home Economics	1

Senior Cycle Course Committees

Subject	Vacancies
Agricultural Economics	1
Physics	1
French	1
Home Economics	1
Spanish	1
Technology	1
History	1

Board of Studies

Arts and Humanities	Vacancies
Social, Personal and Health Education	1

See the TUI website for full details on the role and responsibilities involved. Nominations are normally made through local branches so watch out for correspondence which will arrive in schools/centres in the near future.

RMA News

On Friday 6th November I swapped the centre of O'Connell Street, Dublin for the centre of O'Connell Street, Sligo for the march in favour of a better, fairer way. The estimate for the march in Sligo was 5,000 and the atmosphere was very determined but good humoured. You would have received a letter from our General Secretary inviting you to participate in a march in your area. It is very important that we support our Union in their fight on our behalf. As pensioners we are intrinsically linked into the salary of serving teachers, any cut in teachers pay affects us as it will result in a cut in our pension. There are rumours - and only rumours - that the pension would not be cut but only on condition that the link between pension and pay was broken. At a recent Management meeting of RMA we have taken the position that we are opposed to the severance of the link between current pay and pension. It may seem attractive in the short term but it would be disastrous in the long term.

Many members are concerned about the income levy and the health levy (K1 class PRS). After retirement and up to the age of seventy you have to pay the health levy of 4%. When you reach the age of seventy you are no longer liable for this levy whether you have the medical card or not. The income levy is payable by all except those who have the medical card. If you have returned your card because you are over the limit you are now liable for the levy, however for this group the levy will only come into effect next year.

I know that many members are depressed about the current financial situation, but nothing is to be gained by



TERRY AND BETTY LAYTON CELEBRATE THEIR SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

being depressed or allowing ourselves to get depressed. I know of people who have decided to listen less to the radio or television or read more interesting books and get out for fresh air and have found it very helpful in the present climate.

There was no depression on our recent outing to Cork. Dora could not be with us but her influence certainly was felt with the weather we had, on the 6th, 7th and 8th October it was better than any day we had in the summer. On the 7th we went to Fota House where we had a wonderful guided tour of the house followed by fresh scones and coffee. From Fota we went to Cobh and the Titanic Museum which is self guided and is most interesting and informative. After the Titanic we went to the Cathedral. This is a magnificent building and is in great condition and with the blue sky it really looked at its best. It has forty nine bells and we heard some of them as they strike every fifteen minutes. During dinner that night we celebrated the sixtieth wedding anniversary of Terry and Betty Layton. After a day in Cork which has been nominated one of the ten best cities in Europe and an early dinner we went to the Opera House where Tony

Christie was giving of his best which was too loud for some of us. Tony Christie is the main star at the National Concert Hall on this coming New Year's Eve so we got something right!

You may have read recently about the controversy regarding retired teachers continuing to teach. Most of the coverage dealt with primary school teachers, however it also applies to second and indeed third level teachers too. At a recent Management Committee meeting we adopted a position which is that priority should be give at all times to fully qualified teachers for whom teaching is their primary source of employment. This does not mean that there are no circumstances when a retired teacher may take a teaching position perhaps for a short period or in the absence of a qualified teacher. Retired teachers are eligible for examination work.

We are finalising the arrangements for our Spring break and details will be sent to you soon.

Christy Conville

FETAC National Awards *Please let us know your comments and views!*

Work on developing national standards for FETAC Awards is moving ahead. FETAC will continue to invite all interested parties to provide feedback at critical stages of development. Details of awards at consultation stage are normally available on their website so it is advisable to keep an eye on it. Many of you may be involved in providing feedback on awards in your area through your school, college, centre or employer. The TUI will also be providing some comments to FETAC on issues of interest to its members e.g. mix of minor awards in a major award, flexibility, access to third level courses, balance between general education and specific knowledge. Your comments, as the expert practitioner, are important to inform our views. Please let us know what you think through your area representative, your branch or directly to the Education and Research Officer.

Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)

Giving students a voice by Niall Dennehy, General Secretary and Leanne Caulfield, President.



The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (or ISSU as it is more commonly known), aims to give students a voice in their education and in issues that affect them. ISSU connects students nationwide and is the national umbrella body for second-level school Student Councils. ISSU's aims include:

- To provide a transparent, democratic and reliable organisation;
- To provide training and development for second level Student Councils, in conjunction with relevant bodies;
- To develop policies on issues affecting Irish second-level students and bring the needs and rights of students to the attention of the relevant authorities;
- To work in collaboration with other educational institutions and bodies both in Ireland, and Europe;
- To work closely with educational policy makers including curriculum bodies and teacher unions to continually develop a transparent, fair and modern education system;
- And most importantly, to give students a structured platform through which the voice of the Irish second-level students will be heard.

One of ISSU's biggest projects for 2009/2010 is the national rollout of the organisation and the ISSU Scholar Card. The Scholar Card is a dedicated second-level student ID card, providing students with access to hundreds of discounts as well as offering them proof of age for public transport etc. The response so far has been incredible. For more information visit www.studentcard.ie or email scholar@issu.ie

ISSU engages with the TUI on issues affecting students and key areas of mutual interest. Over the upcoming months, especially during tougher economic times – ISSU and the TUI will stand strong, fighting against any potential education cutbacks... cutbacks affecting our future. It is fundamentally unjust to take any more from the education sector; we've given too much and have little left to give.

ISSU is currently in the process of putting together a mailing, containing more detailed information on the organisation as well as the scholar card project, to be sent to all second-level schools and centres of education nationwide.

For further information see www.issu.ie or email the ISSU team at info@issu.ie



Congratulations to the recent winners of the monthly draw.

August 2009	J. McDermott, Dublin	€1,500
	O. Delahunty, Dublin	€1,000
	C. McDaniel, Dublin	€500
September 2009	W. Wood, Wexford	€1,500
	F. Walsh, Dublin	€1,000
	N. Johnston, Dublin	€500
October 2009	P. Fahey, Kildare	€1,500
	F. Walsh, Dublin	€1,500
	T. Ó Séaghdha, Dublin	€500

Please contact the Credit Union Office – 01 426 6060 – if you would like to take part in the monthly draw. €5 a month will be deducted from your account.

As usual in December a “Christmas Car” will also be part of the draw.

Please note that the A.G.M. of the TUI Credit Union will be held on Friday 11th December 2009 at 8.00 p.m. The venue is the Clarion Hotel beside the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre in west Dublin. All members and friends are welcome.

In recent months some board members have been visiting schools and colleagues around the country promoting the credit union. We are very appreciative of the friendliness and hospitality that is being shown to us. The principals, deputy principals and school reps have been very kind and helpful. It seems to me that staffrooms throughout the country are very much the same – full of busy, multi-tasking, stressed yet very good humoured and caring teachers.

Wishing all our teachers, their students and families a very happy Christmas.

Le mór mheas agus dea-ghuí,

Eileen Clancy, Marketing/Promotions sub-committee.



