**LIMERICK LEADER SATURDAY JANUARY 3 2015** 

Monday and travel to

Israel and occupied

Palestine to spend three

months there working

as a human rights

first-hand experience.

will be his first time

working in the field

and he admitted to

a certain amount of

trepidation in taking on

and to stand with local

"Ultimately

and Palestine

the challenge.

"Obviously

monitor.

From the Feale

# Swapping the turkey and ham for the fresh fish of Zambia

Martina will work with local council officials to improve their financial systems

NORMA PRENDIVILLE

CHRISTMAS 2014 is one that Ryan Doyle, from Newcastle West, will remember for many years to come.

She spent it in Zambia, where she arrived a month ago to spend a year as a VSO volunteer.

"Arriving in Zambia December 1, I wasn't focused on how I would spend Christmas but it was in the back of my mind that it would be a very different one," she told the Limerick Leader this week. "I had Christmas with another Irish volunteer on the same programme as me along with some Peace Corp Volunteers.

"So the spirit of Christmas was there, the difference being the weather and the food. Somehow putting on a T-shirt and sandals in December doesn't give you that Christmas feel! '

And the food too was different, fresh fish with rice and vegetables instead of turkey and ham.

"Of course I missed all my family and friends in Ireland but I didn't feel alone," she added. "It was an unique Christmas and one I will look back on with fond memories in the years to come."

Martina is the daughter of Nora Mary and Tony Doyle, and grew up in Newcastle West and in Coolanoran, Ardagh. She attended Scoil Mhuire agus Ide and is a BSC graduate of UCC. She is also a qualified accountant and also holds further qualifications in Applied Management Practice and in Training and Educational Design and Pedagogy. She has worked as a finance manager with leading



Martina Ryan Doyle pictured before she left for Zambia in early December

Cork and the UK.

And her mission in Zambia is to pass on some of those skills to local authority officials there. She will be working as a financial management

pharmaceutical company, GSK in advisor with five local councils in the Northern Province, helping them to improve the performance of the council and to provide a quality service. "In the area of

finance this means strengthening

the development of and adherence to financial practices in the council to ensure prudent and disciplined management resources," Martina explained.

"In the same manner as our local county councils in Ireland, these local /district councils are the most accessible form of government to people in the local community and how they access basic services, therefore they have an immediate impact on the day to day lives of people and poor governance inhibits service delivery," Martina

Stressing that the role of the VSO volunteer is not to do the work of their counterpart or "tell" them what to do but rather to advise, to share skills and develop capacity, she pointed out that this approach ensured sustainability.

"It creates a strong foundation for the work to continue long after the volunteer has left placement," she said.

And it was this approach, of building lasting and sustainable change, which impressed and drew Martina to VSO in the first place.

She also liked the fact that VSO placements offer volunteers the chance to use the skills from their own area of expertise.

"Being made redudant in August 2014 allowed me the opportunity to seriously consider taking time out to purse this opportunity and when I looked into it at that time there was a role to suit my skills and experience and the timing was right," Martina explained.

"I love to travel and experience different cultures so this opportunity also allows me to

use my knowledge, skills and experience in a different cultural

The next year is going to be challenging but it is one I am relishing," she said.

At any one time, over 3,000 VSO volunteers from across the globe are working at the coal-face of international development. They work in government ministries, NGOs, regional health bureaus, teacher training colleges and teaching hospitals making sure that no part of a system is left unaffected.

The goal is not simply to deal with the effects of a problem but to look at the root causes and seek solutions that will bring about longterm change.

"Volunteers are the heart and soul of our work as a development organisation. From experience, we know that when volunteers live and work in communities, sustainable change occurs," said VSO Ireland executive director, Gerry Thompson.

VSO volunteers are achieving dramatic outcomes such as 65% reduction in neo-natal mortality rates in Ethiopia, 94,000 trained teachers and more than 1 million people accessing better quality healthcare services globally last year, Mr Thompson added.

VSO works in 32 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, mentoring and training local professions. It urgently requires doctors, teachers, principals, midwives and finance managers to volunteer in 2015.

For more information go to www.

### to West Bank NORMA PRENDIVILLE A YOUNG Abbeyfeale man is preparing this week to swap the banks of the Feale for the West Bank. Maurice Cotter will leave Abbeyfeale next

Maurice Cotter, who will travel to the West Bank

And on his return, he plans to be available encouraging solidarity with them around to schools and other groups, reporting on his the world, and I think that's powerful But Maurice, at 26, is way of opposing the no stranger to the world occupation and the human rights violations of human rights. A law graduate from UL, he which go with it,'

also holds an MA in Maurice said. Crucially, however, he pointed out, EAPPI International Human Rights law from UCG and has developed his is based on principled impartiality expertise with stints doesn't take sides in the with the International Criminal Tribunal for conflict. "I don't think the former Yugoslavia, of myself as being pro-Israeli or pro-Palestine. with the Department of Foreign Affairs and with We are pro human rights and international Amnesty International. But, he told the Limerick Leader, this humanitarian law."

But EAPPI does have a clearly defined vision which is "a future in which the occupation of Palestine has ended and both Palestinians and Israelis enjoy a just peace with freedom and security based on

daunting to be going to the West Bank, international law". In preparation for his especially in the current political context, which three-month mission, is slightly volatile," he Maurice underwent an intensive training said. "But I'm excited to meet with Palestinian course which included and Israeli peace a lot about the history activists, to support of the area and of the them in whatever way I conflict but also about security measures.

can, and to help amplify their voices when they might not otherwise be The job itself, he said, entails tasks such as accompanying Maurice will work children to school and Ecumenical monitoring the actions Accompaniment, or EA, of Israeli soldiers at in a programme set up by the World Council of check-points control movement in the West Bank. He Churches in 2002. The will also be expected key principles of EAPPI or the Ecumenical to record and report on any human rights Accompaniment Programme in Palestine violations he witnesses and Israel, are to provide or any incidents of a protective presence, violence perpetrated by monitor human Israeli settlers or house rights violations, to be demolitions by the advocates for change, Israeli authorities.

will Maurice peace and human rights to share available his experience and programme is about groups can invite him by emailing maurice. communities in Israel cotter.eappi@gmail.

his

return,

On

## Limerick representative sought for Rose of Tralee 2015

LEADER REPORTER

GIRLS from Limerick are being sought to represent the county in this year's Rose of Tralee.

Limerick has not had a Rose in Tralee for seven years, with the entry process proving competitive. However, the organisers of Limerick's Rose of Tralee campaign

are hoping 2015 will be the

breakthrough year. Current Rose Dawn Ryan said that despite the disappointment of not making Tralee, the "whole

experience has been unforgettable. The people I have met, the causes I have helped and the friends I have made, have made this

Sheehy 'honoured'

at Sean South nod

the most rewarding experience you can imagine and I would encourage any girl to get involved."

The Meelick woman, a care worker with Enable Ireland in Mungret, attended many functions during her stint and will travel to Belarus with Adi Roches's Chernobyl Children's Trust along with many of her fellow Roses and Escorts in February. She will also travel to New York as the Limerick Rose for the annual St. Patrick's Day parade this coming March.

Sixty Roses were interviewed over three nights last June before two judging panels selected 23 Roses to go forward to the festival in Tralee. Denis Griffin, organiser

of the Limerick Rose Centre, said at the time that the strict selection process was "not unfair".

"Obviously we'd love to have our Rose in Tralee, but if we thought the process was unfair we'd speak out about it," he said. "It's not that this is a slight against Limerick. God help the three judges who have to choose 23 Roses out of 60. It's a lottery, and we make this very clear to all the girls who enter that this is the process," he added.

The 2015 Limerick Rose will receive a whole host of prizes and "gain valuable experience as ambassador for Limerick". To find out more call 087-1474100 or email limerickrosecentre@yahoo.com.



Dawn Ryan, 2014 Limerick Rose, with Stacey McNamara, wedding co-ordinator at the Radisson Blu Hotel and Conor Walsh, Newbridge Silverware Escort of the Year, launching the search for a Rose of Tralee for 2015

# Local reaches out to exiles in California

NICK RABBITTS

LIMERICK's youngest councillor Lisa-Marie Sheehy says she is "honoured" at being asked to address the Sean South commemoration this weekend.

Sinn Fein councillor Sheehy, 21, is to be the main speaker at the 2015 Sean Sabhat commemoration which takes place in the city this Sunday from 2.45pm.

From there, the march will go to the Republican plot at Mount St Lawrence where the Garryowen man is laid to rest.

The Cappamore/Kilmallock councillor is busy preparing her speech ahead of the event, and said she did not expect to be asked by local party leader, Cllr Maurice Quinlivan.

"As such a young person, I was honoured to be asked to speak at such an amazing commemoration. Maurice actually gave me the call, and it was unexpected. I want to do it right, and do it justice," she told the Limerick Leader.

Cllr Quinlivan, who chairs the commemoration, said: "It was decided at the organising meeting that she would speak, as she is representing the way the party is going, in particular attracting young women and young people in general. We thought it would be a good opportunity to speak on that issue, and speak on why she went into politics. It will hopefully encourage other people to get involved in politics. If you look at the recent opinion polls, our core vote is coming from the under On this note, Cllr Sheehy

said she will use her speech to look to the future.

"It is a New Year. We need to move forward, and work together in creating an equal Ireland, and one which we can actually be proud of. The austerity is completely weighing down on the pride of the country," she said.

previous years, Republican Sinn would hold their annual commemoration ahead of

Sinn Fein's parade. However, it is unclear whether this movement will

march this year. The Sinn Fein-led parade

on-Suir Republican Flute

will be headed by the Carrick-

throughout Southern California.

All are welcome to attend.

he has put his heart and soul into helping the Irish community there. Stephen Aherne, from Towerhill, was appointed to the important role of executive director of Irish Outreach in San Diego last march when he was just 30. It is the Irish Immigration Centre representing all of

DONAL O'REGAN

LOVE brought a Cappamore man

to the west coast of America and

Southern California. The son of Joe and Kay Aherne has had a busy few months in his role especially with President Barack Obama's proposals to let immigrants who have had children in the US to remain there temporarily, without the threat of deportation. Undocumented residents who have been there for five years can apply legally for jobs and

to vote. The non-profit organisation serves approximately 2,000 Irish citizens every year including many from County Limerick in San Diego, Los Angeles and

join American society, but not

"We assist a number of undocumented Irish, including a small number from Limerick in the Los Angeles area. Life is difficult when undocumented in the US but Obama's recent



Stephen Aherne with wife Lindsey and an Irish Wolfhound at a Christmas party for deprived children in San Diego organised by Irish Outreach

executive action does offer hope to those who will qualify for relief under it," said Stephen.

They also help the vulnerable and elderly in the Irish community and assist many students,

"We have served a number of people from Limerick. In summer time an estimated 1,200

students travel to San Diego on J1 visas with many being from our own county. We assist these students with finding jobs and accommodation, opening bank accounts, applying for social security cards, connecting them with our San Diego GAA clubs and generally helping them to

we assist with all the issues that arise, both major and minor, with potential dangers in nearby Tijuana, Mexico, a particular concern of ours.

"As the summer progresses,

"We have built up an exceptional network of contacts including doctors, attorney, senior police figures, diplomats and the Red Cross should any Irish citizens find themselves in distress down there," said Stephen, who studied Law and Irish in UCC before completing a Masters in European and Comparative Law in UL. He travelled to San Diego in 2010 on a one year graduate intern visa where he met his now wife Lindsey.

"When my visa expired I returned home to Limerick and we continued a long distance relationship with Lindsey visiting Ireland in the summer and me spending Christmas in San Diego. In August 2013, moved back to San Diego permanently so we could be together, and in August 2014 we got married in The Dunraven Arms, Adare," said Stephen.

This December they ran charitable initiative called Irish You a Merry Christmas with the Irish community joining together to put on a magical Irish festive event for over 250 children living in San

Diego's shelters and transient accommodation.

The collaboration between Irish Outreach and San Diego's GAA clubs proved a huge success with every child getting a Christmas present and meeting NFL great John Carney, who even tried his hand at hurling.

One hundred volunteers served Christmas dinner to all the guests. Even Santa Claus was Irish for the day as he brought an Irish Wolfhound to give Rudolph a break

"Seeing the joy on the children's faces made all the hard work worthwhile. It was wonderful to see how the Irish community worked so hard on this. It was great to give something back to this wonderful city that has given such a warm welcome to the Irish community over the years, said Stephen.

Irish Outreach also actively promote business and tourism in Ireland. They are part funded from a grant from the Irish Consulate in San Francisco but mostly depend on fundraising. They aim to spread the fundraising net this year to Ireland to help them carry out their good works Stateside.

For more on Stephen and Irish Outreach's work log onto www. irishoutreachsd.org

## If you want to drink, that's your business

If you want to stop that's ours

mobile 085-2406867 land line 061-311222

qso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie 01-8420700

#### Work on dangerous bridge to be done by April knocked down. Locals have water services and environment, Limerick Leader voicing their

told the meeting that he has

experienced this himself on a

"I was stopped at a red light.

settle into life in San Diego.

DONAL O'REGAN

WORKS are to be completed on a dangerous bridge in County Limerick by March/April heard a meeting of the Cappamore/ Kilmallock municipal area.

Commuters travelling on the main road between Kilmallock and Charleville are experiencing delays at the single lane stopand-go system at Garrienderk bridge.

Due to a number of collisions over the years, a large section of Garrienderk Bridge has been

been left annoyed at the delay in repairing it and fear that an accident will occur. Brian Kennedy, municipal area

operations manager, informed councillors that "by March/April time the bridge should be up and running again". Mr Kennedy said an engineer

has been appointed. Cllr Lisa Marie Sheehy said those living locally have told

her that some motorists are not obeying the traffic lights. Kieran Lehane, director of

A car came around us and went over the bridge, If a motorist came from the far side of the bridge.. I was shocked. It was appalling," said Mr Lehane.

visit to the site.

Cllr Sheehy said this is happening a lot from her with local conversations residents.

Cllr Bill O'Donnell proposed that the gardai be asked to do a

patrol there for half an hour a day to catch motorists carrying out these illegal manoeuvres.

Cllr Sheehy said this was a good idea and word would get around that gardai were keeping a close eye on it.

"The last thing we want is for an accident to occur from these

safety measure," said Cllr Sheehy. Mr Kennedy said the traffic lights are the lesser of two evils because of how dangerous the bridge is in its currents state.

At the beginning of December local residents contacted the

anger at the situation.

Joe Power said: "When I'm

coming down, people think I am passing out the traffic lights but I'm actually indicating to go into my own place. There will be an accident there. For the last couple of years, we have been trying to tidy up Garrienderk and we have a nice tidy job made of it. We have been left down now. There are more than us annoyed by it - if you asked anyone going to the mart in Kilmallock, they will say the same."