

An Focal

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28 April 2009
Tuesday

Official Paper of the University of Limerick Students' Union

Volume XVII, Issue 14
FREE

Students present €20,000 to local charities

Aoife Breen - Editor

FOUR LOCAL charities received €20,000 between them on Monday, 20 April in week 12, in a presentation hosted by the Students' Union to give the monies raised during this year's Raising and Giving Week which was held on the campus from Monday, 30 March until Thursday, 2 April.

"This presentation is the culmination of a lot of planning and hard work for everyone in the Union. That hard work is certainly repaid when we can deliver €20,000 to such worthy causes on behalf of the students of UL," said SU President Pa O'Brien.

Representatives from Milford Hospice, Limerick Red Cross, Limerick Mental Health Association and St Gabriel's Centre each received a cheque for €5,000 raised by UL students for their charity.

"What we give to you today is hopefully more than a cheque for €5,000. I know that each of your causes struck a note with the students of UL. So, hopefully, as they move on in their lives, they will choose to support you and your organisations further," said Mr O'Brien.

Prof Don Barry, President of the

University, commended the students and the Union for the money they raised over the week.

"This is probably one of my favourite functions to attend every year. €20,000 is a lot of money to raise over a few days.

"I'd like to formally congratulate the student body and thank and congratulate the Students' Union for organising Rag Week."

Anne Marie Hayes collecting the cheque on behalf of Milford Hospice thanked the students for the donation adding that, "fundraising this year is down and notably so" and said the Hospice was appreciative of "anything and everything" they receive.

Marie Breen from Limerick Mental Health Association said, "When I read about [anti-social behaviour during Rag Week] in the press, we knew the other side of the story."

Limerick Red Cross volunteer Brigid Ní Longaigh told the group gathered that this year has been "a tough year for fundraising" and that the money raised during Rag Week was much appreciated.

Ms Ní Longaigh, a 4th year student

in UL, continued to say that the Limerick area has the highest membership in the country and that funds such as that donated from UL

students are vital to maintain the highest standards to allow their members to provide the best service to the community.

Pauline Penny, a representative from St Gabriel's Centre, acknowledged the link between the Centre and UL noting the number of students from health science courses who have their placement in the Centre. She also thanked the students for their generosity in the same week that the hydrotherapy

pool, towards which the funds will go, will be opened.

The SU President closed the presentation by saying, "The Rag Week festival has been much maligned in the press of late.

"As in any festival, there were some incidents of anti-social behaviour which we entirely condemn.

But anyone who stepped on campus during Rag Week would have seen a very different scenario

to that described.

"On campus, there were thousands of young people who were dignified and exemplary in their behaviour. They volunteered their time and took part in numerous charity events, giving generously especially in these leaner times.

"The students of UL collectively raised this money while doing what they do best: engaging with each other and having fun in the spirit of Rag Week."



Students with UL President Don Barry presented €20,000 to four local charities

International Soc win at the top

Aoife Breen

UL'S INTERNATIONAL Society scooped one of the top awards at the recent Board of Irish College Societies Awards held in the Hudson Bay Hotel in Athlone on 14 and 15 April winning the title of Best Society of the Year.

Having already swept the board at UL's Clubs and Societies Ball on 19 March by winning the titles of both Best New/Improved Society and Best Society of the Year, the

8-month-old society represented the college at the national awards.

Dave Studer, PRO for the Society, said, "It was completely unexpected but it is a tribute to the hard work that everyone on the committee has put in over the past eight months.

"The standard of societies at UL is very high, so this is a real testament to the effort put in by all those involved, especially seeing as none of us had experience of how societies

operated before.

"When we all met together at the start of last semester we never expected to reach such heights so soon."

Mr Studer commented on the importance of such a facility for international students coming to UL reflecting on his own Erasmus experience in Tilburg, the Netherlands.

"There was no society available for international students on campus, something that I think is integral in every university to allow for greater integration between international and Irish students.

"My own Erasmus experience was enhanced by a very pro-active international society. As a result of that, I've maintained connections with people all over the world which embodies the whole idea behind the Erasmus programme."

The society has run numerous events over the course of the year including trips to the Blarney in Co Cork, Galway and the Aran Islands, as well as many on campus events.

"We organised loads of social events for our members including five film nights, a book club and, of course, the weekly international nights in the Stables on Fridays."

He also said that the society also introduced speed-dating nights at the start of each semester to help break down barriers and allow people to meet new friends in a relaxed atmosphere.

He mentioned "mentor dinners" which he explained as, "Two different students cook their home cuisine for a group of international students and this rotates every week" and helped students to socialise in a more informal setting away from

the pub scene.

Mr Studer thanked a number of people on behalf of the committee.

"The committee would like to express their thanks to Paul Lee in the Students' Union, Patricia Moriarty in the Arts Office, and Patricia O'Flaherty and Yvonne Crosse in the International Education Division."

Plans for next year include hosting the country's first gathering of all international students as well as expanding on what they have achieved this year.

"We intend to build on this year's success. Next September we're hoping to host Ireland's first gathering of international students from colleges across the country and to work with the Arts Office and the farmers' market to make the food fair even bigger again."

UL were also represented in two other categories by the Computer Society (Skynet) whose event, Skycon '09, was up for Best Society Event and by 4th Year Law and Accounting student Michael O'Connor who was nominated in the Best Society Individual of the Year category.

Paul Lee, SU Clubs and Societies Development Officer, commented that, "This is a fantastic achievement for the International Society to go from a meeting last July in the Scholars' Club planning the resurrection of this society to being the best in UL to being the best in Ireland in such a short time frame is a terrific achievement and congratulations to all involved at committee level.

"This is a huge and welcome boost to societies on campus."

An Focal Digest

In Words

"The SU: it's like one big dirty joke!"

Communications co-op student Andrea Gallagher has an epiphany one day after three months of being surrounded by innuendo (no, in-your-endo).

Students' Union Summer Opening Hours:

The Students' Union building and reception will be open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm over the summer from Tuesday, 5 May. SU reception phone number is 061-202324 or email adele.ocarroll@ul.ie

The SU Shop will be open until 9pm until the end of exams. Summer hours apply thereafter. Monday to Friday from 8.30am until 5pm and Saturday 11am until 5pm.

The incoming sabbatical officers are:

President: Ruán Dillon McLoughlin

Deputy President/Welfare: to be elected on Wednesday, 29 April.

Education Officer: Aoife Finnerty

Campaigns & Services Officer: Fergal Dempsey

Communications Officer: Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

PSA President: Michael Bourke

They will be in the Students' Union from 2 June and will be contactable at firstname.surname@ul.ie.



Members of UL International Society receive their award for Best Society of the Year at the national BICS ceremony held in Athlone on 14 and 15 April

In Figures

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The number of issues of An Focal left this year. Yep, folks, this is the last one.

An Focal

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Thank you to everyone who contributed to An Focal, Vol. XVII, over the academic year 2008/09. A special word of thanks must go to Louise and Louisa at Blink Design for their work in the redesign of the paper. An Focal, quite literally, would be nothing without all the writers and photographers. Aoife Ní Raghallaigh will be the Editor next year. She can be contacted at sucommunications@ul.ie

Election for Welfare while PSA goes unopposed

An Focal Reporter

THREE CANDIDATES will contest the SU sabbatical officer position of Deputy President/Welfare Officer for 2009/2010 in tomorrow's election.

Derek Daly, Ciarán Lyne and Damien Wade have been campaigning for this position since the close of nominations last Thursday at 6pm.

Mr Daly is a 4th year Business student, Mr Lyne is a student of the MSc in Financial Services programme and Mr Wade is undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Education.

As there were no nominations

received for the position during the first round which saw twelve candidates battle it out for the other four SU positions, the nomination period was re-opened.

Polling will take place in three locations across the campus tomorrow with polls open from 9am until 7pm. Students can vote in the Students' Union photocopying room, the library, and the Health Sciences building.

All registered current students are eligible to vote on production of a valid University ID.

Students will be present with a

ballot paper with the candidates names listed alphabetically and asked to vote, in order of preference, for their preferred candidate. Election procedures are the same as for Dáil Éireann elections i.e. a system of single transferable votes will be in place.

The nomination period for the position of Postgraduate Student Association President also closed last Thursday.

As there was only one nomination form was received, Michael Bourke, a student of the MA in European Integration, was elected unopposed

to take over from Emma Murphy on 30 June.

Mr Bourke said on his deemed election, "I'm absolutely delighted. I'd like to thank everyone that supported me especially my housemates, friends and classmates. If I can do half as good a job as the current President, the PSA will be in good hands.

His plans for next year include to improve communication between the PSA and postgrads and to increase the number of social events for postgrads on campus while keeping it "recession friendly".



Michael Bourke, MA European Integration, was elected unopposed to the position of PSA President.

Welfare Election Candidates



Name: Derek Daly

Year and Course: 4th Year BBS

Why are you running for this election?

I'm running to work out a number of key welfare issues but also to work with Ruán, Fergal and the two Aoifes as a union team to represent UL students. From my time on Clubs and Societies and Union executives I know what can be done, and I want to use that experience to the advantage of UL students.

What are the top three things you'd like to do if you get elected?

1. Put an accommodation forum in place
2. Work on awareness of financial aids available.
3. Work on an increased number of crèche places and putting afterschool care in place.

Why should you be elected?

I am familiar with the structures in place around the job and having worked in the union and spoken to Caitriona about the job I feel that I can work effectively both as Welfare Officer, Deputy President and on general sabbatical issues having spent four years watching closely and working with four sabbatical teams.

What makes you stand out from the other candidates running for this position?

For me this is about more than just a job. I'm giving up a job to work to improve the life of UL students. I feel that having been heavily involved in the Union, while at the same time having many friends who never were, that I can work well with the rest of the team to draw more students in.



Name: Damien Wade

Year and Course: Grad Dip Education

Why are you running for this election?

I have always had an immense interest in student issues and facilitating development in any way I can through advice/support. Me in the welfare position will allow me the forum/opportunity to realise the ambition. I strongly believe I have the personal skills and qualities necessary to succeed in the position.

What are the top three things you'd like to do if you get elected?

1. Enhance community spirit and involvement in our campus.
2. Arrange for key reps from various student support agencies such as the MABS, Threshold and HSE to come and speak to students.
3. Organise key events to highlight suicide awareness campaign among other campaigns.

Why should you be elected?

I believe I bring a new, fresh approach to the Welfare position her in UL. As we struggle through the recessionary times, I believe we as students need someone with a safe pair of hands, experience to open ear and offer support in all non-academic issues.

What makes you stand out from the other candidates running for this position?

I myself as young yet experienced in the world of student life and professional life, one which has gained knowledge and experience. I have knowledge gained from the financial work environment and having been part of key campuses across Ireland.



Name: Ciarán Lyne

Year and Course: MSc Financial Services

Why are you running for this election?

I think I would be a good welfare officer because and it would be a position I would enjoy. I have completed both a degree and a masters and now feel ready for a new challenge.

What are the top three things you'd like to do if you get elected?

1. Focus on Students physical well being, closer links with UL arena so that class reps could organise fitness sessions, soccer tournaments for each faculty, male and female.
2. Focus on student travel, ensure that students know all information before booking a J1, inter-railing, weekends away etc, gathering up information and reviews of destinations on a blog.
3. Create a student to student program, where in evenings students can share their knowledge of their chosen topic e.g. diet, ways to keep fit, good student deals, again using blogs to keep students up to date.

Why should you be elected?

I have been a college student for the last 5 years. I have attended UCC and UL. I have lived both at home and in rented accommodation, gone on nights out when I shouldn't have and crammed when I had to! I believe all this means I will be well able to relate to any student who comes to me with problems next year.

What makes you stand out from the other candidates running for this position?

I believe I represent the average student. I am not a committed member of any club or society (although I was BIS sports officer in UCC). I am not motivated for running by any political ambitions. I also think that what I've learned from my college experience makes me uniquely equipped for this position.

Dramatic return to UL

Sinead Keane

AFTER EIGHT years, Limerick saw the return of the Irish Student Drama Association Festival for 2009. The ISDA festival, which has been running for 62 years all around Ireland, is a chance for all university dramatic societies to stage and perform their own plays and also to see what other colleges have been working on the past year.

The UL Drama Society had the pleasure of hosting this year's festival, which consisted of twenty plays, ten colleges and six different nights of entertainment.

The festival opened on Sunday, 5 April, in the Scholars' Club. The opening ceremony was attended not only by the various colleges partaking in the festival but also by UCH Head Michael Murphy and local Councillor Mary Jackman.

Three professional judges, who were to critique and judge the twenty plays, were also in attendance; scriptwriter Martin Maguire, lighting and stage designer Margaret O'Donoghue and actor David Heap.

After speeches from ISDA chair Sarah Madigan, festival director Martin Kehoe and UL Drama Soc president Sinead Keane, the festival itself was opened officially by Mary Jackman.

And so the week began, with a basic structure of four plays, staged in four different venues (UL Jonathan Swift Theatre, Belltable Theatre, LIT Millenium Theare and Mary I Theatre), every day for five days.

It is not difficult to imagine that running this structure was very hard work. With a different college in each venue, with only a few hours to prepare, getting every play staged on time and with no hitches was a very hard task.

Amazingly, each play managed to go off without problems and the week ran smoother than we could have hoped for.

Every night a themed night out was organised in different venues around Limerick city, which were well attended by the various colleges as well as the general public.

Saturday, 11 April, saw the biggest

entertainment event of the week - the ISDA Fringe Festival.

Starting at 2pm, the Fringe contained many different forms of entertainment, including a performance by Choke Comedy Improv Troup and Ennis Gospel Choir. Each performance of the day was free, and there was also baked goods and face painting available.

The overall consensus of the day was well received, and everyone who attended seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Possibly the most difficult job of the week was that of the judges. Besides attending every single play in the festival - which is hard work in itself - David, Martin and Margaret had the task of assigning a name to each award included in the festival.

The awards ceremony - which was also the closing of the festival - consisted of 13 awards, including Best Actor/Actress, Best Supporting Actor/Actress, Best Director, Best Production, Best Sound, Best Lighting, Best Set and Best Original Script.

The standard of each play was incredibly high, and the judges left every theatre with high praise for each college.

Despite the difficulty of separating one play from the rest for each award, the judges chose worthy

winners and the awards were enjoyed by all.

Without doubt the biggest achievement of the night was the Best Set Design award, which was won by Mary Halton of UL Drama Society for her set design in UL's

'Losing Elysium', and the first ISDA award to be won by UL.

With a finishing performance by FRED and local DJ Jeff Lambert, it was not difficult to see that the ISDA Awards were a very enjoyable success for UL Drama Society.



ISDA Opening Ceromony.

Please Talk campaign re-launched

Sarah Mann

IF YOU have ever been told to shut up, disregard the order. Please Talk.

Please Talk is a national campaign designed to let students know what counseling options are available to them should they ever feel the need to talk to someone about their problems. The campaign also wants to spread the idea that "Talking is a sign of strength, not weakness," according to Welfare Officer Catriona McGrattan.

"The idea is to encourage people to talk," she said.

The campaign was launched in 2007 at UCD in response to a number of student suicides on campus, according to the Please Talk website. It has since swept the country, offering help to students who need to get anything and everything off of their chests by putting them in touch with people who will listen. The Please Talk website lists contact information (including websites, email addresses, and phone

numbers) of counseling and support services at all universities.

It's helpful, McGrattan said, "if you're looking to know where someone is or what they do." The campaign is mainly aimed at suicide prevention, but it also strives to let students know that support is available for any problem. "If students experience problems at home, college, or in their private lives, they can log onto www.pleasetalk.ie select their college and identify what services...are available that they might want to access," the campaign's website said.

UL has been a part of Please Talk for two years but recently relaunched the campaign in an effort to heighten awareness for counseling services on campus. Counselors, chaplains, and other support services, as well as some students, wore "Please Talk" t-shirts on Thursday, 23 April to start students talking and asking questions about the

slogan. They handed out badges and answered questions about the campaign.

"Getting the information out there is the important part," said McGrattan. She hopes that the more students see the Please Talk logo, the more they might utilize the website and its services.

She also hopes that students will visit her, the chaplains, counselors, or any member of student affairs if they need help. "I don't think I could ever praise the counselors enough," she said.

Contact information for counselors and other support services on campus are listed on the campaign's website at www.pleasetalk.ie. Support services on campus include the Welfare Officer in the Student's Union, the Postgraduate Students Association in the PSA Centre, Counseling Services in the Main Building, and the Chaplaincy Office in the Main Building.

Class Reps thanked for hard work

Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

AS THANKS for their hard work over the past academic year, Class Representatives from all disciplines were treated to a reception in the White House on Tuesday of Week 12. The reception, which took place before the final Class Representatives' Council of the year, was attended by a large number of Class Representatives, as well as the current Sabbatical Team.

The reception was also attended by Vice President Academic and Registrar, Professor Paul McCutcheon who awarded each Class Representative with a Certificate thanking them for

their work and dedication over the year, as well as their contribution to their course and to the campus community.

Speaking at the event Professor McCutcheon stated that "the work the Students' Union does often goes unrecognised and is often not rewarded by the campus community" but that the staff were very grateful for all the work the Union and the Representatives have done.

Education Officer, Eamonn Gardiner explained that this year's Class Representatives 'were a great crowd to work for, I've nothing but the maximum respect for them and the job they

do. Day in and day out classes are represented by their reps at all levels of the University." Mr Gardiner went on to declare that because of the work the Reps do, they are the "true officers and are unsung heroes".

President of the Students' Union, Pa O'Brien echoed the sentiments and gratitude displayed by Mr Gardiner and added that he realises the Reps have done a lot for their class throughout the past year. He also explained that "it is a great honour to be asked to contribute on behalf of your peers" and that the Reps should be proud of their achievements.

In addition to the reception, Reps were also extremely pleased to receive their long awaited Class Reps hoodies which they received at Class Reps Council. Anyone who has not yet received their hoody or certificate can collect them from Education Officer, Eamonn Gardiner.



Class reps with their certs outside Plassey House.

Fisky business in the Middle East

Jason Kennedy

WORLD-RENOWNED journalist, Robert Fisk, gave a public lecture on ‘The Middle East, Politics and Journalism in a Globalised World’ in the University last week. Dr Fisk, who was the first western journalist to interview Osama Bin Laden, spoke on his experiences in the Middle East over the past 40 years. “I don’t think we care about the people of the Middle East. We care about the oil there, but not about the people.” Dr Fisk also spoke on how impersonal the journalists that cover the Middle East are, while referencing an American soldier’s letter home from Iraq. “Every inconvenience has become our responsibility. Our loss

will never have occurred to most people here. Once we leave, Iraq will return to what it was.” Dr Fisk, who received an honorary PhD from Trinity College, also spoke on how he feels that Barrack Obama will not be the answer to the problems in the Middle East. “Before [Obama’s] election, he spent 24 hours in the West Bank and 24 hours in Iraq. “In his first magazine interview to ‘Time’ he mentioned Palestine only in one sentence. I know what it is going to be like.” Dr Fisk, the son of a World War I veteran, told of his life in Beirut over the past few years. “I’d wake up in the morning and listen to the ocean outside my window and think ‘So

where are the explosions going to happen today?’” Throughout his lecture, Dr Fisk kept referring to “we” saying: “When I talk about ‘we’, I am talking about us westerners, who have been the enemy since the 16th century. Forgive me if I include Ireland in that.” Dr Fisk also spoke about his life as a respected, working journalist and how a journalist should work. “The job of a journalist should always be to challenge authority. “I remember a time a large CIA officer with a rather large rifle around his waist came up to me and asked me “Bob, what did we do wrong?’” Despite his reputation, Dr Fisk admits not using modern methods of communication much.

“I don’t use the internet and I don’t use email. I do use a mobile phone though.” Dr Fisk also spoke of the danger posed by the Middle East to the western world. “I’ve never seen the Middle East in such a dangerous state. However, the real threat is Pakistan because they actually have a bomb.” Dr Fisk also answered a number of questions from audience members. When asked what ordinary people could do to help the situation in the Middle East, he responded: “Go to the Middle East, go to Palestine. Be the reporter. Take photos and show your friends and family. There are lots of cheap flights. They’re becoming quite the holiday destination.”

Signed Munster jersey raises money for charity

Amy Croffey

THE DRAW for a signed Munster jersey was held on the 14 April in the Stables, in aid of the UL Community Development Project, Uganda. Lions Captain and Munster Rugby Player, Paul O’Connell lent his time to appear as the special guest on the night and also helped draw the winning ticket. Fourth year UL student, Eoin Leonard was the lucky winner of the signed Munster jersey. “The night was a great success and there was a great turnout from the students of the University. The project in Uganda is a student initiative so it was good to see such great support from the student body” said one of the project organisers, Lisa Hickey. So far the team has raised close to €1550 for this noteworthy charity. The student volunteers involved in the aid work were the driving force behind selling the tickets for the jersey and the generosity of the UL students was reflected with the monies which were collected. UL staff, UL alumni and the staff in The Stables were also heavily involved in helping to fundraise. All donations raised will go towards the project in July which will send around ten University of

Limerick volunteers, made up of students, alumni and staff, to an isolated village in Uganda. Whilst there, they will help build a school and facilities which will help improve education and development within the village. This is the second year that the UL students, alumni and staff have been involved in the project. Last year, the team visited Kabimbiri, Uganda. Whilst there, they helped to build a school made up of four class rooms and planted 2,500 trees in the village. This year, they will revisit the school to see its success. However, they will focus their attentions on a new project in Kikondo, which is an isolated town with poor access to education. An ‘ABBA Night’ will also be held on Friday the 8 May, in the Carlton, Castletroy, Park Hotel, Limerick. Tickets are €10 which can be bought on the door. On the night, African dancers will provide entertainment and a draw will also be held which includes a pair of Elton John tickets.

Further donations can be made to the charity through the AIB. The Account number is 2338808 and the Sort Code is 93-23-96



Munster, Ireland and Lions player

It’s Summer Ball time!



There was no summer ball last year but that’s not surprising, cos there was no summer really!! But we did have a really great night at the Stables Club 21st birthday party with the Saw Doctors. A 22nd is never as good as a 21st so we’ve decided to have the Summer Ball instead. It’s hard to follow up on the Saw Docs, but we think our headline act might just manage it. It’s nearly 5 years since his last appearance in UL, we can’t understand why it’s taken him so long to get back here but he’s on the way now so we forgive him. Yes that right MUNDY is dropping by to see us on Thursday 30 April. Hopefully the sun will shine but even if it doesn’t, it’s going to be a great day. MUNDY will be joined by the fantastic Dirty Epics (they who had to cut their set short at the Rag Ball, but they’re back with a full set here) the amazing RSAG (Rarely Seen Above Ground) who was shortlisted for the Choice album of the year back in March and who has recently been added to the Oxegen line up. Finishing off the bill and starting off the day will be the homegrown Hot Electric playing a great mixture of covers and a few of their own. So drop down Thursday afternoon and join in the fun. It’s your last bow out before exams and sure it’s the start of a long weekend. Gig starts at 4pm, it’s a drop in and enjoy the music kind of day. Then at 6pm we close down the site, re open at 6.30pm and Mundy is on stage at 9pm. There! I wrote a few words about MUNDY and didn’t mention ‘Galway Girl’ even once!!

2008/09

While we have your attention we just want to say a big thank you to everyone for coming out and enjoying the gigs this year. There have been a lot of them: Fred, Christy Moore Tribute, The Blizzards, PJ Gallagher, Delorentos, Toni Baloni, The Venga Boys, Maeve Higgins, Lisa Hannigan, Ham Sandwich, Vesta Varro, The Saw Doctors, Headphone Disco, Damien Dempsey, Cathy Davey, They Might Be Dead, Dirty Sanchez, Stevie Starr, Jarlath Regan, Karl Spain, Republic of Loose, Andrew Maxwell, Hells Bells, Derek Warfield and the Wolfe Tones, Dirty Epics, Baby Jenx, Walter Mitty and the Realists, RSAG, Mundy...I know I’ve forgotten stuff but what the hell? It’s a good list anyway. Thanks to our sponsors Ulster Bank who helped in a big way to make it all happen. Thanks to all the lads on Crew for keeping everyone safe. Thanks to Adele and all the gang at SU reception for keeping it all going amid the chaos. Thanks to the sabbats for getting involved and being part and parcel of the gigs. We’re looking forward to 2009/10 already we’re looking to do lots more gigs using the big stage in the courtyard and maybe even something just a little bit bigger... stay in touch with us over the summer on Bebo and we’ll see you back here in September. But we’ll see you on Thursday before then! Oh yeah and before I go, congrats to everyone on Rag Week – the gigs were great! The daytime events were bit of a hoot and you managed to raise €20,000 for four very grateful charities. Well done to all! See you at Mundy!



University of Limerick
Students Union
Aontas na Mac Léinn
Ollscoil Luimnigh

exam checklist

Do not leave for the exam without...

- ☒ ID Card (can't sit the exam without it!)
- ☒ Pens/Pencils/Eraser/Set Square
- ☒ Calculator/Dictionary/Texts allowed
- ☒ Bottle of Water

In the exam hall you must...

Eat breakfast/lunch before you go to your exam; you might not want to but you will need the energy. Your body will thank you.

Take everything off your desk apart from what you will be using to write with, your ID Card and any other essential materials (Calculators, Dictionaries, etc); Lucky Mascots etc have to stay in your bag.

Put your hand up and ask for roughwork paper before you start answering; its designed to allow you space to rough out your ideas without destroying your answer

Read the ENTIRE paper before you start answering! There might be questions that suit you better further down the page. You may have to answer questions from different sections.

Do a Word-Dump on the roughwork paper. Write down all ideas concerning the question you're thinking of answering. You might know more than you think and as you write more information might come to you.

Don't rush through all short questions; with multiple choice questions be careful. Leave harder questions until the end. Take time saved on some questions and put it towards harder questions. Don't leave anything blank; attempt everything! You don't lose marks for trying and they all add up towards the total overall mark.

Use every minute of time you have; supervisors get paid if you leave early or last! Don't daydream. Answer your questions and have a read back over them at the end if you get a chance. Having a few minutes at the end to do this drastically increases your chances of spotting mistakes and increasing your marks!

Don't forget your ID Card! Every year people lose ten minutes off their exam (and a few quid from their pockets) because they have to go and get a new one issued from Student Academic Administration!

Black and white: but is it read all over?

Aoife Breen - Editor, 2008/09

I'M GOING through a very rough break-up at the moment. It's not that we don't love each other anymore; it's just that, well, I don't think we're right together anymore. There have been the fights – of course there were – but we usually got over them and went back to being stupid love fools the following week. Sickening, I know. But, being quite honest, I just can't take it anymore.

It all began on the 27 March last year. I handed in a nomination form at the SU reception and I was deemed elected as the then-titled position of Publications & Publicity Officer – which most people more commonly recognise as being the editor of An Focal. There's a whole lot more to the job, I can assure you of that, but, over the course of a year, An Focal has become an extended part of who I am, to be blunt about it.

And now it's time to axe that and I'm not really sure how or how I'll cope in the rebound period. I mean, I hope I don't just jump on the blogging bandwagon and start clogging up the internet with even more useless, mindless trash.

And I'm only 22, so writing my memoirs at this stage (despite the amount that my year in office would contribute to them) would be a bit ridiculous.

They say everyone has a novel in them (to which I like to add, yes, but most people should keep it in them) but I don't think I'm feeling that literary right now. I'm still a bit shell-shocked, being frank.

Being the editor of a student newspaper has been an eye-opener, to say the least. Even the term 'editor' is quite loose because you're more a sub of sorts because of all the donkey work that needs to be done.

While you've been reading An Focal, and seeing its pretty finished pages, there's a whole lot more done behind the scenes. I don't think people realise how I (and all previous editors) could develop such a terrifying love-hate relationship with newsprint.

Firstly, I suppose it's easiest to explain the love part. Think gushing fountains and raining confetti; pink and pretty; sunshine, happiness, la la la, frolicking in golden meadows – all that malarkey. That's sort of the elated feeling I get once everything has been sent to the designers. It's more than just a sigh of relief. It's the sort of relief you might get if you've been crushed by a cast iron gate and then the fire brigade have lifted it from you: "Oh hallelujah! There is a god! There is hope! I can live and breathe again!"

Well, for another two weeks, anyway.

By publication day (what do you

mean you don't know that it's Tuesdays of odd weeks? Have you not been loitering around the SU all year on Tuesday evenings, waiting to pounce on the latest issue?), I have the tendency to have forgotten all my woes and rejoice at the sight of the latest creation.

There she is, in all her black-and-white glory. Ah, would you just look at her! All neatly bound up in bales, politely stacked on top of each other.

Then some eejit comes along and rips a bale apart to take a copy. Fine. You do just that, then. Insolent creep.

I'll confess: I don't usually read the paper once it comes out. I'd prefer not to. Mostly for my own sanity I couldn't face reading most of the stuff that's in it again, but also because – and anyone who knows me will testify to this – I'm positive that there are punctuation and/or grammar and/or spelling errors hidden between the pages that would cause me to break out in a rash or a twitch at best and at worst force me to go through every copy with Tip-Ex and a black pen. Sort of like what my idol, Lynne Truss, recommends in the sacred writings of Eats, Shoots and Leaves. But I really wouldn't have time for that so I avoid it altogether by choosing to admire from a distance. Ignorance really is bliss, you know.

And then the whole cycle starts all over again. Yes, that soon.

Being an editor...no, wait, allow me to correct that. Being the editor of An Focal really isn't just a job, it's a way of life. You adapt your schedule to deadlines. I don't do lunches every second week – those days are sandwich-at-the-desk times.

And if the door is closed it means, 'I don't want to talk to you because your drivell is interrupting my editing speed'. Not that a closed door meant much to most people anyway.

I used to have a sign up at the start of the year that said, 'Do not disturb. Under any circumstances. Ever.' (and a 'please' squeezed in there as an afterthought), but then people thought I actually morphed into a raging carnivorous lion gasping for juicy flesh and gushing arterial blood during putting-the-paper-together weeks so, despite my personal wishes to maintain that image I decided it was probably best not to display the sign.

And I gave up locking myself into the office once I realised that I'd be rightly screwed if the building went on fire. Or if I self-combusted – which was probably more likely in any case given the need for a permit to practically flick a light switch in this place.

The hate part of the relationship, I am mournful to say, is probably a

helluva lot easier to describe, but, alas, I can't say too much without being libellous.

Political correctness has gone to the extreme these days. You can't say a thing nowadays without being in fear of 'hurting someone's feelings'. Grow up. Take the jibes, people, take them! The truth hurts, but it's a lot better than falsities masquerading as reality to maintain happy-happy-land images.

I suppose that has been one of my biggest gripes with my year at the helm of An Focal. With a circulation of 3,000 issues every two weeks, the power of the written word can make or destroy anything it so wishes. That wretched responsibility plonked on my shoulders nibbled at my soul all year.

My naïve youthful desires for freedom of expression and to be a pioneer of truth were quelled by the nature of politics and its slithery ways. There is no such thing as the truth. There are only interpretations of the truth.

Having spent a year at the keyboard and widescreen monitor of the Communications Office (I changed the title of the position sometime mid-semester one at the General Meeting because the original conjured images of Goebbels; a true Goebbels' position wouldn't allow its title to be so forthcoming in dispersing with reality), I have learnt a wealth of information.

I think some contributors opted for a Joycean approach to their writing and felt compelled to transcend the barriers of expression in pursuit of, I can only assume, a greater form of literary communication that left me somewhat bewildered as I struggled to glue the paper together in the early hours of dark mornings.

Don't get me wrong; everything I have received has been interpretable – especially after a few whiskeys – and understandable – definitely after a few whiskeys –, but may have required a couple of plasters and a kiss better before it could actually be unleashed on the general populous.

I've also learnt that headline writing is a true gift. Alas, I have not been blessed with it. I must have missed that queue in 1986 before I fell to the earth. Headlines became the bane of my fortnight. Every fortnight.

You see, the rules about headlines dictate that they must be sharp, snappy and draw the reader in. They also must contain an active verb and actually refer to the article. They can't be too raunchy or



insulting (see my rant about political correctness above).

With all these demands, I now look upon headlines as the most talented part of any newspaper and I shake my head in awe of the subs across the nation whose very living it is to tackle these requirements and wrestle them into luring titles. Fair play. Well done. You're great, all of you – just great. No, really, I'm not being sarcastic for once.

In a similar essence I think photos are also underestimated. They can tell more about a story than any number of words ever could and, what's more, they are probably the closest to The Truth that we could ever get in media.

I know, I know, there is still plenty of subjectivity in photographs, but at least the final interpretation of the image is left up to the reader (or viewer, as may be a more fitting description) who doesn't have to depend on the explanation of the interfering analyst.

And so it is that 'my' 14 issues of An Focal are done. Just like that. Done. I had hoped that I would step back and appreciate putting together the final one, but, no, of course, it sank into the same sort of frenzied hap-hazard stress-fest that beleaguered the previous 13 issues of the year. I must admit, I sort of had that same secret desire of before every issue, wishing that I would sit back and enjoy the reading and the writing in a somewhat leisurely manner.

The time has come to release that

final sigh of relief and to pass on the soul-nibbling goblins to Aoife Ní Raghallaigh, my successor who will take up office in June when you are all far, far away from the UL microcosm. No doubt Aoife II will have her own angst and pet peeves and worries, but, similarly, she too will relish in the sight of those bundles of joy every second Tuesday. I hand her the keyboard and monitor (not literally, that'd be just silly) with confidence.

I'm off...to where, I have no idea, but, for one last time, I'm sure it'll involve frolicking in golden meadows under hot sunshine oozing with happiness and gaiety with gushing fountains and raining confetti in a pink and pretty haze.

Credit must be given where credit is due:

These people are all stars and without them An Focal would've been (a) 16 pages of my waffle every fortnight or (b) non-existent at all.

In particular, I must pay tribute to the sub-editors. Liam and Tomas did a tremendous job with the sports section and I am eternally grateful because, let's be honest, I wouldn't be able to tell the difference between a tennis ball and a Gaelic football unless one hit me in the face and then, by God, I probably would know. Aoife was akin to a lifeguard as I drowned in the depths of the news (or my own tears, whichever). If I've forgotten anyone please feel free to call in and thump me. Ah now, be gentle, like...I'm from

Limerick

News Editor: Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

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Opinion: Jason Kennedy, Pa O'Brien, Eric Doyle, Finn McDuffie, Daniel Sullivan, Emma Kerins, Katie Harrington, Aoife Ní Raghallaigh, Pat 'the Gospel' Robertson, Luke Holmes, John Condren, Paul Bellew, Ciarán O'Driscoll, Ciarán Lyne, Derek Daly, John Rainsford

Columnists: Kyle Murray, Barry Hussey, Paul Carty, Daniel Sullivan, Pa O'Brien, Jason Kennedy, Finn McDuffie, Alexandra Gdanietz.

Features: Caitriona McGrattan, Emma Murphy Aoife Finnerty, Eamonn Gardiner, Damien Cahill, Keith & Regina @ EPM.

Sports Editor: Liam Togher (sem I) and Tomas McCarthy (sem II)

Sports Team: John Condren, Eoin King, Conor McGrath, Fiona Reidy, Mike Considine, Colum Cooney, Siobhán Hinchy, Richael O'Brien, Alan Keane, Ruth Fahy, Neil Treacy, UL Clubs

Cartoonists: Kelly O'Brien, Larissa Mirtschink, Andrea Gallagher

Studentspeak: Eamon Heavey, Andrea Gallagher

Photography: Hugh O'Brien, Huw Thomas, UL PhotoSoc

Can I have gold leaf with that?

Finn McDuffie

A 3rd year student on Erasmus spills his tongue in cheek observations on that enchanting and noblest ornament of the world, France

France is a sublime and impressive mix of the wonderful and the ridiculous. This is the land that gave us 685 ways to dress an egg, 246 varieties of cheese, perfected the prosthetic testicle and designed the Citroen 2CV. And they still have time to take a 35 hour working week with a good strike now and then and a protest after lunch. But that’s only a croissant atop a rather enormous stack of baguettes. Take a look at Sébastien Chabal; a wonderful rugby player, with ridiculous hair. And the Eiffel Tower; a magnificent structure, without any clear purpose but to celebrate sticking it to the late 18th century establishment.

Paris also has a number of shops that sell wonderful chocolate cake with some ridiculous gold leaf on top. And snail-eating. Oh the snail eating. The garlic is wonderful, but the vessel could have been a little better thought out by whoever drew up the culture blueprints.

I realise I’ve jumped aboard the stereotype wagon, but let’s pull over for a short pee break. You see, these stereotypes arise out of extra-national frustration. The French achieve wonder in a perplexingly unorthodox way. Everything we love about France has an element of absurdity about it. If it’s not wonderful and ridiculous at once, it’s not French and it’s not a success. So even though France is the whacky uncle of the European family, it is nonetheless very logical. The assertion that France’s obsession with sex can be put down, not to primal urge, but to a need for thrifty, economical fun, may go a

long way toward explaining this. The logic is both amusing and frustrating. And since we can’t really understand it, there’s no further reason to talk about it. Pee break over. Shake.

Since arriving in France two months ago, I have experienced angry blockades, massive protests, a dozen or so strikes and some delicious fondue. This has all been very exciting. But I do wonder when they’re going to give up. We’ve all heard about France’s white flag fetish. A well told joke asks why people were surprised that the French wouldn’t help the Americans get Saddam out of Iraq, when they wouldn’t help the Americans get the Germans out of France. En revanche, I think the French might have invaded Iraq if the Americans reported a massive truffle find there, but assertions aside, the French are still said to have the surrender-monkey genome. So maybe soon the grevists will

stop their striking and normal, wonderful absurdity will be restored.

As we’re now hurtling along on the stereotype wagon at a metric, wagon-safe, bureaucratically-approved 44 kilometres per hour, I feel I should mention that in my time here I have consumed approximately 18 kilos of cheese, 102 baguettes and a small rabbit. This should come as no shock to anybody who has been here before. Eating rabbit is a good French tradition. And horse and frogs and snails. In fact, if it walks, hops or crawls then any part of its anatomy is game. And it is usually drowned in something cheesy. And with so much great bread to eat it with, my gastronomic return to Ireland, the land of freeze-packed ‘Cuisine De France’ ‘baguettes’, will involve a lot of twitching and irritability. That said, my stomach pangs for an SU roll. Or is that nostalgia casting her spell?

Time to legalise

I’m going to say this straight off: this is not going to be a balanced article: it just won’t. I am purely writing my opinion and do recognise the damage that can be done by any drug like cigarettes, alcohol or chocolate. Indeed the most pleasurable things in life are those which seem to damage us most, except sex which is a healthy aerobic and anaerobic workout. So listen I’m not trying to say that taking drugs or availing of prostitution are good wholesome moral or family activities, my argument is that the prohibition of these things does much more harm than good.

If the history of prohibition has shown us anything is that if people wish to avail of a service they will, be it legal or illegal. Prostitution is rampant throughout the world, it’s the oldest profession there is. If you have nothing else to sell you can always sell yourself!

What we have with prohibition is the murky sex trade where women from poverty stricken countries are often forced into prostitution. They are led to believe that they will come to Ireland or other western nations under the guise of finding a job and making a new life. Too often they are forced into the sex trade and are essentially enslaved.

We don’t have to like prostitution or the concept as a society, but we have to recognise that people suffer with there being no regulation in place. Not only are people affected by this adverse suffering but some scumbag is profiting from the illegal trade they make by providing a service that people want.

We have seen this in our own community recently where the drugs trade has claimed many lives including innocent people. These violent criminals are in charge of massive industries which not only make them rich and powerful, but allow them to intimidate and murder ordinary decent people.

The cannabis trade in Ireland is huge. It is currently the biggest cash crop (bigger than corn, wheat; everything!) in the United States where growing conditions are a bit better. Can those who haven’t smoked it at some stage put their hands up!?

Brian Cowen, Barrak Obama, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair – all the people we trust to lead us and our nations – have all smoked it up,

Brian Cowen even said “Of course I did, and, unlike Bill Clinton, I did inhale!” So this, to me, is a socially acceptable drug which does little harm except to bags of Doritos and ice creams.

So why are we hiding from it? Why are we letting criminals make untold amounts of money off something that is socially acceptable and less damaging than alcohol? It makes no sense. There is a group out there who say decriminalise it but sure that makes less sense. That means more people will buy it without the fear of repercussion making these criminals richer and more powerful.

I think it’s time now that we stopped fooling ourselves and realised that regulation of substances or services which those is our society choose to avail of is pointless and damaging.

The war on drugs waste Garda time, spends hundreds of millions and does little but create drug lords who resort to violence at every turn. When they finally put any of these men away there is another waiting in the wings to terrorise his community.

Isn’t it time we took these goods out of the hands of criminals and put the tax revenue generated, which would be substantial, towards some worthwhile projects.

Regulation rather than prohibition is surely the key to living in a mature and open society.

I’m educated: where to now?

Pat “The Gospel” Robertson

As I sat musing in the courtyard last week a strange realisation came over me. I realised that that which seemed so far away four years ago was now upon me. Education and graduation was imminent, yes....I had proven my mother wrong, I will soon be Pat Robertson B.A. So was it all worth it and how had it been. Would I do it again, you say?

Well of course I would! Things just aren’t the same in the real world with all its real problems: no jobs (f*ck off), more tax (f*ck off) and global warming (f*ck off). I don’t yet want to face these issues.

There was a time in first year where I thought I would meet a woman in fourth year, build a meaningful relationship based on common interests, get her pregnant with like triplets or something (men children, obviously) and then just live on kinda buzz.

I now realise that I’m not yet fit to mind myself, not to mind a load of useless babies.

The other thing is that I’m certainly not ready to meet a woman with marriage on her brain. I mean, come on, I’m 22...my best years are yet to come. So, I thought of the things that I would miss when I leave and I have categorised them as such.

Beer

I know you can still buy beer in the real world but if you decide to go on it at ten in the morning by yourself then all of the green in Elm Park...then all of a sudden you’re an alcoholic. Back in college you would have been “crazy” and “massive craic”. But in the real world they look down on our kind... bastards.

Women

Where is this dream Utopia where 6,000 women between 18-22 run around scantily clad in search of experimentation and new experiences with kind

gentlemen such as myself, where is it? It’s here in college, that’s where. Where else would lines such as “I’ll give ya a swig of my buckfast for a feel of your boobies” work?” Galway or Mayo possibly, but apart from that – nowhere.

Mind expanding experiences

There is a time for sitting around, havin’ a schmoke and watching a bit of Dr. Phil, that time is college. After college you do things on your days off. You go places or see things. But while in college you don’t need an excuse for a day off. All you need is a couple o’ friends, bit o’ schmoke and Dr. Phil.

Banter

Sure you can’t beat the college banter. Whether it’s tales of ridin’, smoking or general shenanigans, there’s always something to keep you entertained. I know this one fella who arrived back from the

Lodge with a first year nursing student. She seemed a quiet country girl; Saw Doctors fan – you know the type.

Hence he thought his luck couldn’t get better as she undressed in an alluring manner beckoning him to the bed for a gratifying 30 seconds of pure pleasure. Five minutes later she whipped out a sex toy the size of a baby’s arm and an industrial size tube o’ lube. He didn’t hang around for the internal examination obviously.

So what’s the craic after college? Well it isn’t all bad – it’s just not the same banter as you get around here. Still, though, you can’t stay round here forever chatting up 18 year olds in the Stables while doin’ a bit o’ jiving to ‘Galway Girl’ starts to look a bit strange after a while. So I hope you enjoyed it, or if you’ve another couple of years that you make the most of them; sure it’s shite out there in the real world!



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Columnists

A Fresh Approach

Jason Kennedy

Diary of a First Year

THIRTY-THREE weeks ago, someone said to me, “You’re going to grow attached to this place.” Now that I’m in my final few days as a mere first year, I can see where he’s coming from, yet it’s hard to look back when I’m not even finished yet.

Now that I’m approaching the end, I feel that I should get my head down and study, study, study. I’ve decided to quit German, which has been threatening my sanity since week one, and so will have to do politics exams in August. For weeks, people have said to me “keep going, don’t quit German now”, and, stupidly, I did, knowing that I wouldn’t be able to stick it ‘til fourth year.

Still, even with German being the pain of the year, I have a lot of great memories of the place, even after just a few months. I remember in the first few days, when only four of us were living in the house, the night the new girl moved in and was too afraid to come out because she thought we were all plastered drunk and crazy.

It’s also gas to think that I’m now going out with one of the five Students’ Union sabbatical officers, who stood in front of us during Orientation week. How did that happen?

After all the good times I’ve had this year, Cappavilla was an obvious choice to live in next year. I lived with a good crowd and got on with the neighbours. What more could I have asked for? The people I live with next year will have a lot to live up to. I hope I stay in contact with this year’s bunch, even if they don’t decide to live on the north side of the campus next year.

It’s much the same with the people in my course. When I signed up to do Journalism and New Media, I expected there to be a lot of snobs in the course. I was delighted to find out that most of the people were incredibly friendly and outgoing. I’m currently in the process of organising a class trip to Oakwood theme park in Wales for them, which is just as tedious as it sounds. I’ll look forward to seeing them next year, after they’ve spent their summer digging out local stories and brushing up on shorthand.

And me? Well I’ve learned so much this year. Get involved, but don’t go overboard; five jagerbombs in a night makes little people quite sick and never, ever, ever do German. I will genuinely miss the place and the people over the summer. But, as a good friend of mine says, it’s not over ‘til it’s over and it’s not over for a good while.



AHEM. SO, another college year draws to a close. As another group of sabbatical officers ride off into the sunset (some of them probably on first years, as tradition demands), I think I will take a look through what was hot in the paper this year, what sparked the imagination of the regular student and what got us talking.

Fees

Is the fight over? All year the students of UL had fees on their conscience. It was a constant issue but mostly seemed constantly inevitable. Have students lost their battle? I’m not sure, but the fact that only 300 to 400 UL students managed to make the well-publicised city protest makes me think maybe. Sure, we managed to block a bridge with similar numbers, which was nice, but we seemed to lack bite in general. I’m not talking about tying-yourself-to-a-Feds-moped-above-in-Cappavilla-type bite, just a collective will. Could it be that we believe we should pay? Or are we just too passive to worry about this ‘til September?

Saw Doctors in courtyard

We were promised a mini-festival in Oktoberfest! We didn’t quite get one but we did get some great music in Fred, We Should be Dead, Damien Dempsey and the Saw Doctors. What didn’t happen during the day certainly happened at night. This gig saw the first use of the SU courtyard during the five-stage Freshers’ Ball. It was great! So hopefully it will be a permanent fixture on our social calendars. As one girl said, “Tis like f*cking Oxegeen around here!”

Mucky pitches

A controversial front page newspaper photo – of what looked like a swamp in Florida – saw Pa O’Brien being branded Sports Staff Enemy Number 1 in UL. All he really did though was point out the inequity of living on Ireland’s sporting campus but training in a cesspool of mud filth and decay. We see the University taking action now and delivering a plan for a development worthy of our students. Shame is a beautiful tool for progress!

Rag Week

Sunny Rag Week and the living was easy. A load of bullshit in the paper about students getting arrested though: when it was actually Munster fans and Mary I women so sexually starved that they were chasing down men like rabid dogs. Sure, there were a couple of bad incidents but most students were great. The Union has been peddling the condemnation line (which they have to), but the actual fact is we weren’t too bad.

The Mumps

No shiftin’ in the Lodge or you’ll f*ckin’ die, like.

Bridgegate

I’m sure that only the hacks are aware of this incident. Martin Cullen was successfully stopped on Thomond Bridge but managed to get across the Living one. The official line was that there weren’t enough on the Living to stop him and they wanted to avoid any damaging arrests, but, shit, it doesn’t really matter how many they had on the bridge, his driver

has a God damn gun! Conspiracies abound of a secret Union plot and pact to make Fianna Fáil look good by...blocking a bridge. Well... whatever happened Fianna Fáil are gone to shit anyway, so yeah... plan foiled ULSU.

Hardy Bucks

Ireland’s answer to trailer park boys sees Mayo’s finest smoking, fighting, driving round town and even getting the occasional ride. If you need a laugh during the exams take five minutes out to give it a look on YouTube

The ‘R’ word

I have got one thing to say to the recession: F*CK OFF!

So that’s it; it’s been good. I wrote some of these articles in half an hour and others took me as much as 40 minutes. I started these articles to get free drink to be honest...It didn’t work. Next year, I’m going to get a real job and pay for my liquor. I wish you a summer of sun, liquor and women/men of loose morals. Have a good one!



Columnists

Deep Throat

WE ONLY had a go at half a year this time out. While it is entirely possible that Captain Pugwash, or Lt. Commander Bath-time for Baby, or whatever his name was, will be back next year we're not the least bit interested in reflecting on his material.

There is still a danger at this point that Rag Week will be canned for next year but I suspect that time doesn't so much heal wounds as render most memories too porous to care. That said, don't be too surprised if the college goes for some surety of good behaviour and decides on holding some portion of the capitation grants to clubs and societies to ransom. Any default would have the upside of plugging some of the hole in the college's finances.

And now that he's a Lion – and king of the pride at that – (though a British and Irish one mind and not in some weird furry sexual way calling himself Simba) wouldn't you think some bright spark in the PR department or President's office would look to give Paul O'Connell that engineering degree he started here all those years ago? I mean, why not give him an honorary Bachelor's degree now and sort him for another honorary postgraduate award when he retires and a doctorate down the line. But we should do it soon or some other place will nab him and that would be so like UL to let slip another chance to promote some positive aspect of the college.

The Don is busying thanking the staff for their various feedback on his speech to them about the state of the college. The feedback can be paraphrased into "Don't eliminate our department, we're brilliant. You should kill that one over there; they've done nothing but waste money." Expect to see major changes i.e. reductions in departments and schools, in the coming academic year.

Before we leave the staff alone. We'd like to thank one of the Nancy Serranos for providing us with much fun over the year but we don't know which one it was. The most recent mirth making came

from this quote from a notice that former UL student Fiachra Ó Luain is "running a shoe-string campaign (financed mostly by Fiachra Ó Luain's dole money)" which prompted one staff wag to comment, "There I was thinking that the dole was a job-seeker's allowance.... :-)) - Then again, I suppose that he is seeking a (rather well-paid) job in Brussels.. :-))". It's been unreal!

Speaking of elections, try and keep in mind various UL folks who are standing in the local elections. Brian Stokes here in Castletroy, Liam Quinn up in Laois, Diarmuid Scully, I'm not suggesting you vote for any of them but I'd keep them in mind just in case you need help down the line with that little difficulty with the planning authorities. We're getting to be nearly as bad, or as good, depending on how you look at it, as the other colleges are at producing baby politicians.

Coming around to matters Union related one last time. Looking back on the year, we had seriously thought that at least one of the set of sabbatical officers elected last year would have gone for another run. Chance doesn't count as he was elected this year. We thought to ourselves that El Hefe had been waiting for this gig for so long that she'd never be off after just one stint.

Still she has surprised us before, it was just that one time in a darkened corridor but she never wrote or called afterwards.

Pa had the looks of a five year plan, while Damien was just coming around to getting started or that's what he told us. Still, it was great to see people running for positions again even if it was fear of unemployment that drove some candidates into campaigning. Chance will have to think about leaving the campus or doing good works in overseas labour camps.

As for predictions, we reckon the days of worrying about minor problems like where will I park my car are going to be a thing of the past. I give it a year before we see stories of student brothels in the mainstream press, six months

for the Sunday Independent.

In all honesty, you're a shower of useless know-nothings but we love you all. And if we do manage to get votes for the Seanad and you do manage to graduate, will you think about giving one of our own a scratch. I could use it.

And in a ridiculous and possibly pointless attempt at some quality control we're going to have try outs for next year. If you think you're the right stuff to scribble this sort of nonsense e-mail us with a page or two at thethroat@gmail.com. After the exams or even during the summer will do, cos we might be lonely. We promise to filter out the rubbish and pass it onto the new El Ed, not that she is under any obligation to pick go with our choice.

And as ever UL prevails!



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Postcard from UL

Alexandra Gdanietz

Notes from a German Erasmus student

THE SEX Education Show, Rag Week, Kanelbullar baking, mum's visit and Ring of Kerry tour, Easter break, home alone, no alcohol on Good Friday, another famous gaming night, Dolans, Limerick pub crawl, study, study and study once more! That's basically my resumé of the last three weeks.

While watching TV with my German housemate and her friends we unsuspectingly found ourselves confronted with huge female genitals at eight in the evening, uncensored and in close-up view. I was shocked. Impossible on German TV and certainly something that would make me drop my cornflakes. That's what you call educational measures, I guess.

And that brings me to Rag Week straight away. I didn't see much of Rag Week, I must admit, since I was busy showing Ireland's best side to mum and baking Swedish cinnamon rolls. And you guys will say: What? Erasmus-student and no going-crazy, party-to-the-extreme, table-wrestling, Cola-drinking-contest-action? No, not at all!

Much as I would have liked to see Rag Week or have at least one pint in the sunbathing crowd of UL students sitting in the Students' Union courtyard, listening to one of the many live concerts on campus, just to get the feeling, I couldn't.

Unfortunately, I was overburdened with college work! I just can't help but think of all the Erasmus people at my home university in Potsdam, doing absolutely nothing, showing up at tutorials once a semester and if so, playing computer games at the back of the room.

But I don't complain, complaining is typically German! I like being involved here, being part of campus life. On top, getting

organised doesn't seem to be my actual strength.

Easter break was far from Rag Week, as if the entire of UL had to recover from one week non-stop party. My housemates decided to go home for the break but I wouldn't. I would hold the fort and organise a study party for my friends and me. And what can I say: study parties never work out! By now I'm proud to be a stupid-YouTube-videos-expert: Techno-Viking, Italian for beginners, man swallowing microphone and Hitler singing 'Born to be Alive', to mention just a few.

The current mumps epidemic on campus makes Erasmus students' faces swell up and that's bad because they couldn't join in for the trip to the Aran Islands.

In general I find myself thinking of everything as if doing it for the last time. I don't like saying goodbye and I don't have the blues but time is flying and in less than four weeks I'm back in Berlin wondering why I can't be Erasmus for the rest of my life.

Erasmus is great and I only can recommend it to everyone! I'm sure to remember my time at UL as one of the best times in my life. I won't forget Limerick and its people. I will say: I've been to Limerick, the city with the most miserable image of Ireland, and it was great. I will keep the Irish as friendly, crazy (for some) and warm-hearted in mind.

I will ask for a pub on campus at Potsdam University and a Spar, packed with chocolate bars. I will go to university in my tracksuit trousers and in my hoodie and I'll probably get weird faces but I don't care. I'll say: I've been to Ireland and that's how they do it.

In Focus: Surviv

It's the final countdown...



YOU KNOW it's near the summer when you see three things happening around campus: the sun is shining, the green in front of the library is full of people and you see people turning up in your lectures that you thought had dropped out! Yes, it is that wonderful time of year again: exam time!

The purpose of this article is just to give you a quick heads-up as regards exams and exam preparation and hopefully spare you some of the accompanying stress. It is never too late to open the books and start studying (unless the exam is over, then it might be a tad late alright)! Here are a few stress busting tips which will hopefully reduce your exam related headaches!

(i) Before you start answering questions, start asking them; find out when and where the exam is on. Which building? How long will it take me to walk/cycle there? How long will I have to allow driving there and will I need extra time to park the car? Are there past papers? How the exam is structured; short questions or long essay type questions? How much time have I got and how much should I allow for each question? Run through these questions in your head before you start studying so as to avoid any nasty surprises on the day itself.

(ii) Check to see if your module allows you to take a calculator/dictionary or other aid into the exam with you. If it does, then

please make sure that the one you are using complies with exam regulations! There is nothing worse (and yes I have seen it happen) when you are asked to take your calculator out of the exam hall, ten minutes before the exam begins!

(iii) It's never too late to take control of your semester. See can you hand in essays, tutorial assignments or labs; they might be docked due to the fact they're late, but some marks are better than no marks! If you've been living in the Lodge for the year, head to your last few lectures and tutorials; lecturers know that people will be showing up and exam and revision tips are usually given around this time. Also it might be a good idea to meet people who have notes from the semester!

(iv) Print off or download the past exam papers from Public Folders and start doing a few questions. If your course is has changed or is new, then be warned that the old papers might not actually reflect your exam; if this is the case ask your lecturer will they post a sample paper. For long questions, the general theory is fifty minutes per question (for a two question, two hour exam); try to tackle a question every evening, after study and before you relax. It will help you to focus and regurgitate the information you have been slaving trying to take in. Take ten minutes at the end to go back over what you've written comparing it with your study notes;

the more you practice, the more you will take in.

(v) Read all questions fully and twice! It's not above lecturers to try and put in trick questions into exams. Some multiple choice questions are especially difficult, so take your time and don't rush!

(vi) Make sure your diet isn't being neglected during this period. Plenty of slow burners for sustained energy releases. The SU shop has lots of pasta and rice type dishy-things etc. Also for the culinary challenged, a few chopped rashers in a bowl of pasta with a pint of water/milk rarely goes astray. Try to take on some fruit and also veg as part of your diet if you can; put an apple or banana in the bag if you're headed to the Library or the Lab. Try to avoid Coke and other high energy drinks; they only provide short term boosts.

(vii) Try not to stress too much and panic if you can. It's only an exam; the worst case scenario is that you might have to re-sit it. Try and get a good night's sleep before your exam; it will help more than you know! Go to bed, get a few hours sleep, get up early and revise again before you head to your exam. Treat yourself during this period also. Take regular cigarette/coffee/chocolate breaks and talk to your housemates while doing so. Doing this for a few minutes every fifty minutes or so will help break the monotony of the study and will also give you something to look forward to as you study.

Casting an Eye on I-grades

We've all heard about getting an A grade or a B grade, but what the hell is an I-grade?

From the Student Handbook, an I-grade is granted by the University to students who "face an immediate crisis" and therefore cannot complete all of the requirements for a module.

In essence, I-grades are awarded to students who, because of physical or mental illness or immediate family bereavement, can't sit their end-of-semester exams.

How do I get one?

The University is pretty tight on who can and can't apply for an I-grade and pleading extreme work pressure is not a valid reason to demand one.

Students must submit satisfactory

evidence to support their request for an I-grade through the Student Medical Centre, Counselling or Chaplaincy services. If a cert originates from outside the University, the student must bring it in person to the medical centre or counselling or chaplaincy services unless it clearly states that the student is bed-bound. Certs must be presented within five working days of the relevant exam(s) in order to meet grade deadlines. They must be dated and, in the case of illness, refer to the nature of the illness and resulting incapacitation and state that the student is not fit to sit his or her exam(s).

So, what happens then?

The I-grade Committee meets after the end of the last exams and considers all applications it has

received for I-grades. If a student is successful in attaining an I-grade, SAA inserts this into the student's academic record. I-grades must be cleared by the end of the repeat exam period for that academic year. If a student is successful in getting an I-grade, he or she should get in touch with the faculty member responsible for the module(s) to clarify how the outstanding requirements will be fulfilled.

A lot of the time, this will entail sitting a written exam at the same time as the repeat exam for the module in question, but it won't be capped at C3 like repeats. There are other possibilities (such as submitting extra coursework or even assessing performance in the module overall), but, generally, an August exam is the most frequent solution.



ing the Exams

Stress Busting

Eamonn Gardiner

LOSE YOUR head if it wasn't tied on? Fly off the handle at the slightest bit of pressure? Well then exams are going to be FUUUUUNNN for you!

But, on a more serious note, they're exams; they're not the end of the world! Handle them like that and before you know it you'll be through them without a bother!

As a former fellow sufferer I know where you are coming from; my first exam (politics) had me so stressed that I couldn't eat anything before it! And it was at half-four! That sort of stress isn't helpful to anyone.

If you let that get to you, the exam period will loom over you like some sort of scary-monster-type-thing!

The purpose of this article is basically to give you a few pointers about how to lessen the impact of the inevitable stress which will come down onto your nice sheltered life of lectures and lodging like a proverbial ton of rectangular shaped building thingies.

1 Eat well. An army marches on its stomach and your studying skills will only march so far without sustenance. And the person sitting opposite you in the exam will get really thick if your tummy keeps rumbling all the way through the paper (personal experiences)!

2 Arrive on time. Again personal experiences on this one. Don't wake up on the floor of your room having fallen asleep studying all night long and have to race to your exam! Spending the first ten minutes of your exam attempting to get your breath back is not fun!

3 Bring pens and pencils. There is nothing worse than running out of steam in an exam! Don't let yourself down and run out of ink! Also if you're doing a paper which requires drawing make sure you

bring your materials with you; if you get a chance clean the rulers etc so they won't mark the page.

4 Read the whole paper from start to finish; you might find that questions further down the page suit you better than those at the top. Don't rush in, take a few minutes and use some spare paper (put up your hand and ask for it!).

5 Do a word dump; literally write down everything you can remember from your studying on one side of the page. After you've looked at it for a while, turn the page over and use the reverse to try and construct a working idea of what you're going to write for your answer. Don't be afraid to ask for more rough work paper!

6 Don't just dump all those lovely words on to the paper! Think about your question, analyse it and underline key words and phrases, e.g. Explain the similarities and differences between the War of Independence and the Civil War. Then construct your essay around those key points; don't write about everything you know, only write about everything you've been asked!!

7 Your ID card is not just for getting into nightclubs and the Stables/Scholars. Bring it with you to your exams; the invigilators will need to verify you're you (who else would be stupid enough to sit an exam they don't have to?) before they'll let you into the exam hall. Students have been forced to either return home or go to Student Academic Administration in order to get a new card before the invigilators will allow them to take an exam!

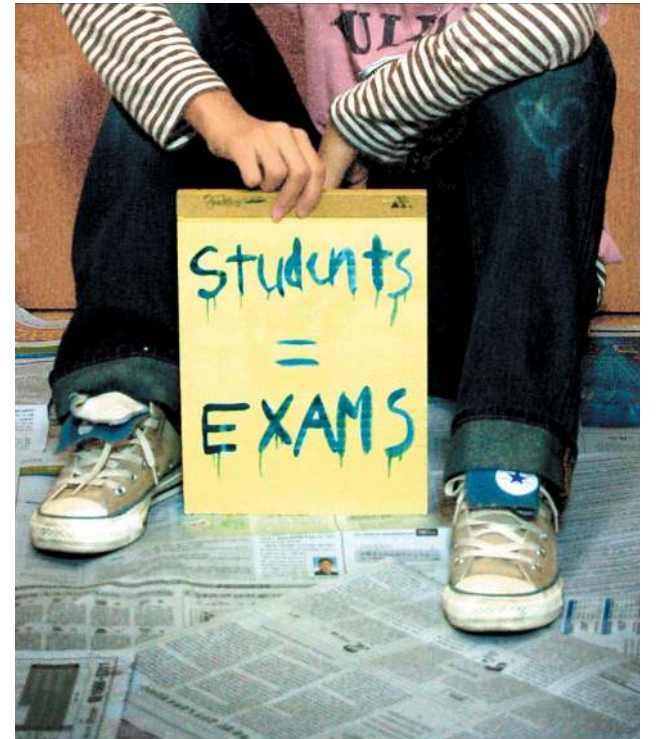
8 Turn off your phone going into the exam and leave it in your bag or place it on the floor beside your desk. You don't want to be caught with it on in case they think you were availing of the 'text-a-friend' bailout option.

9 Leave your lucky teddy or dolly in your bag. Trust me they'll

still be close enough to give you the bestest luck possible and the supervisor won't ruin your luck by asking you to remove them!

10 Take your time planning a question for a few minutes before you race off into it and realise you've no idea what you're writing about! Use your rough work paper; you did pay for it after all!

11 Don't on the other hand take the entire exam period planning the celebrations after the exam or ogling the hot (male and/or female) supervisors! Firstly, you're pretty obvious, boys and girls, and, secondly, it just distracts you from what you're supposed to be doing – namely writing your paper and getting your exams! Don't daydream, it's an expensive hobby in more ways than one.



Top Educational Questions

Courtesy of Student Academic Administration



I want to drop out, should I bother doing my exams?

Yes, you should do your exams. If you choose not to, you will be awarded all Fail grades and will still have to pay a semester's worth of fees if you choose to transfer to another course.

Can I drop out and change course at this point of the year?

You can still drop out at this stage of the year by going Student Academic Admin (SAA) in the Main Building. Here, you will be given a release form which they can fill out. But, there is no real point in dropping out at this stage because, after 31 October you will be liable to pay fees for one semester for whatever course you choose to do next year instead.

I've missed my exam, what do I do?

Your first point of contact should be with the lecturer. If you inform the lecturer, it may be possible for him or her to set another paper on

that day or come up with another alternative, viable solution. After that, if you wish to apply for an I-grade, you need to go to the counselling or medical services.

I-grades

The time limit for applying for an I-grade is five days after the finish of exams. If you wish to apply for one, you are much more likely to be successful if you apply before the exam, or at least on the day itself.

You must bring the module code, date and time of your exam to the medical or counselling services. If you have a certificate that originates from outside UL, you must present it the medical, counselling or chaplaincy in person, unless it specifies that you are bed-bound. These services will forward documentation to SAA who then pass it on to I-grade Committee which sits seven days after last exam of semester.

I grades are not counted as repeats so you can achieve any grade (i.e.

I-grades are not capped at a C3 grade). There is no fee to sit an I-grade exam.

Viewing papers

Scripts will be available to view on certain designated days after the exams. If you want to view your paper, you must register to view them with the relevant department. A form must be filled out for each different module.

Academic cheating

If you are found to be cheating, you will be allowed to finish the exam and your paper will be corrected as it normally would by the lecturer. The matter will then be passed onto the Disciplinary Committee.

Minimum standards to progress

You must achieve at least a D2 in every module and have an overall QCA greater than 2.0 to progress to the next stage of your course.

If you don't achieve these standards

you have some options:

- Take annual repeats – you can take a maximum of two per semester (four per academic year). Repeat exams are capped at a C3 grade, meaning the highest grade you can get for a repeat exam is a C3.
- Repeat the semester
- Repeat the year
- Have your enrolment terminated

You must have QCA greater than 2.0 to be eligible for the annual repeats

There is a fee for all repeats exams. Repeat exams are held before the start of Autumn Semester (i.e. for students with repeats from Academic Year 2008/09, the repeat exams will take place in August 2009).

For reapplying or transfer of course check out handbook p 37, 38, 39

When will results be available?

Results will be online from 22 January, 2009.

S'Union Speak

As the year comes to an end we ask the Sabbats and SU staff about some of the most challenging times they faced and overcame over the last year!

Bubbles - Welfare Officer

Well, when the lube didn't arrive in time for the shag packs during Shag Week...Me and Paddy Rockett had to go around to every sex shop in Limerick and try to purchase it in bulk. They all recognised me even though I wasn't wearing my red PVC cat suit under a trench coat like I usually do when I go for my weekly shopping trip. I was worried Paddy might start to suspect, but then I realised they knew Paddy by name too so it was grand.



Adele - Reception Manager

Definitely when Roisin told me she was knocked up. Do you know condoms are provided for free in the Welfare office, there was just no excuse for it!



Roisín

Administrative Secretary

That time I got knocked up was quiet challenging and after hearing what happened to Paul Lee's wife I think I may have more challenges ahead! Although if Paul's around I think I'll be ok!



Emma - PSA President

When Pa and I got married at the Alumni dinner (we had flowers and everything!) only to find out that he ran off with my best friend Jen at the PSA Ball! (I have the photos to prove!) (What an absolute pr*ck!) It started to get really awkward at work but I just had to pick up the pieces and move on with my life



Damien

Campaigns & Services Officer

Probably one of my biggest challenges was getting up in the mornings to host the day time Rag week events. One day I ended up hosting them dressed in boxers, a dressing gown and slippers. No one batted an eyelid though so all's well that ends well. I was very comfortable actually I might do it more often!



Pa - President

Well I faced many challenges throughout the year, but the one that reoccurred was the social challenges of the job. I had to be seen in various pubs and clubs talking to first y- I mean students and always with a pint of Guinness in my hand as they are my sponsors. The toughest time was probably when I fell asleep in the Scholars with what I would describe as a pointy Santa hat on during Christmas Daze and my friend Murph put a sign on me saying if found please return to the SU. Someone did thank god, in a job like this you need good reliable friends.



Eamonn - Education Officer

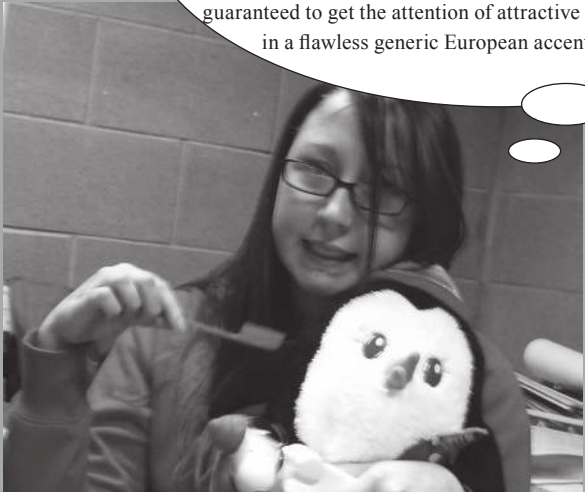
When I interrupted the president of the university at academic council and got told off by him! It didn't seem funny at the time but in hindsight it is considering I now realise they can't take my degree off me!



Aoife

Communications Officer

I suppose the biggest challenge I faced was adapting to sharing my office with the new co-op student. At the beginning it was quite awkward and uncomfortable, I couldn't write An Focal in my underwear like I usually do and I couldn't swig neat whiskey and shake my fist at the world - at the union! - in such an obvious way anymore. However, a bond of trust and allegiance grew between us and I felt comfortable enough to get back to my old routines as well as try new things like learning dance routines that are guaranteed to get the attention of attractive males and how to speak in a flawless generic European accent. Great Success!



Andrea

Communications Co-op student

I've only been here since January so it's hard to say, really, but all my friends, especially my mate Mattie Brennan (big shout out to him...look, you got your mention in the last An Focal) say I've changed a lot since I started working in the SU. I dunno what it is about the place but, God, there's nothing but innuendo and dirty jokes lurking in every sentence. I used to be an innocent lass from Mayo...now look at me: I'm coming up with more dirty jokes than the lot of them combined...I should just keep my lips shut these days.



Editorial

An Focal

University of Limerick

Students' Union

University of Limerick, Plassey, Co Limerick

Volume XVII, Issue 14

Tuesday, 28 April, 2009

Letters to the editor (Aoife Breen, 2008/09) may be sent to the above address or alternative may be emailed to editor@ulsu.ie. Please note that submission of a letter does not guarantee publication, but you never know, you may be lucky. Recycle An Focal (and all waste paper) in blue skips located at the rear of your building.



Looking to the future

AND SO another semester draws to a close, bringing with it, this time, the academic year 2008/09 and ending another chapter in the life of many students at the University. The time has come for 4th years to bid farewell and to allow UL to seep into their memories as they finish their final exams and graduate with the degrees that they have sought out for the past four years. They have achieved what they came to do and will join the closed group of UL alumni in August when they receive their parchments. For everyone else, September is a long way away and there are many summer months to fill before returning to the UL rollercoaster. This year, however, was markedly poignant in third level education in Ireland.

Last summer, Education Minister Batt O'Keeffe shocked student representatives with his announcement that the Free Fees Initiative may have to end due to a worsening economic climate. Registration fees were increased to a whopping €1500 and students were left susceptible to the financial reality of pursuing a degree.

We issued press releases, we took to the streets, we blocked a bridge; but what have we achieved in the long run?

As the whole global economy descends into the unknown darkness of a recession, the reintroduction of fees may very well be the only solution left open to any government.

But there are other options; other more equitable options that any powers that be need to investigate thoroughly.

Education is what created the Celtic Tiger; the educated Irish workforce of the '90s attracted foreign direct investment because of their skills. No

government minister should ever forget that.

The only way we will clamber our way out of this economic abyss is by doing our best to ensure that the future will have something to stand on. That something is education.

As the campus begins to empty out and the sound of nothing replaces the shrill chatter and laughter of students, remember that the battle has just begun. While only a few hundred students turned out on the 23 September last year to march on Limerick city with their fellow students from Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Institute of Technology, perhaps as the reality is becoming more glaringly obvious then more would have turned out in hindsight.

But, as they say, hindsight is 20:20 vision. We need to look to the future. We need to find out how we, the students of Ireland, can work with the government to implement a fair and equitable way of financing third level education such that the very finite resources of students aren't crippled to an extent that impedes participation rates. But at the same time, we can no longer be blinded by illusion and accept that there simply isn't as much money to finance universities as there was previously, while every other sector is also crying not to have their budgets dashed.

We need to be able to persuade and show the country the importance of education and the importance that education will have once the gloomy clouds of the slump begin to disperse. We need to be ready for the future. We need to be ready for recovery.

Pa's Propaganda

Well here it is, the last time I will be using An Focal to spread my lies and/or propaganda (it's been fun), but I still have some more left in me.

I have had a great year working in the Union; it's been really hard work and a challenge at times but always enjoyable. I know I was in The Stables and Scholars and other licensed premises quite frequently, but it hasn't all been drinking, a lot of it has but not all!

My main aim at the start of the year was to get a few vital things done. These were things like getting better information all around campus (Plasma Screens ready to be installed), re-branding and making the Union more visible, a new website, expanding and formally establishing a ULSU bike shop, opening a new ULSU Shop (September), Protesting against fees, starting the process of Anonymous marking, having bigger gigs in bigger venues (SU courtyard and permission to investigate UL Bowl and Whitehouse site) and getting the University to give students what we deserve, not only in an academic sense, but also the provision of top class sports facilities for the students of UL. All these things have been done or are in the process of being done.

You can never get everything you want done because you're slipping into a big organisation and bureaucratic system where it takes time to get things moving. With the job comes responsibility also. You can no longer really justify being the person found swimming in the fountains in during Christmas Daze. It wouldn't sit well at all if I was ended up in front of University discipline!

I've done my best to try and fulfil what I promised and don't regret anything I've done along the way. I want obviously to thank my Officers who gave their all throughout the year. Everything didn't always go smoothly but we worked together to get through things.

Mostly I hope that you all had a good year and that the Union delivered for you. We have made a lot of progress this year which I know will be carried on by the new team that comes in to take over in June. I think that you need new faces in here every year and fresh approaches. I think it keeps the Union relevant to who they represent.

Anyway that's about it I think. Hope everyone has a good summer and that you've had a year to remember in UL whether it was your first or fourth,

All the best,
Pa



As the distant memories of gluttony and basking in riches fade away, the prospects of summer '09 in Ireland loom on the horizon.
Cartoon by Andrea Gallagher.



The Advice Bureau

Education In Focus

Study Networks

Eamonn Gardiner - Education Officer

It’s that wonderful time of year again: exam time! It’s the time of year when you realise that ‘hey, maybe I should have gone to all of those lectures and tutorials in RAG Week’, or ‘maybe I shouldn’t have slept in for my Friday morning 9am every week!’

But fear not! The end may well be nigh, but hope remains! Just because you’ve been a little lax on the whole attendance issue (lets face it, no one’s perfect!), doesn’t necessarily mean you’re going to completely fail the exam. You more than likely won’t set the world on fire, but you should still be ok. In situations like this you should remember a very simple phrase: damage limitation!

Damage limitation does what it says on the tin. It means fair enough, you’ve had an easy ride so far this term, but that’s over now. So switch on and tune in or otherwise you’re going to fail.

Damage limitation isn’t about A1s, it’s about D2s and C3s and passing a particularly crap semester and progressing with your class. The first thing you need to do is go to your friends/classmates and ask them what you missed during the semester; they can fill you in on what questions the lecturer asked of the class, give you an accurate picture of what was covered in lectures/labs/tutorials and hopefully provide some insight into the semester. This system is known as a support network. Networks can be formalised (such as a trade union) or informal.

The next thing you should do as a group is to share out your notes from lectures, labs and tutorials for the module. Essays and presentations should also be shared as should books and articles. This pooling of information greatly enhances the information available to all members of the network and strengthens the collective study abilities. While it might seem to be a commonsense approach to the topic of study, it should not be overlooked. Ask what your friends are studying and then have a look over their study notes also. This has the added advantage of learning with someone who is also interested in a particular area. Therefore together you and your friends can come together and bounce ideas off one another and create an environment where learning actually becomes far easier.

Another key point at this juncture is to go to the internet. UL uses a few systems for the dissemination of information; SULIS and Public Folders are just two of a growing number. SULIS is an online teaching portal (main site) used by some lecturers to provide readings and online resources for their classes. It has the advantage of allowing lecturers to place one reading in electronic format online so that hundreds of students can access it simultaneously. It also ensures that data pertinent to your exams should be available to the maximum number of students.

Public Folders are a subsection of the Microsoft Outlook email system which the university uses. Lecturers post their past exam papers and some study notes on this system. It is readily accessible from any UL Student email account and files can be easily downloaded. The only issue is that your email address has to be opened and with ITD issues recently it is better to download papers sooner rather than later.

As a final word don’t leave the study too late. I’ve done night before the exam study and it’s not a good idea. Start early and do a little every couple of days. The fewer exams you have the easier it is, but still try and do a few hours every day on just study for your modules. If you start doing out questions from the past papers they will stand to you in the exam. Time management is key in an exam and the completion of a few past papers will really give you an ace on this one.

Best of Luck in your exams and if you need help, call or text (086) 0435302 or email eamonn.gardiner@ul.ie

Show me the money!

...useful websites for the future

Studentfinance.ie

The one-stop shop for student finance including detailed information on

- The maintenance grant
- The student assistance fund
- Millennium fund
- Back to education allowance

It also has limited information in relation to scholarships and other student grants.

Welfare.ie

This is the Department of Social and Family Affairs website. It provides information on the following benefits;

- Treatment benefit
- Back to education allowance
- Child benefit

Contact details and addresses of local social welfare offices are listed on the site.

Revenue.ie

The Revenue Commissioners are responsible for all Irish tax and customs. Tax relief and refunds available from Revenue include:

- Tax back on tuition fees
- Rent relief for private rented accommodation
- Tax back on medical expenses
- Tax relief on service charges

Details of the revenues regional offices are listed on the website along with telephone numbers.

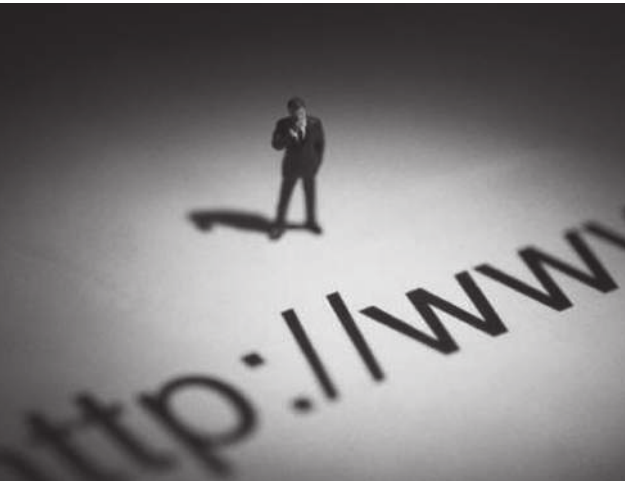
Citizeninformation.ie

A general knowledge-type website, which includes pubic service information for Ireland; including anything from registering a child’s birth to renting a room and everything in between. The website is divided into categories and those most useful to students are;

- Education and Training
- Money and Tax
- Social Welfare
- Housing

(Students who are due to live aboard as part of their course may also want to look at the ‘Moving Country’ section for some useful information)

As always the SU welfare officer is available to answer any financial related questions you may have; email suwelfare@ul.ie or call into the welfare office, downstairs in the Students’ Union.



Let’s talk about sex baby!

An Focal sex columnist Annie Glyde-Dammes

Ok, it’s exam time and that means serious stress for most of us. And what’s the best method of stress relief? That, ladies and gentlemen would be sex. But aside from saying “Do it!”, what else is there to speak about? So in keeping with the theme of exams, this week it’s going to be an exploration of sexual positions and which ones are best for various “situations” – Think of this article as a guide to practical exams...Of course I won’t be examining you personally but don’t think that every girl/boy who has sex with you won’t be!

“Dave’s” favourite position after a long, hard day at college is ‘girl-on-top’. He says this is because he’s too tired after the day and he doesn’t really like to move around much as he’s old. Bless him, he says he likes a girl who does all the work, as it should be. My analysis – avoid Dave. He is long question on a paper of multiple choice ones – too much work.

“Betty’s” favourite position is also ‘girl-on-top’, but for totally different reasons to Dave, obviously. She says it’s because she likes to be in control. My analysis – avoid Betty (unless you’re a “Dave”) as she’s clearly a complete control freak. She is the 1.1 student in your class – no matter what you work on or how well you know what’s coming up you will never be as good as she is.

“Fiona’s” favourite position is ‘missionary’ because she enjoys the simplicity of it and because it’s the way sex was intended to be had. My analysis – have sex with Fiona, but just the once. She’s like the exam set by a lazy lecturer – the same, year in year out. Although, just like the reliable problem question, occasionally her name will change.

“Enda’s” favourite position is ‘spooning’. He says it’s because he enjoys how close he can get to a partner when he spoons her. My analysis –Enda is the History of Ancient Civilisations exam– downright boring, unless you understand what’s going on.

And finally, “Louise’s” favourite position is “standing-up-legs-around-waist” (forgive the lack of official terms, my Karma Sutra book is at home). She says it’s because she enjoys the thrill and the excitement of something different. My analysis is give Louise a try. She’s like an engineering practical exam – mechanically difficult, until you get the hang of what’s going on, then she’s easy marks.

So in those hours when you’re stressed and frustrated you could do what I do, which is make up a sex evaluation system based on a study and exam theme. Or... you can just go and put this stellar evaluation system into practice. Rather unsurprisingly, I recommend the latter – it’s more fun.

Hepatitis B

Description:

It is a viral infection that affects the liver and blood

.

Effects:

-Long term complications can include liver failure and cirrhosis of the liver.
-Increased risk of miscarriage or premature labour. The infection may also pass it on to your baby during pregnancy.

Cause:

- Through blood and other body fluids.
- Unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- From an infected mother to baby during pregnancy.
- Sharing drug using equipment with an infected person.
- Tattoos, acupuncture and piercings with non-sterilised equipment.

Symptoms:

- Flu-like symptoms.

- Fever.

- Jaundice (yellow colouring of the eyes and skin).
- Nausea.
- Tiredness.

Around 10-50% of people infected have no symptoms.

Treatment:

You may need medical treatment.
You should stop or reduce the amount of alcohol you drink to reduce further strain on your liver.

Prevention:

- Get a Hepatitis B vaccination free from your GUM/STI clinic.
- Don’t share needles with drug users.
- Don’t have intimate sexual contact. Or
- Have safer sex – always use a new condom correctly and put it on before you have sex.

PSA Notes



Hi All,
Well I cannot believe that this is the final edition of the year. It has been a busy year and it promises to be a busy summer for all in the PSA and the postgraduates alike. During May and June we have summer events planned such as the annual barbeques and a postgraduate day on campus.
First of all, best of luck from all here in the PSA with exams and end of year assignments. The next few weeks are going to be some of the most hectic of the year so should you need any advice or direction please do not hesitate to call in. We will have a final semester night at the end of exams in the Common Room and the Stables on Friday 15 May. Tickets are available from the

PSA priced at €10, for your meal and two drinks included.
As this is the last edition I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the extremely hard work which has been done by the PSA executive this year and to thank them for their contribution to the Association this. By name they are Deputy President Michael Bourke, Events Officer Ciara McCorley, Publicity Officer Kyle Murray, ULSU Rep Paddy Rockett and SU Secretary General Tomas Costello. It has been such a busy year for the Association and without the help and support of the executive it would be difficult for the Association to run smoothly.
Also I would like to thank the ULSU team for all of their help and support

this year. It has been a pleasure working with Pa, Bubbles, Damo, Aoife, (and Andrea...the other half of the Comms Dept!) Eamonn and Shane as a sabbatical team and we have shared some great times over the past 12 months and hopefully a few more before the end of June. The irreplaceable part of the ULSU team, who have made my job a lot easier over the past two years are the staff and in particular Roisin, Adele, Tomas and the crew in night time reception. These people are the bones of how we represent students and I would like to thank each one of them for everything they have done to assist the association this year.
On Wednesday the elections for PSA President will take place and I would like to take the opportunity to wish the new Association President the best of luck for next year and I look forward to working with whoever that may be during handover. And finally to all of the Postgraduate students; I hope you have enjoyed the year and I hope that you stick around for the summer and enjoy some of the events planned for the summer. The PSA will be open as always all summer long so don't forget about us.
Take care and enjoy your summer
Emma

Damo's Piece: the last inches

Hi all. It's weird. One minute I'm sitting at a desk in a mildly clean office mid June last year and boom, all of a sudden Rag Week is over, my office is declared a health hazard and I'm almost finished one of coolest years of my life.
From orientation week to the winter slump, to a new semester and the madness that was Rag week 2009 it has been a great year. I met so many good people in the student population of this college that I for one will never ever, as old as I get, give out about student antics during Rag weeks or indeed during the year.
This year we had some incidents which were jumped on by the media, but in fairness with about 2500

people out every night that not bad. Imagine if 500 people decided to dismantle houses in the estates, now that would be news!! I must congratulate Fergal Dempsey who will be taking over from me as Campaigns and Services Officer. Well done Fergal and yes the office is staying the same. I will leave office on the 12th of June, a little bit sad but I will attempt the 13 Tap Challenge that day so all are welcome.
I'd like to say thanks to all my colleagues, all the people I worked with and was involved with and to all the students I met or helped. A special word of thanks to all the students who got on the "dirty" stage for various tasks during Rag

Week, that's the spirit guys. Especially to the three lovely ladies whose bras were opened in 9 seconds on the Tuesday of Rag Week. Great crack!
Anyway that's it, thanks thanks thanks to everyone, enjoy your time as UL students, the real world is a scary boring place and I'll see ya around sometime, it's been my pleasure working here for you! I'd like to leave you with a few lines from one of my favourite movies, can ya guess what it is? You shouldn't take life to seriously. You'll never get out alive. I've learned that you can't treat every situation as a life-and-death matter because you'll die a lot of times. Write that down.

ULSU Nitelink - Timetable for Academic Year 2008/09

Route A 19:00, 20:30, 22:00,

- Stop 1: Dromroe Village
- Stop 2: Thomand Village
- Stop 3: Cappavilla Village
- Stop 4: Plassey Village
- Stop 5: College Court
- Stop 6: Groody Student Village
- Stop 7: Courtyard Student Village
- Stop 8: Brookfield Hall
- Stop 9: Parkview Hall
- Stop 10: Park Mews (Kielys)

Returns to UL via Flag Pole Entrance

Route B 19:45, 21:15, 22:45,

- Stop 1: Kilmurry Village
- Stop 2: Elm Park
- Stop 3: Oaklawns
- Stop 4: Kilmurry Lodge
- Stop 5: Brierfield (Back of the Estate)
- Stop 6: Woodhaven
- Stop 7: Annacotty (Synotts)
- Stop 8: Spar (Dublin Road Bus Stop)
- Stop 9: Courtyard/Brookfield Roundabout

Returns to UL via East Gate entrance

Route C 23.30 Only

Route A+B Stops on Request
Drop off only



Ladies Rugby claims back their Intervarsity Cup

Fiona Reidy

UL LADIES' rugby entered the Intervarsities which were hosted by UCC this year on a high after a great League Final performance the week before beating UCC 27-7 in the DCU Bowl. On the opening day UL faced their toughest games playing UCC and the Garda College. UL started very slow in the UCC game and it took the team a while to rediscover their top form shown the week previously. Despite this UL looked the far superior team and their relentless effort paid off when Ashling Hutchings crossed over for UL's first try. Laura O'Mahony was next on the scoreboard for UL after many phases of play. UCC never threatened UL's line and were unable to score any points. The final score was UL 10 UCC 0.

In the next game UL faced their old rivals the Garda College and were keen to beat them. The two teams were deadlocked the whole way through with either team not getting through each others defence. Garda's Niamh Briggs hot off the Irish Women's 2009 RBS Women's 6 Nations Championship campaign landed a penalty to break the deadlock and secure victory for Garda on this occasion. Final score

UL 0 Garda 3.

Despite this narrow loss UL remained upbeat and positive about the second day's matches. UL played NUIG in their first game of day two and knew that they had to beat the Galway girls comprehensively to secure a place in the final. UL were fired up for this game and did not hold back.

Captain Jo O'Meara was first to score after making the decisive break inside NUIG's 22 metre line. Anna Caplice added the conversion and then was fast to score a try of her own under the posts.

In the second half it was more of the same from UL who had a brilliant structured defensive line throughout this game. Fiona Reidy was next to touch down for UL, Caplice again converted. The final score came through the dynamic Ashling Hutchings who evaded tackles and scored under the posts, Caplice added the conversion. Final score UL 26 NUIG 0. This meant that UL were through to the final and would be facing the Garda College once more.

With the sun blazing, the final saw two evenly matched teams take

each other on tackle for tackle in a bid to become 2009 champions. There was no joy for Garda as UL's Ashling Hutchings, following on from her excellent form in the league final, planted a try in the Garda half after a superb line break, Caplice added the conversion to lead 7-0 at half time.

After the restart, Garda were slow to turn their territorial pressure into points due to an excellent UL defence.

However, Niamh Briggs added Garda College to the score board when awarded a penalty kick to bring her team back into contention. However, Garda could not fend off the advances of the Limerick side despite their relenting pressure and UL managed another try through captain Jo O'Meara whom received a pop pass from Caplice to sneak in under the posts, Caplice once more added the conversion and the game at full time was UL 14 Garda College 3. UL did not concede any tries to their opposition during the two day Intervarsity competition an achievement in itself. What a remarkable ending to a hugely successful year for UL Ladies Rugby.

UL Ladies Hockey League Triumph

Katy Horner

EASTER SATURDAY on their home pitch in UL, saw the Ladies 2nds assert their dominance in Munster Division 4 Hockey, with a comprehensive 4-0 win over Tipperary in the final match of the season. UL had secured the league title 2 weeks prior, with victory away in Bandon. The win over Tipperary meant UL finished 7 points clear at the top of the table of 10 teams, having lost just 1 league match this season.

With only 5 points separating the top 5 teams for much of the season, UL went from strength

to strength, guided by coach Aamir Khan and captain Laura Davis. With many new faces, the first few games could have proved difficult but a consistent turnout at training was reflected in results, giving a great start to the season. Victories included tough away matches against Fermoy, Waterford, Bandon and Cobh. League matches were interspersed with a promising cup campaign, UL narrowly missing out on a league/cup double losing a nail-biting cup final 2-1 to Bandon.

However, winning the league

title and thus securing promotion to Division 3 was the main goal of UL Hockey this year, after many years coming so close. This was achieved through a huge team effort, seeing the coming together of an extremely dedicated panel of hockey players which made for an outstanding season all round. Just 9 goals were conceded over the course of the league campaign by a watertight defense and the outstanding goalkeeping of Leah Kidney and Kathryn Buggy. 32 goals were scored, Laura Davis just edging out Ciara Ryan as

top goal scorer. Other prolific scorers included Susie McDonagh, Sandra Rossiter, Aimee Reed and Nollaig Quinn. The huge depth and ability in this Division 4 side bodes well for a great season next year.

A number of UL players also achieved representative honours in Munster. Laura Davis has been selected as Vice-Captain for the Munster Team in the Junior Interpovincials. Jen O'Loughlin represented Munster in the Senior Interprovincials (scoring 2 goals against Connacht) and Laura Peters at U-21 level. The UL first

team was captained this year by Fenagh Smith and also included a number of past representative players. The first team, playing in Division 1, the top level in Munster Hockey also finished the season on a high with victory over Belvedere, and leaving UL finish the season in sixth place of eight teams in the league table. Former UL player and current Irish Captain Eimear Cregan, has captained Cork Harlequins to a playoff against UCC on 26th April, which will decide the Division 1 Champions for 2009.

With teams in Divisions 1 and 3 next year, UL Ladies Hockey will have teams closer in standard and aims to continue developing the club in Munster hockey, with the aim of introducing further teams in future. All ages and abilities are catered for with players ranging from schoolgirls and UL undergraduate players to a number of postgrads and people working in and around Limerick. This season has shown a great social and sporting aspect to the club, and this promises to continue on to next season.

Club

Five-a-side success for O’Goill

Tomás McCarthy

MAIRTIN O’GOILL’S team won a historic first Rag Week five-a-side tournament which turned out to be an exciting week of action.

Nineteen teams entered the tournament that ran from Monday to Thursday of Rag Week. Groups C and D were first into the action

on Monday.

Michael Verney’s team in group C caught the eye early on with victories of 11-1 and 6-1. Verney, UL and Offaly hurler, also had a number of other GAA players on the team to make them a force to be reckoned with.

O’Goill’s team also qualified from that group. The team of David James

Collision-Ryan missed their morning matches but put up a decent battle in the afternoon fixtures. Group D was won by the team of yours truly after the three other teams failed to turn up on the day. Thankfully, from the organisers’ point of view, this didn’t happen in the other groups.

On Tuesday and Wednesday I was on refereeing duty so I was able to

get a glimpse of groups A and B. The teams of Kevin Brennan and Niall Cleary were most impressive. While some of the games were one sided there was also some tight and close encounters. The standard of play was high and the encounters very competitive.

Thursday was the day of the knock out stages. From an early stage on

Thursday it was clear that Mairtin O’Goill’s team were going to take a bit of beating. They absolutely hammered us 11-3 in the quarter final stages on Thursday morning.

There was just no stopping the team in Galway jerseys as they came through the semis and final to claim the first ever Rag five-a-side title. They were awarded with a cup and

medals especially made for the tournament.

A number of people must take credit for staging this event over Rag week. The Students’ Union organised the tournament and it is hoped that it will make a comeback in Rag week 2010. The An Focal sports team will be back let there be no doubt about that.

Depleted An Focal fall at the quarters

Tomás McCarthy

THE AN Focal sports team once again put their reputations on the line in the name of another interesting challenge. The Rag Week five-a-side tournament provided the ideal opportunity to test ourselves once again. We decided to name our team FC Controversy.

The draw on Friday of week 9 saw us pitted in group D which we renamed the “Group of Death”. The tournament kicked off on the Monday with our three group games on at 11, 12 and 1 o’clock. What transpired on that Monday morning was crazy and ridiculous.

With Rag Week kicking off the night before, some of our players (King in particular) were worse for wear and also starving (Paul and John). McGrath was late and McNamara was an absentee but these two losses proved insignificant.

Out of the 9 teams that were supposed to play on Monday, six turned up. All three teams that failed to attend were all in our group. This resulted in An Focal earning three 2-0 automatic victories. That means we topped the group on nine points, scoring six goals and conceding none – all without kicking a ball. So, on Monday, ‘FC Controversy’ were the only team alive in the “Group of Death” powering through to the quarter finals.

Fast forward to Thursday morning at 11 o’clock and ‘FC Controversy’ would definitely be getting a game. With a lack of match practice, fatigue from a tough Rag Week and no substitutes, there were plenty of reasons to be worried.

We faced the Galway outfit captained by Martin McGill. With Fiona playing rugby and Kevin Mc out of action, ‘FC Controversy’ lined out with yours truly in goals, McGrath and Paul O’Connor at the back with Condren and King providing the attacking options. Galway went a goal up early on but An Focal deservedly got an equaliser which will be remembered more for the celebration afterwards than Eoin King’s lethal finish.

If you recall the Senegal celebration where they went into the corner and danced around the jersey you would be close. The sports editor sprinted up from his goal put his Keane 16 shirt on the turf as we all danced around much to the amusement of almost everyone. It proved to be the high point of the match from our point of view.

We constantly got caught on the counter attack and trailed 5-1 at the break. The first goal of the second half would prove crucial and we didn’t even get that. With Paul suffering a knee injury it was proving one-way traffic. However, Eoin King pulled one back after good work from McGrath and fired his hat trick after a through ball from yours truly.

We threw everything into attack but ended up conceding more than we scored. I did earn a dubious late penalty after a rather theatrical fall. Even then the sports editor still had his effort saved. A final score of 11-3 was probably fair and saw the great entertainers exit the competition.

I think McGrath summed up this encounter best when he said “football was the real winner”. And who am I to argue with McGrath?

The Siege flings the Frisbee crew towards awards

Eoin King

BEATING OUT the kayaker’s trip to the Alps and the skydivers sojourn to France, the ultimate Frisbee club won the best organised club event of the year.

Staged during valentine’s weekend this year 20 teams, including 2 from England and 1 from Holland competed at the now annual Frisbee competition known as the Siege.

To get the lowdown on everything ‘ultimate’ there is no better man to talk to than Jim ‘Limerick Jim’ Heneghan.

One of the founding fathers of the UL Ninjas, Jim was the man in charge at this year’s event, inviting every Irish team, as well as some Frisbee proponents from outside the isle. After hosting the intervarsities in 2007, the Ninjas reckoned a major tournament outside of the college nationals and the Cork open was needed.

The progress has been swift in the competitions second year, highlighted by this year’s award. There are 30 Ninjas in the club, and while it has a high turnover of international students, the Irish contingent continues to grow.

A fast non-contact sport, similar in style to American football, the sport engenders all the finer qualities of sport such as ‘the spirit of the game’. All foul calls are made by the players themselves. No referee is needed. At the past two world championships, the last staged in

Vancouver in 2008, the Irish have won the ‘spirit of the game award’. And though the “quality of players in America is much higher... the standard in Ireland is very high”.

Limerick Jim went to the high school where the game began, Columbia High in New Jersey, in 1968.

Having started the club in 2007 along with a few others, UL Ninjas have been steadily improving. Although behind the likes of Trinity, UCC and UCD, the club continues to gain experience and is off to the biggest Frisbee event in Europe this year, the Windmill Windup, competing and socialising with 80 other teams from across the continent.

While the team heading this year is set, the club will welcome any new members and guarantee a place at every event entered. The club, as Jim puts it “is a great way to meet girls or guys”.

Despite the excesses of the Stables and Lodge (a costume party themed ‘Freaks and Geeks’ was a hit this year), the standard remained high and the play competitive, providing hope that “it will be a launching pad for other tournaments during the summer.” If anybody is interested in joining you can visit the UL Ninjas website

‘ul-ultimate.110mb.com/main.php’ for more information.

UL Soccer News

Tomás McCarthy

Crowley Cup

UL 1 UCC 3

UCC struck first three minutes into the game to give them an early advantage. UL equalised when Sean Wason won and converted a penalty midway through the second half. UL hit the woodwork three times before UCC scored on the break with four minutes to go. UCC got a third three minutes into injury time to put a rather flattering look on the scoreline.UCC went onto win the cup beating Queens 4-1 in the final. This is a three in a row for UCC.

There was no plate semi-final as St. Pats Drumcondra gave UL a walkover .

Crowley Plate Final

UL 5 NUI Maynooth 2

UL Scorers were Fabien Fernandez (2), Jean Hourcade, (both Erasmus students), Ronan Kavanagh and Lee Carey.

This game was quite comfortable for UL as they were as 3-0 and 5-1 up in this game.

So despite losing to UCC in the first round UL still emerge with some pride in retaining the plate.

UL’s squad in the final was Enda Joyce, Sean Keating, Rob

Phelan, Kevin Murphy(Capt.), Liam Duffy, Sean Wason, Lee Carey, Tony Greaney, Jean Hourcade, Fabien Fernandez, Ronan Kavanagh, Cian Healy.

Futsal

UL won their Third Level Futsal regional final in Galway. After emerging from their group with NUIG and GMIT they defeated Athlone IT in the final 3-2 on penalties. It was 1-1 after extra time. UL penalty scorers in the final were Fabien Fernandez, Lee Carey and Jean Hourcade. Cian Healy made the crucial save during the shootout. At the time of going to print they were preparing to contest the national finals in Dublin with the winners travelling to Serbia.

Interprovincial Ladies

The Ladies Interprovincial college tournament hosted by UL took place on April 3 and April 4. UL players Emer Flatley, Siobhan O’Sullivan, Lorna O’Connell, Ruth Fahy, Niamh Mulcahy, Sarah Considine and Lynsey McKey represented Munster. Leinster emerged the victors after topping the table with two wins from three games.

All about the journey

Tomás McCarthy

IT IS always difficult to look back at a college sporting season and judge whether it was good or bad. Such is the range of competitions there will inevitably be great success, failures, near misses and controversy along the way. This year is no different.

The soccer club is one of those clubs who seemed to strike gold this year. The ladies team have such

an abundance of talent at their disposal that further domination could continue for years to come. To complete a treble of titles intersarsity, futsal and league, is staggering. Unfortunately, due to the low profile of the ladies game this achievement has not been shouted from the rooftops as much as it should. Make no doubt about it though, this UL ladies soccer team are the UL team of the year.

The men can also be proud of their season following a historic

first CUFL title claimed at Terryland Park. Following an unbeaten campaign this crown was fully merited.

On the GAA front there was disappointment all round. This reporter was convinced that the Fitzgibbon Cup was on its way back Shannonside, but UCC had something to say about that. The footballers were narrowly denied in the second round of the Sigerson. Narrow margins were also the downfall of the ladies football team

in the O'Connor Cup final. A fresher hurling title was delivered against LIT in one of the best GAA games on campus this season.

The UL ladies rugby team were confident all season of achieving the double and, to some, this might have seemed a bit arrogant. At first, it appeared to me to being just that but seeing them in action changed my opinion.

A bit like the ladies soccer team there is quality throughout the field on this team. They lost their title

last year but this time out there was to be no mistake. A league and intersarsity double was secured in impressive style and it proves that confidence is no bad thing.

Of course, there are small tales along the way which catch your eye during a season. Handball success in Cavan, basketball finals, ultimate Frisbee intersarsties, the pool club in Birr and of course the UL Vikings deserve a mention in this piece. All of these events play a role in the UL sporting calendar. There are so

many events that have taken place it is simply impossible to cover them all here.

One thing which always grips you though no matter what the season is the sheer commitment from all involved. The training, preparation and dedication which goes into UL clubs is phenomenal year on year. Here's to everyone who contributed to another season of twists and turns. At An Focal sport we have enjoyed the journey.

In a league of their own

Tomás McCarthy on the UL soccer club

SOMETIMES IN a season everything just seems to fall to place. Certainly for the UL soccer club it has been one of those seasons. Starting with the men's team and their journey this year has not been without drama and entertainment. Before Christmas their firepower in the league through the likes of Paul Cummins and steady defence saw them qualify for the quarter finals. The departure of manager Trevor Lovell to South Africa seemed to be a decisive moment in the season. The good league form early in the season could easily have been derailed. New manager Conor Molan, though, kept the UL motoring. Narrow wins over IT Tallaght and UCD ensured a Premier final date. Going into the Collingwood Cup there were high hopes. Anything can happen on the day in cup football though and UL slipped up to UCD in the quarter finals. However, the team pulled up their socks and pocketed the plate competition the Farquhar Cup. After this, attentions were drawn to the Premier final at Terryland Park. It proved to be a historic night with John Tierney striking twice and one from Cummins to secure a 3-1 win. UL had won the first ever CUFL title. The fresher team also performed well in the Harding Cup that was hosted by UL.

Martin Deady and Bobby Tier were among those to impress as UL reached the final only to be beaten by UUJ. Perhaps the best indication of the quality in this team can be seen in the number of the squad now plying their trade in the League of Ireland. Limerick 37 boast the likes of Martin Deady, Paul Walsh and Brendan Daly while recently Athlone Town have signed Brian Cleary. Whatever the men can do the ladies seem to do better. A treble winning season shows that the other colleges have a lot of catching up to do. There is quality throughout the side from Laoise O'Driscoll in goals right through to Lynsey McKey up front. In November the indoor Futsal title was claimed on home ground defeating Sligo IT in the final. By February the league title was secure overcoming the challenge from UCD. And so the team arrived in Castlebar in early March for a tilt at the intersarsity crown. Captain Kacey O'Driscoll found the winner in the final to defeat Sligo IT 2-1. Next year the ladies are going for three intersarsity titles in a row and also three league titles in a row. Who would bet against them?For the sheer success that has been enjoyed it has truly been a year to remember for the UL soccer club.

The point of the GAA in UL

Eoin King

AS STUDY gives way to summer, attention shall turn to the GAA and the inter-county clashes. Yet, what can be forgotten in some quarters is that the GAA functions year round and that in some guise or other matches with as much commitment in them as those evinced in September are being played out. The year gone by, like most years, was a mixed bag for UL GAA. There were trophies collected and hopes dented. It's the way it works. Men and women trained in the muck of Maguire's all for the glory of representing the university.

Per usual, most newsprint and attention focused on the senior hurlers, whose brilliance and skill unfortunately gave way to a flat display in the Fitzgibbon Cup final. For those who might have seen the final on TV and nothing more, the game was a false impression of how good this team was all year.

The two games preceding the final were hugely impressive as they dismantled St Pats in Newtownshandrum before disposing of CIT in the semi final with a 3-20 to 2-11 score line that did, indeed, represent complete

superiority.

Men like Matthew Ruth, Seamus Hickey, Tom Stapleton and Brian Carroll were leaders amongst a team of class hurlers. UCC, having struck with a last minute goal that edged them past WIT by the narrowest of margins appeared inspired and uninhibited the following day. UL appeared to be caught cold. Solace can be taken from the knowledge that they defeated WIT, the winners in the previous year's classical final.

In the Sigerson competition, the hunt will resume next year for the elusive crown of best senior college football team. Cian O'Neill's troops may have exited in the second round but it took three extra bouts of play against UCD for it to happen.

Finishing 1-16 to 1-15 the one point margin epitomised the track these fellas are on. So close, yet, too far away to be properly noticed. Missing out on the last eight will have been disappointing but the team pitted themselves well against a regular final-four team.

Players like David Moran, Paddy Byrne, Stephen Lonergan, Enda Varley

and Johnny Buckley, to mention a few, represented the university impressively.

When it comes to close finishes and hard luck stories the ladies footballers will surely recount their own tale to add to the lot. After claiming a league title before Christmas the O'Connor Cup beckoned. UL nearly claimed it. One lot of extra-time too many and DCU proved the difference.

Wins over NUI Maynooth and NUIG booked them a weekend in UUJ. It took a 2-14 to 3-07 win against Queens University Belfast after extra time to reach the final against the Dublin outfit. They were chasing at half time by a margin of four. Into the second half it was quickly six points. But led by Gillian O'Connor, Geraldine O'Flynn, Fiona Rochford and Eimear Considine UL staged a feisty fightback that resulted in another period of extra time. Level after the first half of extra time, DCU eventually pulled ahead to claim the O'Connor cup by that sickening difference of one point.

The feeling of a losing a final can also be shared with the senior camogie team who lost in the Ashbourne shield

final to NUIG.

Once again UL were separated by a one point margin, losing 1-14 to 2-10 after NUIG rallied impressively in the second half. However, always one for pointing out the positives, An Focal wish to point out that that goalkeeper Joanne Nolan and corner forward Cora Hennessy were represented on the Ashbourne All-Star team.

One team to win their lot were the Fresher B hurlers who rallied back after a poor first half to claim the Ulster Bank Fresher B hurling final against LIT. Considering the number of GAA teams representing UL stretches into double figures there are teams and players that have rolled up the sleeves and put in the effort not mentioned here. As with any GAA club there are people who give up their time to train and help out in all aspects who should be thanked. Whatever about results and near misses it takes these people to make a GAA season to run in the first place.

Special thanks must also go to Patsy and all in the office for their time and patience at times with An Focal Sport.

Water, water everywhere

Tomás McCarthy

FOR UL sports clubs that took the water this season it proved more than a worthwhile exercise. The sub aqua, sailing, kayak, waterpolo and rowing clubs continue to go from strength to strength.

The UL sub aqua club were honoured at the Clubs and Socs ball with the 'Club of the Year' award. For their year round trips alone the club were more than worthy of this prize. ULSAC visited Kilkee, Loch Hyne, Castlegregory and Dingle among others this year.

Going further afield, a trip to Scotland was organised and, in January, 18 divers headed to Spain. For training ULSAC have access to a 4.37m dive pit. More than anything though, the whole organisation of the club and emphasis on safety makes ULSAC a club to be reckoned with.

The UL kayak club this season has retained its high standards. In November CUSAI awarded them the best Multi Day Event after their intersarsties last February. The club were also nominated for best club event of the year at Club and Socs Ball for their trip to the Alps.

In January the club won the

invitational-only Clare Glens Race. In February the club participated at the intersarsties which were hosted by UCD. Also trips were made around Ireland to locations such as Sligo and Killarney.

The UL waterpolo club performed admirably at the intervarisites at NUIG. The ladies team narrowly lost out in the final to Trinity College. They did pick up notable victories along the way including an 18-2 hammering of the hosts in the group stage. The men's team just missed out on a place in the semi finals. The UL rowing club have trained feverishly hard over the past season. The team are currently preparing for their intervarisities which take place in late April.

Let's not forget the UL sailing club. After a couple of years of near misses this year things have come good. In week four they won the Southern title in Baltimore. They followed this up with an even more impressive performance at the intersarsties in Galway. UL emerged victorious in Oranmore and have now qualified for the Student Yachting World Cup which will be held in France.

Mahedy still on a mission

Tomás McCarthy

A BRIEF glimpse around his office tells you all you need to know. He is truly a sporting man for a sporting campus. Meet UL Director of Sport, Dave Mahedy.

Mahedy initially came to the then Thomond College because it was “the only place to do physical education”. This was in the mid 1970s and it was to be the start of a wonderful relationship. He came back in the mid ‘80s as sports manager as they needed someone to manage the facilities. It was “exciting time” he recalls as Thomond College grew into the University of Limerick and the sporting facilities expanded with it. “Some people would say I’m here too long!”

Certainly Mahedy’s current position is a world away from where he started but he loves every minute of it because “there’s always a challenge”.

When you see the magnificent Arena you would think that Mahedy would consider this as his greatest achievement. Instead he views the special atmosphere created as being far more important.

“It’s the only place in the world where you can get Olympic athletes, students and the ordinary public in the same place at the same time. You could be in the gym and Paul O’Connell could be on the thread mill beside you. It’s not the fact that there’s a 50 metre pool it’s the fact that everyone can mix together.”

You can see here the immense satisfaction he gets from the job. The normal paying punter means as much to him as having the Irish rugby team. He mentions the National Special Olympics coming to UL in 2010 and this to him is as big of an event as any to him. “Yes, you can put bricks and mortar together; yes, you can win trophies but that, to me, isn’t relevant.”

Part of the reason for this unique atmosphere at the Arena has been the presence of the Munster rugby team.

Mahedy recalls Declan Kidney looking for new facilities after his appointment in 1998. This was at a stage when the sports department where still based

in the PESS Building.

“It kind of snowballed from there. In those early days they had their weights training here and went to Thomond Park for their field work.” The success of the Munster team has meant they have kept coming to the Arena.

“It’s automatic now. They would love to use here more. Now they have an office here in the Arena, they have their video analysis here in the Arena and the coach is based here in the Arena.”

Mahedy maintains that there is a good spin off from having the team here and gives good publicity for the facilities here. “When you look at the news at 6.01 you see them in the Bowl, you see them doing weights and you say that’s my place. That doesn’t happen in other colleges. They come here.”

Reflecting on the UL season, I first raised the disgraceful state of the pitches earlier on in the year. In fairness, Mahedy didn’t try to shirk the question or divert away from it. He talked about the bad weather we had first.

“We had an appalling summer which meant the pitches had no time to recover. Basically we need to upgrade the training fields. People are playing on the playing fields because Maguires fields are bad.”

What Mahedy proposes is putting in astro-turf pitches on the North campus to alleviate the pressure. He also talked about the nature of the UL season.

“Our season is October to March which is in the height of the worst of it”.

This is the main reason for the proposed astro-turf pitches. He also stressed that “more people are taking part in games and there’s more traffic on the pitches. There’s a huge increase in the amount of people playing Gaelic games and there’s also a huge increase in the number people playing softball and even down to a simple game like Ultimate Frisbee. Ultimate Frisbee then need pitches. In a way our success in encouraging people to take part has backfired.”

Although he did mention the weather factor Mahedy said, “I can honestly

say it’s something we are not shying from. It’s one of these things that we contributed to ourselves and by encouraging more people to use it we increased the problem”.

Looking at more positive aspects of the year Mahedy was quick to point out that “its not just about winning trophies”. To him it’s much more about getting more people involved and encouraging people to get active. Despite this he still mentioned some notable highlights from the UL season.

“There’s been some significant trophies in the outdoor pursuits area like sailing and windsurfing they had a particularly successful season”.

He made the point that we shouldn’t be too disappointed in losing out in the Fitzgibbon and the ladies football finals.

“We sometimes think we should be winning all these but there’s other colleges out there who want to win them too”.

He regarded the UL Bohs retaining their Under 20 AIL League as a huge success which he felt went unnoticed.

“It’s not often looked on as a UL thing. The men’s soccer won the league and were unfortunate to lose to UCD in the Collingwood and they went on to win it”.

Of some teams like the ladies basketball or ladies rugby he said “we kind of assume they are going to win”.

In an overall sense, though, Mahedy said, “it’s been another good year” but again maintained that greater participation was still the main objective.

Even after more than twenty years in UL, just by talking to the man you know that he’s not finished yet. He takes every day as a challenge but it’s a challenge he enjoys facing.

As he says himself as I leave the office “sure I’m doing my hobby for a living.” Dave Mahedy simply wouldn’t have it any other way.

A full transcript of this interview will be made available on the blog section of www.bebo.com/anfocalsport

Basketball Club Year Review

Noreen O’Connell

THIS YEAR was definitely one of the best years the club has had due to the fact that this year we had the complete package: we competed on the court, but the club spirit that we have off the court carried us throughout the year. Here is a brief synopsis of the year.

So to start it off was the Fresher recruitment drive. With freshers recruited, now to get them involved and keep them busy.

The League this year from a club point of view was the most successful year to date with both the men and women making the final (at the time of press these games have yet to be played).

The women only lost one game on the way to the League finals. The reason that we only incurred one lost was due to the fact that we have great depth within the club and so all the players contributed.

The men’s team this year greatly improved with it structures and professional approach that it had. This came from the appointment of new head coach Neil Campbell. The men won an epic semi-final here in

UL against DCU when the game went to overtime and the boys won by two. It was their ‘never say die’ attitude that carried them and hopefully this will prevail again in the final.

Then, in second semester, came the Intervarsities and the Fresher tournament. The Intervarsities was hosted by UUJ in Belfast and UL travelled with two strong, but relatively young, squads. The competition was very good and the UL teams did admirably.

The men’s team lost in the quarter final to DCU, but, by reaching the quarter final stages, they have guaranteed their position in the “A” competition next year.

The women reached the semi-finals and lost to UCC who went on to win the competition.

The fresher tournament was hosted by UL and both UL teams did well. The fresher tournament is a basketball competition that is run just for the first years in the colleges so as to keep them involved in the clubs.

The men’s team made it to the semi-finals and lost to UCD who were the eventual winners. The score in the semi final was UL 33 – UCD 53. The

women’s team won all their group games, progressed to semi-finals and played NUIG, where they won by a point 27 – 26. Then to the final where we played UCC. This was a competitive game, however it proved to be one game too many and fatigue had set it, and the UL team lost 17 – 32. This was a great weekend and all the freshers thoroughly enjoyed it..

Every year the club goes on a foreign trip and this year was no different with the club heading to Edinburgh in Scotland. The club travelled out on a Tuesday and returned on the Friday. A great few days was had by all and if possible the club is now closer than before.

To wrap up the year we had a fun skills and drills night where we run fun competitions for the entire club where the key to the night is participation. All reports and results of this night can be found on the Basketball website at the following address: <http://www.ulbasketball.skynet.ie/>

To say that we are looking forward to 2009/10 already would be an understatement.

Windsurfers through the year

Our foreign trip

The windsurfing club undertook its annual foreign trip this year between from the 10 to 24 January to Fuertaventura in the Canary Islands. Fuertaventura translates as “strong wind” in English and it certainly lived up to this reputation for the majority of our stay.

Conditions proved very favourable with consistent winds and 24 degree sunshine, often allowing us to leave the wetsuits on shore. Major improvements were seen in all 14 participants particularly in the beginners, who benefited greatly from the tidal lagoon which allowed safe, sheltered windsurfing.

The shore break on the other side of the lagoon allowed for good wave sailing practice for the more advanced members of the club. Our windsurfing was undertaken with Reni Egli pro windsurfing centre who annually host the windsurfing world cup and proved most helpful throughout our stay. Entertainment at the centre was provided by the German naturalists who often had no care for where the boundary for the nudist beach ended.

The south and west of the island provided good surfing conditions, although at times the double overhead waves proved challenging to paddle through and led to the renaming of one spot as ‘hold downs’ and another as ‘treadmill’. A number of boards did not make the trip home in one piece but there is hope that at least some will live to fight another day.

Our accommodation was in the Stella Dunas resort in the town of Jandia. The resort contained numerous swimming pools and sporting facilities with volleyball matches often becoming fiercely competitive.

There was also an on-site zoo although not all the animals were caged. Kangaroos and donkeys could be found bounding around everynight and peacocks provided our daily wake up call.

Many also took advantage of the lax laws of the hotel buffet which provided daily sustenance.

While the island was pretty quite at this time of year we had become regulars at a number of spots by the time of our departure including the Boot and Ball, Mafasca the onsite nightclub and the trendy Tartuga. All in all it was a great two weeks which should put us in a strong position for the upcoming intervarsities. We will hopefully be back to island again although Ryanair’s cessation of flights to the island will make getting there more difficult and other options may have to be considered for next year’s trip.

Our College Banter

With that being said, it gave a great feel for the up and coming semester as far as windsurfing was concerned. We had our first trip on the 20 February. We had a couple of new recruits and one or two study abroad students, as well as the old favourites and the banter continued on late into the night. The main reason for the trip was to practice

for the intervarsities, which was to take place in Achill in two weeks time on March the 6th.

The Beach Party

This year we hosted a beach party in the Lodge. It kicked off in the Stables where some people came for a warm up before hitting the Lodge. The night club had plenty of beach attire, though the weather wasn’t the best there were plenty of coconut bikinis and even some of the ladies made an effort. The night was a complete success, and we hope to be throwing more in next year regardless of the weather.

The Intervarsities

At the intervarsities, UL triumphed in nearly every category. Clinching the bronze, gold, best college over all and two stunts, a tandem wind surf and best wipe out that were pulled off in the expression session after the competition was all done and dusted.

At night all the colleges got together and went to the local pub where the pints were flowing and good vibes all round. Shenanigans continued into the wee hours back in the little cluster of houses shared by several colleges including UL. A good time was had by all.

We will be hosting next years intervarsites at our base camp in Castlegregory. We’ll be looking for more recruits to participate next year and even more supporters. Be sure to keep it in mind when sign up next year.

What’s another year – An Focal highlights

Tomás McCarthy

On the road again

There can be no argument that Fiona Reidy’s sat nav deserves a special mention for getting us to Newtownshandrum for a Fitzgibbon hurling match. Myself and King were fierce impressed but the CD that was playing left a lot to be desired!

Early bird

This year An Focal sport has discovered the morning time. For the very first time the sports team had a meeting at 11 o clock in the day on the green in front of the library. I can safely that we at An Focal sport just don’t do mornings.

Take up the challenge

This year the sports team have been eager to test ourselves. We have already been hammered in pool and in soccer, have taken to the karaoke stage, been tested with quiz questions and showed off some moves on the El Lodginton dancefloor. What comes next is anyone’s guess.

Quotes of the year

- “*Sure camogie isn’t a real sport atal*”
A controversial John Condren.
- “*I want a weekly Ciaran McDonald corner in the paper Carthy.*”
Kev Mc from Mayo!
- “*Liverpool were like riding him*”. Fiona talks about Robbie Keane.
- “*I’m off to get some carrot cake*”. A hungry John Condren.
- “*The UL goalie might as well do the report for the second half – ‘twil give her something to do!*” A rather fed up Eoin King.

Headline of the year

‘Gardai investigate as UL steal victory’

Crazy text award

“Hey runnin behind say it wil be 20 past ish got caught up doin a fyp sprintin thing”

Fiona had an unusual excuse for being late for a sports writers meeting. I like the way she said she was running behind!

Crazy text award 2

“UL have nice jerseys”

A random text I received during the Fitzgibbon Cup final!



The An Focal Sports team 2008-09: Tomás McCarthy (Sports Editor), Conor McGrath, John Condren and Eoin King

Premier League Awards Show

McCarthy’s Team of the Season

Edwin Van Der Sar	Phil Jagielka
Nemanja Vidic	Berde Hangeland
Patrice Evra	Ryan Giggs
Michael Carrick	Steven Gerrard
Stephen Ireland	Cristiano Ronaldo
Nicholas Anelka	

<i>Player of the season:</i>	Nemanja Vidic
<i>Young player of the season:</i>	Ashley Young
<i>Manager of the season:</i>	Martin O’Neill
<i>Goal of the season:</i>	David Bentley (Tottenham) v Arsenal
<i>Worst player:</i>	Bobby Zamora (Fulham). When the ball hits your head and you are sitting in Row Z that’s Zamora!
<i>Biggest disappointment:</i>	Robbie Keane for bottling his big opportunity.
<i>Surprise package:</i>	Louis Saha for starting a game!

King’s Team of the Season

Shay Given	Glen Johnson
Rio Ferdinand	Nemanja Vidic
Patrice Evra	Cristiano Ronaldo
Steven Gerrard	Frank Lampard
Steven Ireland	Ryan Giggs
Fernando Torres	

<i>Player of the season:</i>	Steven Gerrard
<i>Young player of the season:</i>	Steven Ireland
<i>Manager of the season:</i>	Martin O’Neill or David Moyes
<i>Goal of the season:</i>	Geovanni vs Arsenal
<i>Worst player:</i>	Salif Diao (Stoke City)
<i>Biggest disappointment:</i>	Manchester City
<i>Surprise package:</i>	Gianfranco Zola and West Ham United

McGrath’s Team of the Season

Pepe Reina	Fabio Aurelio
Kolo Toure	Nemanja Vidic
Phil Jagielka	Cristiano Ronaldo
Stephen Ireland	Xabi Alonso
Ryan Giggs	Didier Drogha
Fernando Torres	

<i>Player of the season:</i>	Ryan Giggs.
He maybe 35 but he’s playing with the vigour and heart of a 19 year old. An absolute top class professional and servant of the game.	
<i>Young player of the season:</i>	Ashley Young. Jonny Evans is right up there as well. He has showed incredible maturity in defence at such a young age.
<i>Manager of the season:</i>	Gary Megson? I don’t think so. Steve Bruce would be mine. A very average Wigan team have thrived under his guidance this season.
<i>Worst player:</i>	Fabricio Collocini has been a major disappointment for the Toon army. The curse of Newcastle’s infamous defence has reeked havoc on his form.

<i>Biggest disappointment:</i>	Luiz Felipe Scolari. Chelsea looked like a spent force under him. No width or direction. It was a shame that a World Cup winner was sacked by a naïve oil baron but only results matter at the top.
<i>Surprise package:</i>	Aston Villa did push on this year for a Champions League place. They were cruising at Christmas but their small squad killed them in the end.

Condren’s Team Of The Season –

Edwin Van der Sar	Bacary Sagna
Nemanja Vidic	Berde Hangeland
Joleon Lescott	Ashley Young
Michael Essien	Stephen Ireland
Ryan Giggs	Fernando Torres
Nicholas Anelka	

<i>Player of the season:</i>	Nemanja Vidic (Man Utd)
<i>Young player of the season:</i>	Stephen Ireland (Man City)
<i>Manager of the season:</i>	Martin O’Neill (Aston Villa)
<i>Goal of the season:</i>	Paul Konchesky (Fulham v West Ham)
<i>Worst player:</i>	Arsenal’s Nicklas Bendtner missed many more chances than he scored. (Dis)honourable mentions for Newcastle’s Jose Enrique and Stoke’s Dave Kitson.
<i>Biggest disappointment:</i>	Berbatov. You expect more for £30 million
<i>Surprise package:</i>	Aston Villa

Top Ten Irish Goals

Tomás McCarthy

- Ronnie Whelan vs Russia Euro 1988
- Jason McAteer vs Holland World Cup Qualifier 2001
- Ray Houghton vs Italy World Cup 1994
- Kevin Sheedy vs England World Cup 1990
- Ray Houghton vs England Euro 1988
- Alan McLoughlin vs Northern Ireland World Cup qualifier 1993
- Liam Miller vs Sweden friendly 2006
- Kevin Doyle vs Slovakia Euro qualifier 2007
- Robbie Keane vs Germany World Cup 2002
- Andy Reid vs Cyprus World Cup qualifier 2004

UL Sports Round-Up

Liam Togher

Declan Kidney

Grand Slam winning rugby coach Declan Kidney is to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Limerick in recognition of his contribution to Irish sport. Professor Don Barry, UL President said, “Declan’s management style is what sets him apart as one of Ireland’s most successful team managers.”

Waterpolo

The National Waterpolo tournament took place in the UL Arena on the weekend of April 18/19.

UL Bohs

The UL Bohs have secured their place in top eight of the AIL League. This means they will be in the Premier tier for next season’s reconstructed league.

Comments

Email any comments you may have to mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com. Since it’s the last edition the first email we receive will get a prize.

Just for fun

Final Words 2009

Tomás McCarthy

AS THIS is the last edition of the 08/09 season I have a few words to say. I won't keep ye too long don't worry.

The first of many thanks yous goes to editor Aoife Breen. Aoife has worked tirelessly all year and deserves great credit for her efforts. From a personal point of view, it has always been a pleasure to work with Aoife and her help and advice has been valuable over the last semester. I would like to wish her the very best for the future.

Next I have to mention my magnificent sports team. Eoin, Fiona, John, Conor, Ruth and Neil have worked their socks off all year. It has been great craic to work with such a sound bunch of people who

are really interested in sport. Every fortnight they came up trumps with some very interesting and entertaining pieces. How they put up with me I'll never know.

Another true An Focal sport legend is Liam Togher who even on co-op has kept writing articles of the highest quality.

Finally a big shout out to you the readers. I know we don't have that many dedicated fans but to those of you who constantly read our material it is much appreciated. Thanks also to everyone who has wished us well during the year.

That's my lot I hope ye all have a good summer but let there be no doubt that An Focal will be back soon! Give it a lash!

Magic Numbers

Tomás McCarthy

- 3 – Years for Christy Cooney to stamp his authority as new GAA President.
- 96 – People tragically killed twenty years ago at Hillsborough. At least today's all seater stadiums mean that an event like this will hopefully never happen again.
- 30 – Minutes is all it took to sell out the general public's ticket allocation for Leinster v Munster at Croke Park. Now that's what I call good business.
- 2 – Goals in seven games for the sharp shooters from Kildare County. Another Derby County in the making I wonder?
- 1 – Very tired sports editor who doesn't know what to put as his last magic number!

A Sports Writers Diary

Tomás McCarthy

- 28 March** Togher arrives to Limerick and we descend on the Stables for the Ireland v Bulgaria game. My hero Kevin Kilbane scores an own goal but a good night is had by all. Some of the chants roared in Molly's include "You don't know what you're doing" to the DJ, "Lovenkrands, Lovenkrands, Lovenkrands" and "Get that man a taxi!"
- 29 March** Waterford hurlers suffer another league as Joe Canning scores a point even after losing a boot. El Lodginton at half 9 means the start of Rag Week and sees the appearance of sports writers King and Alan Keane!
- 30 March** An early start for the Rag Week five-a-side as we get into the quarter finals. On the way to Trinity Rooms I get into a dodgy chat with an unhappy UL hurler. The sports editor comes out without any injuries.
- 31 March** I suddenly become a ref for the day at the five-a-side taking charge of four games having good craic and also falling on my arse in the first game.
- 1 April** The sold-out Stables goes bananas when Robbie rocks the Italian net! The Young Wolfe Tones round off a truly legendary Irish night!
- 2 April** Get hammered in the five-a-side 11-3 but at least we get to perform our Senegal celebration! The UL ladies rugby team claim the intervarsity title in UCD.
- 3 April** My voice is in bits. Just another victim of Rag Week McGrath tells me.
- 4 April** Thank god Alan Shearer is gone from Match of the Day for a while!
- 5 April** "I've never even heard of that fella before." My reaction to Macheda's incredible late goal for United against Villa. Another defeat for the Deise at the Gaelic Grounds.
- 6 April** It so quiet around UL no problem getting the aul newspaper in O'Mahony's. Usually they are all gone by the afternoon.
- 7 April** Back at home watching the Champions League. You really would miss the atmosphere of the Stables.
- 8 April** Chelsea destroy Liverpool and all of the RTE panel are left red faced after writing them off before kick off.
- 9 April** Kevin Doyle is off to Juventus in the summer? Sounds like rumour only McGrath could come up with!
- 10 April** The Eircom League is the only option on Good Friday in three channel land. It turns out not so bad after all apart from Peter Collins presenting the thing. Oh yeah it's called the Newstalk League now isn't it?
- 11 April** That Macheda fella strikes again!
- 12 April** Mighty, mighty Munster! Limerick is manic after Munster defeat the Ospreys! Leinster scrape by Harlequins to set up the ultimate showdown in Pairc an Chrocaigh.
- 13 April** Watch a bit of horse racing on the box while finishing off some Easter egg. Aren't Bank Holidays brilliant!
- 14 April** I'm ashamed to say I missed he second half of Chelsea v Liverpool. It's always the good ones you miss. Thank god for late highlights!
- 15 April** Nervy night in the Stables as Ronaldo scrapes United past Porto.
- 16 April** Richard Dunne gets sent off for Man City. He's a fierce man for the own goals and red cards.
- 17 April** Interview Dave Mahedy, take An Focal sport photo minus Fiona (sorry!) and get another project done! Write my last entry into the diary with a tear in my eye.

Give It A Lash Premiership Quiz

Liam Togher



- Name the six clubs beginning with a W to have played in the Premiership.
- Which Premiership striker can count Coventry, Newcastle and Blackburn among his former clubs?
- Which one-time Premiership team's home kit is brown and amber?
- Of these five, who didn't play in the first Premiership season in 92-03: Bolton, QPR, Swindon, Norwich, Southampton
- What is Man Utd's lowest Premiership finish?
- Who scored a stunning last-minute goal for Liverpool in their 2-1 win over Arsenal in 2004?
- What rare feat did Arsenal achieve in their title wins in 01-02 and 03-04?
- Which three goalkeepers have scored in the Premiership?
- Who is the first and thus far only New Zealand international to have played in the Premiership?
- What connects the three clubs which Jimmy Bullard has played for in the Premiership?

Quotes Of The Edition

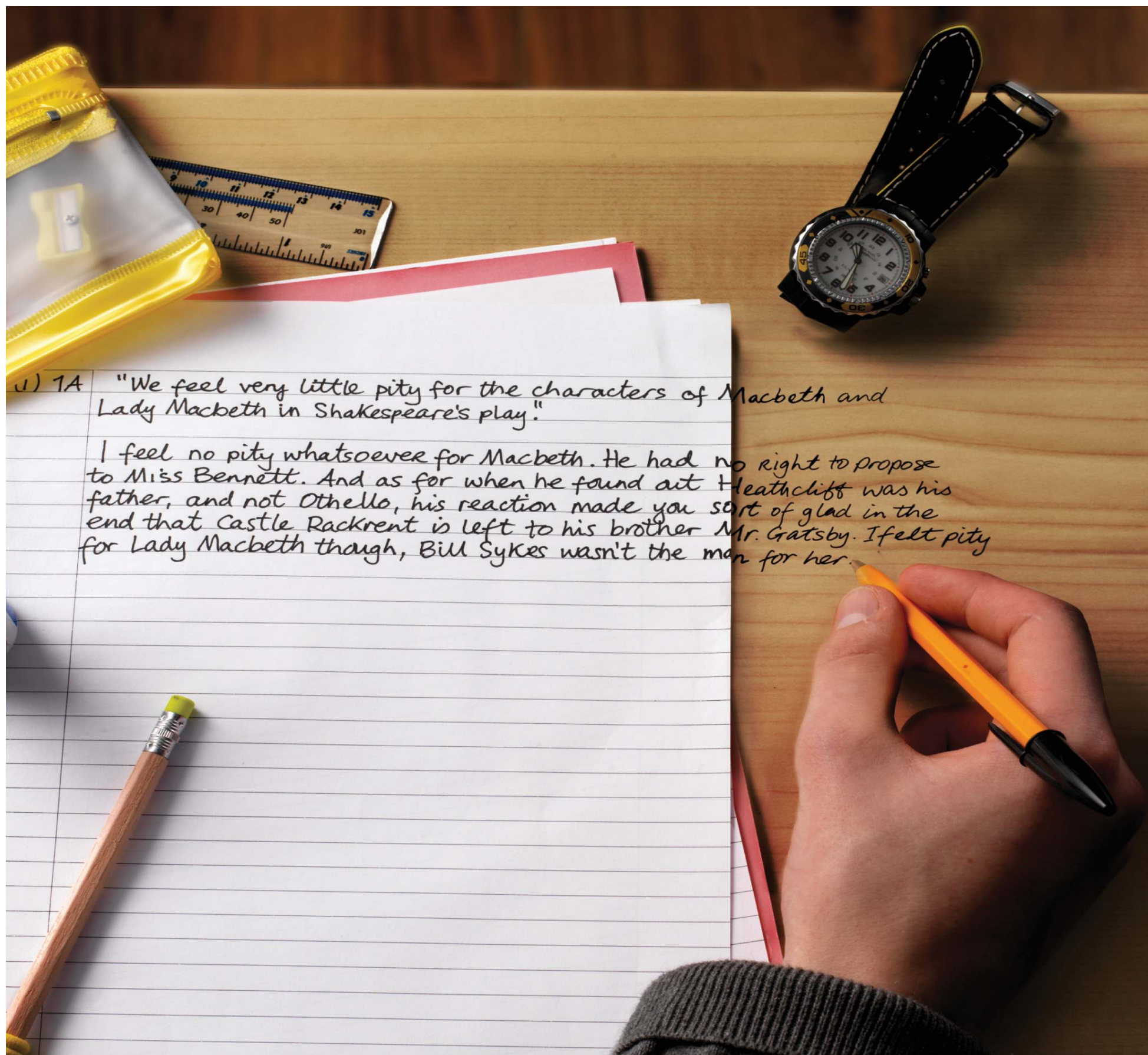
Tomás McCarthy

- "Your journalism is horrobolical"*
A random UL student called Darragh Walsh giving the sports editor abuse on the El Lodginton dancefloor.
- "This is not The Sun"*
Eoin King points out that An Focal sport will keep up its high standards of journalism.
- "I would f***in' marry that"*
A thirsty McGrath proclaims his love for a pint of Mi-Wadi after the five-a-side match!
- "I'd say the fresher women were fair bad. I don't even know how they did"*
King once again says things without really thinking first.
- "He really found his niche alright"*
McGrath makes a terrible joke about Niche Market winning the Irish Grand National.
- "Who in their right mind would wear a Carlow jersey?"*
John Condren gets irritated at the smallest of things!

Answers to Sports Quiz

- Watford, West Brom, West Ham, Wigan, Wimbledon, Wolves
- Craig Bellamy
- Bradford City
- Bolton
- 3rd
- Neil Mellor
- They did not lose a single away game en route to both titles
- Brad Friedel, Paul Robinson, Peter Schmeichel
- Ryan Nelsen
- They have all been promoted from the fourth tier to the top flight since the Premiership began in 1992 (Wigan, Fulham, Hull)

Advertisement



1) 1A "We feel very little pity for the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play."

I feel no pity whatsoever for Macbeth. He had no right to propose to Miss Bennett. And as for when he found out Heathcliff was his father, and not Othello, his reaction made you sort of glad in the end that Castle Rackrent is left to his brother Mr. Gatsby. I felt pity for Lady Macbeth though, Bill Sykes wasn't the man for her.



GUESS WHO DIDN'T HAVE THEIR FYFFES TODAY?

Enjoy a sustained energy release that keeps you sharp and alert.