DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN REPORTER, Tuesday, April 26, 2011

Author visits

BOOKWORMS at a primary school in Dumbarton East were treated to a special visit by a renowned Scots author.

Primary six pupils from Knoxland Primary were given a talk by Matthew Fitt, whose books include But N Ben A-Go-Go, Kate O. Shaster's Tale: And Other Poems, and Katie's Moose.

The author has lived all over the world, including Prague, New York and Sydney, but now lives in Lanarkshire.

He is a writer and teacher who goes to schools encouraging pupils and teachers to feel more confident in their use of the Scots language.

Quiz the candidates

BUSINESS and the economy will be on the agenda this week as the area's parliamentary hopefuls take to the stage in an election hustings.

By Paul John Coulter
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Fishing competition

ANGLERS in West Dunbartonshire have the chance to reel in £1,000 by taking part in a charity fishing contest.

Macmillan Cancer Support is looking to hundreds of keen fishermen and women to take part in its Big Fish competition this June.

The charity hopes to raise over £40,000 from the contest which will take place at Balloch Country Park, near Cardross or Carron Valley Reservoir, Kilsyth, on Sunday June 11, with anglers competing for a share of winning £1,000.

Bookies have their say on election result

BOOKIES have slashed the odds on a Labour election victory and on Thursday, with Labour leader Iain Gray tipped to lose his seat.

Mr Gray faces losing his East Lothian constituency according to William Hill who shortened the odds that he will lose to the SNP's David Berry from 7/1 to 5/1.

Graham Sharpe, spokesman for the bookmakers, said: "As the gamble on the SNP winning the election has gathered pace so have the suggestions that even leader Iain Gray may not be secure in his own constituency – and thus far we haven't taken a single bet of over £10 on him winning the seat."

The SNP odds were cut from 5/6 to 4/9 and Labour's chances lengthened from 5/4 to 13/8 – the first time the party has been odds against since betting on the election began.

Mr Sharpe added: "Support for Labour has virtually dried up while we are now taking four figure bets on the SNP — the largest so far is £1,000 from a Paisley punter."

The rest of the odds last week stood at Conservatives and Lib Dems at 125/1.

Man jailed after refusing to pay compensation

A MAN who pushed a lady over in nursing home chose to go to prison rather than pay her compensation.

Alexander McEwan, 63, pushed the lady at Dalmonak Nursing Home, off Renton Road, causing her to fall against a fire extinguisher which was attached to the wall.

Appearing in Dumbarton Sheriff Court on Thursday, the Dumbarton man was ordered to pay a £200 fine for the offence and £300 in compensation which was at the request of his lawyer. However after Sheriff Simon Pender delivered McEwan's sentence, the 63-year-old said: "I'd rather go to jail than pay that."

McEwan, who was found guilty of the offence which took place on June 23 last year, accepted a fine of £100 for breaching the peace on that same day, however refused the compensation payment.

McEwan, of 147 Hardenhuish Road, Cardrona, was jailed for 14 days.

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HELENSBURGH ADVERTISER, Thursday, April 28, 2011 15

Closure threatened school's green joy

A CLOSURE-threatened primary school has celebrated attaining a prestigious and highest award in a th ment scheme.

By Jenny Foulds

Green School Awards from the Children's Commissioner from the Environment.

Lus Primary, which is now in consultation to shut the school, ha end fourth Eco-Schools' Green Fl

The village school is now the fir only the third ever — in Argyll a fabulous accolade.

Mairi Fiona Phillips says the s many reasons why the school sh she cannot see any educational b school which allows her children t National Park every day.

She said: "A closure would s community as the school has done so much to attract the community in its work, for example, by developing an orienteering course for everyone to enjoy."

The flag awarded Lus pupils in a range of eco and health activities including the designing and making of an orienteering course in Eas Glen using Norway Spruce

the parents and local community at Lus have been a crucial part of our eco work.

"We couldn't have done it without their support."

In the course of their work pupils also received John Muir awards, RSPB silver and bronze awards, and two

to a maximum and it's relevant to children living in a National Park. Most people take their kids to the park for a treat but our kids play in the park every single day.

"What is the educational benefit of taking that away from them?"

Pedal power

THE NSPCC is calling on nurseries in Argyll and Bute to take part in its annual Pedal Push.

Now in its 15th year, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) says Pedal Push is a fun and easy way for pre-school aged children to raise funds for the NSPCC.

Children at nurseries, creches and playgroups can take part by being sponsored to hop on their bike, trike or scooter and pedal or push their way around a fun course at their nursery, playgroup, playground or even their local park to raise funds for the NSPCC, making a real difference to children's lives in Scotland and across the UK.

Nurseries can also choose to raise funds for their own group or cause by keeping up to 25 per cent of the money raised.

Organisers will receive a free Pedal Push pack containing a handy guide, sponsor forms, stickers, posters, a group certificate and some activity sheets.

Sarah Morley, NSPCC Scotland community fundraising manager, said: "Pedal Push is a fun and healthy way for youngsters to make a difference for other children. I hope all those children taking part have a wheely good time!"

Anybody interested should register at nspcc.org.uk/pedalpush, call 0800 101 996 or email pedalpush@nspcc.org.uk for more information.

Outdoor advice

AS people head out to enjoy the countryside this spring, NFU Scotland is asking everyone to take care around newborn lambs and calves and to be careful not to disturb them.

In particular, the union is asking people to keep dogs well away from vulnerable young and pregnant animals.

The chairman of NFU Scotland's Livestock

A copy of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and specific guidance for dog walkers can be found at: http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/

This week's hot topic on Facebook

THE Advertiser has gone interactive to find out what issues are affecting our readers.

This week we asked facebook followers:

"Is Easter becoming more about chocolate and cards than a religious celebration?"

Here are some of your responses:

Stephen Morgan: "Yes it is. If it weren't for Christmas presents and Easter eggs I doubt whether a significant part this country would have any involvement with Christianity any more."

Lynn Spencer: "The Easter bunny or rabbit comes from the hare, an ancient, pre-Christian symbol of fertility associated with spring. Anglo-Saxon mythology says Eostre changed her pet bird into a rabbit to entertain a group of children, and the rabbit laid brightly coloured eggs for them. Eastre (or Eostre) who was celebrated as the goddess of spring by the Saxons of Northern Europe. A festival called Eastre was held during the spring equinox by these people to honor her. So it's religious, just not Christian."

Trudy Atkinson: "Quite sad that this country's history is being eroded by commercialism at Easter and Christmas. You don't have to be a practicing Christian to admire the heritage we have and recognise that religion and its associated bank holidays etc had a big part to play in bringing families together."

Stephen Morgan: "Lynn, what you say of the Easter bunny is indeed correct, and the egg itself was originally symbolic of rebirth in pre-Christian society, however in its current incarnation in our country it is associated (on the whole) with Christian beliefs, although many other faiths have their different variations. Which is correct? We'll never know, but one thing is for certain and that it now seems mainly all about making profit for chocolate and card retailers. Regardless of the origin, this isn't right."

Gail Thomson: "Yes it is how many kids know the real meaning of Easter and for that matter Christmas."

To join our facebook debate on hot topics go to: www.facebook.com/helensburghadvertiser

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