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PAIRED OFF: This image of Atlantic puffins gathering nesting material on Skellig Michael is part of Sheena Jolley's exhibition Island Magic at the Blasket Centre, Dunquin, Co Kerry, from April 30 to May 30. Atlantic puffins spend the winter months at sea and each year they return to Skellig Michael to breed.
Picture: Sheena Jolley

Blind man's wuff justice for 'gay' dog

AUSTRALIA: A restaurant that refused a blind man entry because a waiter thought his seeing-eye dog was "gay" has been ordered to apologise and pay compensation.

Ian Jolly was told he could not take guide dog Nudge into Adelaide's Thai Spice last May because a member of staff objected, The Sunday Mail reported.

The restaurant's owners said a misunderstanding had arisen between Jolly's female companion and a waiter who understood the woman "to be saying she wanted to bring a gay dog into the restaurant".

"The staff genuinely believed that Nudge was an ordinary pet dog which had been de-sexed to become a gay dog," the owners said in a statement to South Australia's Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

The tribunal on Friday ordered the restaurant to pay Jolly 1,500 dollars (€1,039) and offer him a written apology for discriminating against

him on the grounds of disability.

The restaurant, which displays a "guide dogs welcome" sign, refused to comment.

USA: A mother duck didn't survive her walk across a busy Wisconsin roadway, but a motorist made sure her 14 ducklings stayed safe — even one that wiggled under the dashboard.

Angela Speed of the Wisconsin Humane Society says the good samaritan was driving in a Milwaukee suburb on Friday when she saw the newly-hatched mallards trying to cross a busy road.

The woman told Speed that a vehicle in front of her hit the mother duck, leaving her ducklings confused in the middle of the road.

The woman gathered them into her car and took them to the Humane Society. But an hour later, she heard a peep. A mechanic took apart her dashboard and found the 14th



worldapart

duckling. Speed says the brood is healthy and expected to survive.

SPAIN: An off-duty policeman returned an envelope containing €6,000 in cash which a passenger lost at a Madrid subway station, the interior ministry said on Friday.

The officer was on his way to board a train to the northern city of Leon when he spotted the envelope on the floor of the station. Inside he found five €200 notes and 100 €50 notes behind a white sheet of paper with the name of a company on it.

Police were able to track down a representative of the company and the cash was returned to its owner.

INDONESIA: Forget about getting a job as a police officer in Papua if you have had your penis enlarged.

An applicant "will be asked whether or not his vital organ has been enlarged," said Papua police chief Bekto Suprpto, quoted on local website Kompas.com. "If he has, he will be considered unfit to join the police or the military."

The ban was applied since the unnatural size causes "hindrance during training," said police spokesman Zainuri Lubis in Jakarta, quoted by news portal Detik.com.

Indonesia's remote easternmost province is home to Papuan tribes, many of whom are known for wearing penis gourds.

Papuans use a local technique to achieve the enlargement, according to a sexologist quoted by local newspaper the Jakarta Globe, wrapping the penis with leaves from the "gatal-gatal" (itchy) tree so that it swells up "like it has been stung by a bee," the expert said.
(Reuters)

USA: An alleged ill-timed toilet break has landed a man accused of robbing a store behind bars.

Police said Sean Almond was found urinating behind a Kangaroo Mart in Suffolk minutes after a clerk reported the store had been robbed on Thursday. Police said Almond was carrying the stolen cash.

He was charged with armed robbery. Charges of assault and urinating in public are pending.

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From pork pies to Podge and Rodge

SOME people hate long good byes. I love them. That's why I'm devoting this week's column to saying farewell.

I am, like the littlest Hobo, movin' on. It's sad to leave, but, at the same time, I can't help reflecting that three years for an Englishman at the Irish Examiner must be some kind of record.

When I started the column in April 2007, I had just moved to County Carlow, from New York, I had just had my first book published, my first child, Bento, was almost one and I was attempting to build a house out of straw bales.

Three years later, and I am now just finishing my second book, a biography of Isabella Blow, which should be out in the autumn, I have just celebrated Bento's fourth birthday and I have a second child, a daughter called Elinor.

The house built out of straw bales blew down, as any little pig could have told me it would.

Speaking of pigs, I've worked my way through five sets of porkers over the past three years, all called Podge and Rodge, I've made hundreds of pounds of sausages, several dozen black puddings, but eaten fried pig's brains just the once.

I've got quite into the farming. I particularly enjoy haggling with farmers these days. You don't want to be in a rush to do this. The other day, after two weeks of protracted negotiations, I sold a sheep farmer 25 bales of straw (which was meant for the house — now built out of timber and bricks and near as damn it finished).

Undoubtedly my proudest rural achievement, however, has been learning to reverse a trailer. I can even do it while people are watching these days. Tasks as yet uncompleted on the agricultural front include learning how to drive a tractor, growing anything and chainsaw usage.

When writing about friends, family and neighbours I have invariably operated on the principle that forgiveness is easier



Tom Sykes

The Last Word

to obtain than permission. I thank them all — especially Pop, Granny Barrow and Toby the gentleman farmer — for their forbearance.

But my greatest thanks of all go to my beautiful wife Sasha. It can't be easy living with a relentless self-publicist who weekly chronicles the minutest details of your family life for a living. But she's supported me all the way with the column, and smilingly tolerated every fresh and controversial revelation and opinion — well, all except the one about not wanting to go to the birth of my second child (I went).

My wife is the best thing that has ever happened to me. She is an inspiration and an example. I love her, and sometimes, in the hurly-burly busyness of daily family life, especially when you are trying to finish building a house, I forget to tell her that. Sorry if I'm getting mushy, but goodbyes make me emotional. I think that's why I like them so much.
So long.

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