



LIFE MAGAZINE INTERIORS SPECIAL

INSIDE THE HOMES OF THE DECADE. 16-page section inside the magazine

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## WE MUST LEARN FROM ANA'S DEATH

# BRENDAN O'CONNOR

THIS SECTION, PAGE 31



# A new beginning

■ Historic Yes for gay marriage after surge in youth vote

■ Coalition plans to cash in on new feel-good factor

■ Martin safe as FF to win by-election



## Bol: 'We will not cut rates'

RONALD QUINLAN  
Special Correspondent

BANK of Ireland will not cut its variable-interest rate despite Finance Minister Michael Noonan's threat to impose a levy on banks that refuse to give relief to homeowners.

Last week, it was widely reported that the bank would follow AIB and other lenders and reduce its variable rates in response to political pressure.

However, in what is likely to be interpreted as a snub to the Government, a Bank of Ireland spokesman said chief executive Richie Boucher's meeting with Mr Noonan last Thursday had focused solely on the bank's efforts to encourage customers to avail of fixed rates.

On Friday, Mr Noonan warned the State's six main banks faced a "penal levy" if they failed to reduce their rates.

Full story: page 2

JODY CORCORAN and DANIEL MCCONNELL

THE Government plans to capitalise on euphoria surrounding the success of the Marriage Equality Referendum to draw a line under protests at austerity measures such as water charges.

The resounding victory of the Coalition's same-sex marriage campaign has emboldened Fine Gael and Labour in the view that Ireland is now ready to move on from the politics of protest and embrace a more positive new era.

But the Government's intention has already been dealt a serious blow. Last night, Fianna Fail was firmly on course to score a notable victory in the Carlow/Kilkenny

by-election, in which the two Government party candidates looked set to suffer a heavier than expected defeat.

In the Marriage Equality Referendum, however, a large majority of 62pc voted Yes and 38pc voted No. The total valid poll was 1,935,907.

The margin of victory was

**FULL RESULTS: PAGES 17-22**

last night being attributed to the emergence of a new generation of young voters. Politicians are this weekend re-assessing the changed landscape to take account of an insurgent youth vote.

The referendum changes the Constitution so that mar-

riages between two people would be legal "without distinction as to their sex."

As counting continued into the evening, the only constituency to so far vote No was Roscommon/South Leitrim, by a margin of 51.4pc to 48.6pc.

The Presidential Age Referendum, which would have allowed the age of candidates for the presidency to be lowered to 21, looks to be defeated, according to early tallies.

"I think this is a moment that rebrands Ireland to a lot of folks around the world as a country not stuck in tradition but that has an inclusive tradition," Ty Cobb, the international director of the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington-based advocacy group said.

**RESULT: Becky Oakley and Aileen Griffin, centre, who plan to marry, celebrate the Yes vote.**

**Photo: David Conachy**

The result was never in doubt almost from the opening of ballot boxes at 9am yesterday. The No side conceded defeat at around 11am. David Quinn, the director of the Iona Institute, said in a tweet: "Congratulations to the Yes side. Well done."

Last night, the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, said the referendum result showed the Catholic Church "needs to do a reality check."

Also last night, the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, in reference

Continued on page 5

PANTI BLISS

## Yes I said yes I will yes!

YES. It's such a little word but today it feels so big. YES. Has one simple syllable ever meant so much before? Not to me anyway. I've never asked anyone to marry me, but today it feels like I asked a whole country to marry me and they said Yes. And I'm delighted. Ecstatic. I'm over the gay moon and drunk on Yes, and like any happy groom on his wedding morning, I'm truly, deeply, madly in love. I am in love with the whole country.

At times over the past few months the campaign has been tough. Exhausting, frustrating, mentally draining. It's been difficult for members of the LGBT community and our friends and families to see the No posters everywhere, to come home at night and watch the debates on TV, only to wake up in the morning and hear them all over again

on the radio. Every debate, argument and conversation has felt deeply personal. People debating our lives, our relationships, our worth.

But the campaign has also been wonderful. Over the past few months many thousands of ordinary people — gay and straight — have joined forces behind a simple idea: that all citizens of the Republic should be treated equally under the law. That we should, as the Proclamation of 1916 urges, cherish all the children of the nation equally.

And to that end, people have contributed their time and energy and talents, and even if the result had been different, they would have been able to say that they couldn't have done more. They have stuffed envelopes, made videos, raised funds and written letters. They've gone to meetings, organised rallies, and got up early to hand

out flyers at train stations before work. And they have talked — to family and co-workers and strangers. They've had conversations that weren't always easy, but were necessary. In groups (that started out small but grew and grew) they have attempted to knock on every door in the country — and they almost succeeded!

Groups of men and women all across the country — students with shaved heads and grandmothers with headscarves, indefatigable activists and groggy-from-night-work taxi drivers — knocking on the doors of their fellow citizens in the pursuit of a simple and beautiful idea: the we are all equally deserving of respect.

On Friday, Ireland agreed with that simple proposition. Forty years after those first brave men and women stood up and said, "no more", the people

of Ireland said Yes, and what must have seemed impossible all those years ago has been achieved: Ireland's LGBTI citizens are full and equal citizens under the law.

And I know that not everyone voted Yes. Some voted No out of deeply held religious conviction or other genuinely held concerns, and others because the world is changing so fast and they can't keep up. And many of them voted No with heavy hearts because they didn't want to hurt gay friends or family.

But I hope, and believe, that in time — as Ireland's LGBTI citizens and their families get on with their lives under the full and equal protections of the law — that even those voters will recognise that the people of Ireland made the right decision last Friday.

It was indeed, a good Friday.



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MOTION & EMOTION

