

Kate O'Reilly

WHAT'S ON

■ **COFFEE MORNING:** Monkstown Golf Club in Co Cork, are holding a coffee morning in aid of Marymount Hospice, on Thursday next, February 3 from 10am. All are welcome and there are lots of prizes to give away on the day.

■ **FASHION SHOW:** A fashion show will take place in aid of Cork Simon Community on Wednesday next, February 3, at 8pm in Vienna Woods Hotel, Cork. Tickets are €5 and are available on the door. Call the fundraising office at Cork Simon Community on 021-4929410.

■ **FREE CLASSES:** Jeff Gonet gives a free Hatha Yoga class at Unity Yoga, Patrick's Hill, Cork, every Thursday from 5pm to 6pm. On Mondays there is a relaxation class from 11am to 12 noon — the first class is free and on Tuesdays there is a pilates class with Angela Hanon and again, the first class is free. For more, see unity-yoga.net/current-class-timetable/ or call 086 3014428.

■ **SPORTING LUNCHEON:** Irish charity Fighting Blindness will hold its annual sporting luncheon on Friday next February 4 at 12.30pm in the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin. Ahead of Ireland's opening Six Nations match against Italy and the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup, RTE's Des Cahill will be joined by stars from Irish sport including Shane Byrne and Mick Galwey. Funds raised through this event are crucial to support the charity's research projects for the cure and treatment of blindness in Ireland where over 100,000 people are affected by conditions such as Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Diabetic Retinopathy and Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP).

To reserve a table, call Elaine on 01-709 3050. Further information is available at www.fightingblindness.ie.

■ **HEART CLINIC:** The Irish Heart Foundation will hold free blood pressure and cholesterol testing clinics at the Irish Heart Foundation Office, 42 Penrose Wharf, Cork from 10am-12pm on Tuesday, February 1, and in Middleton at the Family Resource Centre on Wednesday, February 2, from 2.30pm-4pm.

The Irish Heart Foundation's Health Promotion Nurse, Sr Siobhan Ryan, is also available to talk to groups in Munster (ICA, active retired, men's groups, parent's associations, etc). Sr Siobhan covers subjects including stroke awareness, healthy eating, cholesterol and blood pressure and physical activity. Contact the Munster Regional Office, 021-4505822, for more details. If you have questions about stroke or heart disease you can also contact the IHF Helpline on 1890 432787.

■ **FACE AGM:** Fermoy Action Children's Education (FACE) is a voluntary group set up to provide support services for children with dyslexia, dyspraxia and other specific learning difficulties. Their AGM is on Wednesday next, February 2, at 7.30pm in the Fermoy Community Resource Centre. All welcome. Call FACE on 087-2278459 or email facefermoy@gmail.com

Items for inclusion in this column can be sent to koreilly8@gmail.com

A salt-based treatment for asthma has helped Irish celebrity Twink, get back to full health, writes **Arlene Harris**

Breathing easily

ALMOST half a million adults in Ireland suffer from asthma. This condition, which causes patients to feel short of breath and wheezy, is debilitating but can also be life threatening. Adele King (aka Twink) knows how dangerous the condition can be. Last year was rushed to hospital with a chronic asthma attack which doctors believed could have been fatal. Luckily for the TV and theatre star, her breathing was stabilised and she continues to manage her asthma on a daily basis.

One of the factors which she says has helped her to control the condition is her attendance at the Salt Cave in Maynooth. This therapeutic 'cave' is in fact a room with the physical atmosphere of a Siberian salt mine. The particles of salt which permeate the room penetrate the chest causing mucus to be removed from the lungs.

"I had a chronic asthma attack and thought I was going to die," recalls Twink. "I spent four weeks in hospital then went to the Salt Cave in Maynooth.

"The salt therapy sessions brought me lots of relief and I found I could breathe more easily. It did me a great deal of good and I like the fact that it is natural and 100% drug free."

Dr Tamas Bakonyi runs the clinic with his wife Orsi. As a GP, Dr Bakonyi is quick to point out that the benefits of salt therapy should be used in conjunction with



CLOSE CALL: Twink was hospitalised last year after a chronic asthma attack.

Picture: Gareth Chaney/Collins

conventional medicine. "Salt has been used for many years to alleviate the symptoms of asthma and allergies," he says. "But the method we are using is more beneficial as instead of inhaling it through a nebuliser, the patient can sit in the room for up to an hour just breathing normally and allowing the salt

to do the work.

"We are not 100% sure how it works but it seems to suck the fluid out from the bronchial tubes allowing the patient to cough up the phlegm after the session.

"However, we wouldn't advise patients to stop using their asthma medication as the therapy should be used in conjunction with prescribed inhalers as a means of alleviating breathing problems."

The Maynooth clinic has been in operation for two years and the owner says the therapy is also gaining strength across Europe and in the US.

"A study of salt therapy on children with cystic fibrosis is currently underway in Germany and there are also clinics in Belgium and America," says Dr Bakonyi. "The climate of Ireland leaves us susceptible to breathing conditions and I am confident that this sort of therapy will become part of our health culture in the next five to 10 years."

Frances Guiney, respiratory nurse specialist with the Asthma Society of Ireland, sounds a note of caution about the treatment: "Due to the paucity of trials on the benefit of 'salt treatment' no definitive conclusions can be made as to the effectiveness of this treatment in chronic asthma. More trials with long term follow up are necessary."

■ Individual sessions cost €35 and blocks of 20 sessions cost €350. For more information visit www.saltcave.ie or call 01-6289851

HEALTH NOTES

A NEW survey by Centrum has found that 70% of people in Ireland feel that they don't have enough time in their day, with 68% of those surveyed reporting that they are too tired to do what they actually want.

Over half of women in Ireland cite housework as a contributory factor to their lack of energy, against just one in five men.

The main contributor to men's lack of energy or fatigue is their job (53%), which affects just 41% of women.

When it comes to family life, almost half of women (46%) say that their children contribute to their lack of energy, whilst the same applies to just 23% of men in Ireland.

The number of people in the Republic of Ireland living with breathing difficulties (chronic airflow obstruction) is expected to rise by 40% by 2020, according to new research by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH).

In 2007 nearly 94,000 adults had serious breathing difficulties. By 2020 this is expected to rise to over 131,000. Chronic airflow obstruction is linked with conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. These conditions are a leading, and increasing, cause of death.

The Irish Cancer Society (ICS) is seeking 25 motivated people to take on the challenge and Trek China this October (14-23) in aid of cancer research. Through reaching a fundraising target of €4,500 and walking along the Great Wall of China, you'll be



ON THEIR MARKS: Lyndsey O'Sullivan, Sinead Murphy and Kathy O'Sullivan from Bantry Bayside Joggers club at the launch of The Bay Run 2011. Picture: Gerard McCarthy

making your every step count.

For more information, visit cancer.ie/trek4life or to speak to a member of the fundraising team phone 1850-606060.

The sixth annual Bantry Bay Run takes place on Sunday, May 1. The half marathon starts from Glengarriff, along the coastal route to Bantry. Cork Senior Football captain Graham Canty and members of the Bay Run's chosen charity, the Bantry Division of the Special Olympics, turned up at the launch to support the initiative. More than 1,300 took part in Bay Run 2010. This year internationally renowned long distance run-

ner Catherina McKiernan will once again be the official starter of the run. Registration at www.bayrun.ie costs €50

Potentially deadly varieties of a common food bug found in cheese and ready meals are "uniquely adapted" to infect the heart, a study has found. The listeria strains are most likely to target people with pre-existing heart problems, or who have had heart valve replacements, say researchers. Scientists in university of Illinois, Chicago, discovered that mice infected with the strains had up to 15 times more bacteria in their hearts than those exposed to other forms of listeria.