

An Focal

In Focus:

Making the Grade:
Exam Survival



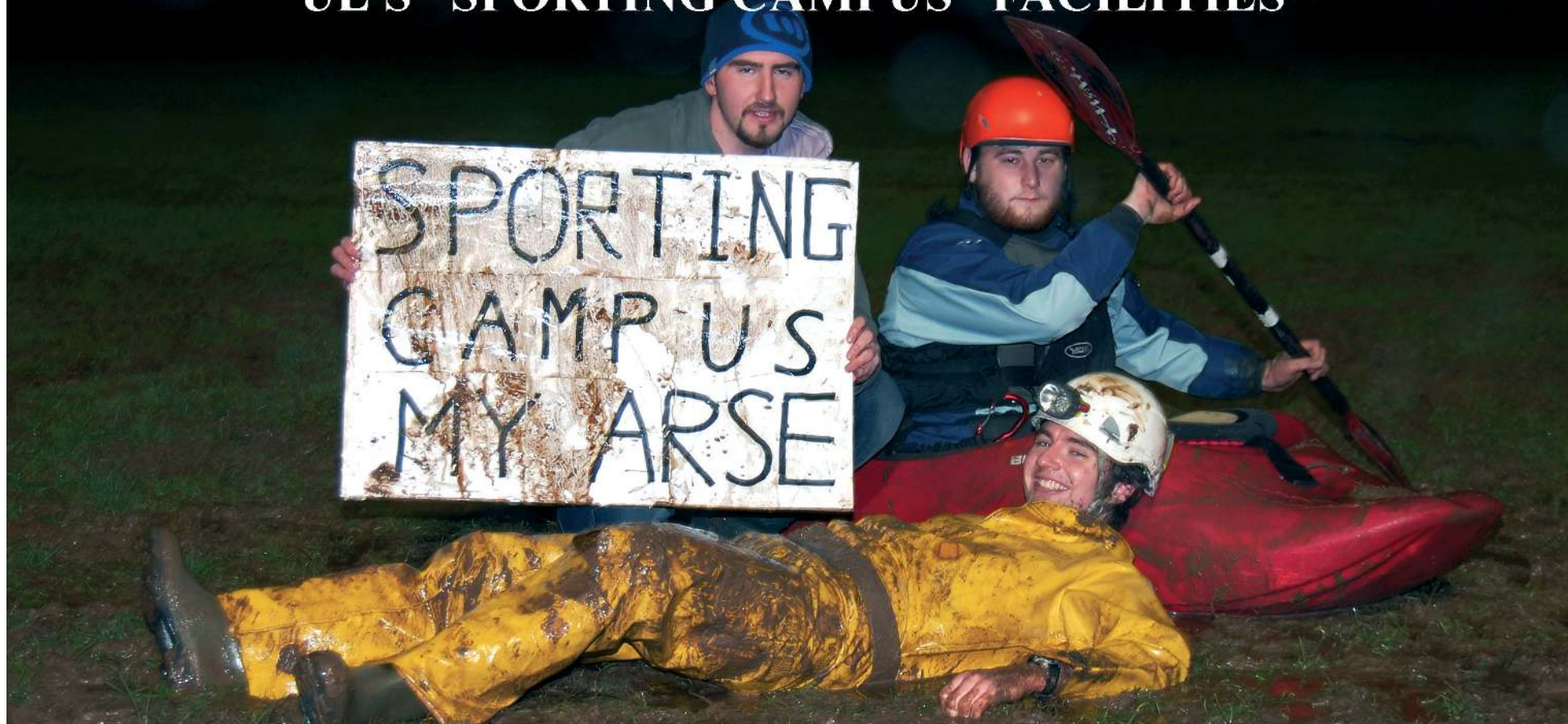
Sport: Five medals for UL
Judo

18 November 2008
Tuesday

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FREE

MAGUIRE'S MUDBATH UL'S "SPORTING CAMPUS" FACILITIES



Kayaking on a playing field: SU President Pa O'Brien with Kayaker Darragh Hearne and Outdoor Pursuits Club member Cillian Burke on Maguire's Pitch, the training grounds for UL's clubs (photo by Hugh O'Brien)

Aoife Breen - Editor

UL CLUBS have reignited the long-standing complaint against Maguire's field behind Kilmurry Village and have called on the University to guarantee proper maintenance to the pitch that will allow clubs to train safely.

Maguire's field has been a consistent burden on UL's GAA, soccer, rugby, softball and American

football teams, who argue that the pitch's inadequate drainage leaves the field either totally unusable or highly dangerous to players.

Paul Lee, SU Clubs & Societies Development Officer said, "Traditionally, there has always been complaints against the facility, but the clubs have never managed to mobilise as a group. This seems to have changed this year with games cancelled and the pressures of

additional costs. This isn't a good reflection on Ireland's self-named 'sporting campus'".

Fiona Reidy of the ladies' rugby club commented, "It is an inadequate training facility for our teams. The surface is uneven and has locks of water in it in most places.

"As far as I am concerned, it is a hazard and for 'Ireland's sporting campus' it is simply not good enough.

Softball club member Eoghan Reade said, "The Bowl has been extremely well maintained, but, sadly, this is very rarely given over to UL clubs".

Freshers in the soccer club have not been able to play a home game this year due to the referee deeming the facility unplayable on health and safety grounds, according to the club's president, Dr Martin Hayes.

The club, with the FAI, have also

appointed a full time development officer this year whose remit is to organise recreational soccer in UL. However, at the moment, the officer is unable to perform his duties because of the facilities made available.

SU President Pa O'Brien reacted angrily to the situation saying, "The field is a disgrace. It's not lit properly for training and is unsafe for our clubs

"UL is a top-class facility only to a select few outsiders and elite athletes while our own students are forced to train and compete in woeful conditions, with some teams even being forced to travel to play their home games.

"Maguire's pitch is a potential danger to students and injuries seem to be becoming more and more common on this substandard surface."

Resignation of Education Officer

Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

Due to unforeseen health problems Shane O'Callaghan, SU Education Officer has had to resign. It was a decision which could not have been foreseen and the Students' Union have wished Mr O'Callaghan the best. The current Sabbatical Officers will do their utmost to assist any student with an educational query until a new Officer is elected.

Nominations for Education Officer opened on the Tuesday, 11

November, and closed on the Monday, 17 November, Week 11. Any registered UL student was free to nominate themselves for the position. The election for a new Education Officer will be held on the Friday, 21 November, with the successful candidate taking up office on Monday, 24 November.

The new officer will receive full training following their election, as the position involves a large

workload. The current Sabbatical Officers have vowed to help and to provide full support to whomever is elected.

The Education Officer is responsible for any education problems that may arise within the college. This includes aiding students with any problems or queries they have regarding their course or exams, as well as organising grinds and providing tips and information to

students. They are also responsible for organising Class Reps' Council and trainings and must also liaise with Class Reps.

Pa O'Brien, SU President, advised any student running for the position that it involves, "a big workload and there is a lot to learn, so they need to be prepared for long hours at the start".

He also explained that the position can be quite rewarding in terms of

resolving educational issues as the Officer will be given the opportunity to work on students' personal cases and be a true help to them.

The Students' Union has expressed their sadness at Mr O'Callaghan's departure as it has forced them to say goodbye to both a friend and a co-worker. The remaining Officers wish Mr O'Callaghan all the best in the future along with a speedy recovery.

An Focal Digest

In Brief

UL's Got Talent

ULTV Society

UL has got talent and we know it. Whether you can sing, act, or dance the dreolin, we want to see it. Be it the fame or fortune that appeals to you (yes there are cash prizes), come along to the auditions in week twelve. Anyone interested in watching the auditions live before the show airs after Christmas, can come along on the day and sit in for only two yoyos.

ULTV Society are also proud to announce our "How will you get yours?" video competition. In response to the rise in college fees, we are getting students to come up with interesting ways they could raise the fifteen hundred euros. The best video will win a three day trip to London to take a backstage tour of BBC studios and the radio production houses in January with members of ULTV society. Submissions can be lighthearted or serious. Entries must be in by 31 December.

ULTV have teamed up with Drama Society to produce our very own UL drama show. Scriptwriting is still in progress for the mini drama series. If you are interested in writing, drama, television, or screenplays, and are not already involved, contact us on the email below.

Also, we are always looking for interviewers and presenters, so if you think you have the personality to interview people like the Frames, Jaded sun, or the boys from Dirty Sanchez, to name but a few, come in for an interview!

If you would like more information on 'UL's got talent', the 'How will you get yours' video competition, scriptwriting, workshops, interviewing/presenting positions, or if you would just like to come along to one of our weekly meetings, contact – ultvsoc@gmail.com



The University crest after one non-contact training session with UL Ladies' Rugby on Maguire's pitch

Brainwave

The Irish Epilepsy Association will hold the Student Support Group for this semester on Wednesday, 19 November, 2008 from 14:00 – 16:00 in the Daly Room, Plassey House, UL.

All are welcome and admission free. The meeting is open to people with epilepsy or people whose life is touched by people with epilepsy in UL, LIT and Mary Immaculate College.

For further details contact

Ms. Anna Kelly,

Community Resource Officer,

Brainwave The Irish Epilepsy Association,

Limerick Social Services Centre,

Henry St., Limerick

Phone No. 061 - 313773 or email brainwavelk@eircom.net

Graduate Medical School Open Evening

Are you interested in a career in Medicine? If so, why not come along to the forthcoming UL Graduate Medical School Information Evening?

This is an opportunity for potential students to learn about the programme, meet with Medical School Faculty, and with current students on the course.

Programme details for the event are below and if you wish to attend you must register in advance by e-mailing: michelle.murnane@ul.ie or phone: 061- 233756/061-233740

The Information Evening for applicants intending on entering the programme in 2009 will be held at 7pm on Wednesday, 26 November in KBG12, Kemmy Business School.

Representatives from Ulster Bank will be available during the evening to provide information on the bank's comprehensive financial support scheme for students of the UL Graduate Medical Programme.

Schedule of events:

19:00-19:10: Coffee & Welcome

19:10-19:30 About UL – Mr Sean Reidy, Marketing Director

19:30-19:50 The Graduate Medical Programme at UL – Professor Paul Finucane, Foundation Head, Graduate Medical School

19:50-20:30 The Student Perspective – Students from current cohort, and from the Medical Society

20:30-21:00 Questions & Answers Session – Your opportunity to ask about the Graduate Medical Programme and the University.

In Figures

1 training session

The length of time that gear lasts for a number of students participating in clubs whose activities are carried out on Maguire's pitch.

1 minute

The length of the silence held in the Plaza at 2pm on Thursday, 12 November, in solidarity with the family of murder victim Shane Geoghegan.

6 weeks

How long UL Ladies' Rugby player Fiona Reidy's last pair of boots withstood playing on Maguire's field.

6 foot 6 inches

We knew that Pa was tall, but geez, really?!

22 minutes

The length of time it takes to cycle from the University campus to the city centre via the Dublin Road, according to the newly-launched Slí na Sláinte routes at UL.

48 hours

How long Paul Howard invested in watching all series of Sex and the City in preparation for his latest Ross O'Carroll Kelly instalment.

have you lost a loved one in the past year?

There will be a special Mass of Remembrance for relatives of students and staff who have died in the past 12 months in the Contemplative Centre (opposite the SU) On Thursday, 27th November at 1.05 pm

If you would like someone to be included, please submit the name to Edel Stackpoole at ext 2327 or edel.stackpoole@ul.ie

All welcome!

Refreshments in Teach Fáilte afterwards.

In Words

Being single in your mid-twenties is like buying a turkey on Christmas Eve – there aren't that many good birds available.

Ross O'Carroll Kelly creator Paul Howard offers his advice to the audience in the Jean Monnet during his readings from his latest book.

The Constitution is broken! SU Communications Officer Aoife Breen laments the fact that the digital version of the SU Constitution with the latest amendments has 'technical problems' in the document preventing her from printing off a hardcopy

We feel that nothing has been done about this for far too long and we are very fed up of the way field sports are treated in this manner. UL Ladies' Rugby player Fiona Reidy commenting on the apathetic nature of the University in taking action to rectify the pitch on which UL clubs train.

We are a small community in the grand scheme of things, but we can be an effective community.

University head Prof Don Barry at the launch of the Slí na Sláinte routes at UL in conjunction with the UL Environmental Committee and the Irish Heart Foundation.

Minute's Silence for Murder Victim

An Focal Reporter

A strong gathering in the Plaza at 2pm on 12 November had just one message to send to Limerick's violent gangs: "enough".

Following an email initiated by Ellen Byrne of the Irish World Academy, the campus community engaged in a minute's silence in the memory of Limerick-man Shane Geoghegan who was murdered near his home in Kilteragh, Dooradoyle, close to the Crescent Shopping Centre, in a case of mistaken identity on 9 November.

A few hundred students, staff and faculty, including University President Professor Don Barry and

SU President Pa O'Brien, congregated in the plaza to commemorate the life of Mr Geoghegan and to show their support for the ending of gangland violence in the city. Ms Byrne organised the demonstration through communication with staff and research postgraduates of the campus through ITD's email 'Opinions' forum. "I believe the time has come for all rational and peace-loving citizens of Limerick to say enough is enough."

She urged the campus community to mark its objection to the "shocking escalation in violence in Limerick".

"I'm not naive enough to believe that this alone will lead to the end of the cycle of hideous violence which has almost become synonymous with our city, but perhaps it may make our political leaders realise that platitudes and political breast-beating will no longer suffice." One student member of the crowd commented that, "I'm not

from Limerick, but I've been in college here for three years now and I feel it's a part of me. This latest murder was an absolute tragedy and my sincerest condolences go to the Geoghegan family. He was an innocent man in the wrong place at the wrong time. There needs to be justice and it needs to happen soon".

The Arena also opened a book of condolences which is placed in the foyer of that building.

Students' Union Clarification

In the last issue of An Focal (Vol XVII, No. 5, 4 November), 'Notes from the Bath' raised a number of points about the finances of the SU shop. The clarification intended to coincide with the column was mistakenly not printed at the time. It is printed below to answer the questions asked by the columnist and to clear up any ambiguities that may have arisen as a result of the column.

The SU is not run with a profit motive but is careful with its money. Twice in the last ten years we have

nearly gone bankrupt and have had to be bailed out due to financial mismanagement. The new SU shop has only been open a year and a half and still has a massive loan outstanding (€500,000) which is serviced by any profits made. The shop's accounts are available to everyone through the Companies Registration Office. The shop also sponsors ULSU Ents and so provides students with entertainment.

The University Capitation (two-thirds of which goes directly to Clubs and Societies) is used for

staff wages but doesn't even cover these. Money we raise is used for free and non-profit services such as contraception, the bike scheme and the Nitelink.

Of course, the Union exists to lobby for students but you cannot run an organization without money. Any money spent – any money at all – is approved by Class Reps in March for the coming academic year and so we are completely transparent with our finances.

We hope this has cleared up any questions raised by this article.



Students participating in the minute's silence in the Plaza on Wednesday, 12 November

ULSU SHOP
Owned and operated by students for students!

specials

- Goodfellas Deeply Delicious Pizza flashed @ €2.99
- Spar Isotonic Orange - buy one get one free! €1.09
- Avonmore Orange Juice - buy one get one free! €1.95
- Cuisine de France mince pies - 3 for €1.10
- Chicken fajita mix in a wrap - €3
- Spar tortilla and dip for €2
- Cadbury Selection Box - buy one get one free - €3.50

STAR BUY!

Buy any roll or sandwich from the deli, and get M&M peanut AND Spar Water 750ml for €1 more!

- See Euro Crunch offers in store:
- Spar Water sports cap..2 for €1
 - Cadbury Crunchie/Caramel/Twirl...2 for €1
 - Lyons teabags Green 40s...€1
 - Spar chilled orange juice ...€1
 - Kitten soft 2-pack Toilet Roll white ...€1

Card Shop: Monday - Thursday 08:30 - 19:00 Friday 08:30 - 18:00 Saturday 11:00 - 17:00
Dromroe Shop: Monday - Thursday 08:30 - 19:00 Friday 08:30 - 18:00

Time to Walk

Aoife Breen - Editor

Launching the University's new Slí na Sláinte routes in the Millstream Common Room on Wednesday, 12 November, President Don Barry reflected on the initiative as "representing the true spirit of the University" by "educating and empowering" the campus community to participate in physical activity.

Under the direction of the UL Environmental Committee, 45 new signs have been posted around the campus informing faculty, staff and students of the distances and walking and cycling times to destinations such as the Kilmurry Roundabout, the Parkway and the city centre.

Irish Heart Foundation representative Ann Riordan commented that, "enough cannot be said for the benefits of walking

or cycling and hopefully these routes will motivate people to leave the car at home".

University President Prof Don Barry thanked the Environmental Committee for their work and complimented them on being "proactive in introducing new initiatives on campus, such as the Farmers' Market and staff car pooling this year" and commented that the University is "proud and grateful" of their work.

"The aim of is to encourage the campus to participate in physical activity. We have, I think, one of the most beautiful campuses in Ireland and, indeed, Europe, and there is no doubt of the positive impact of physical activity on our minds

"We are a small community in the grand scheme of things,

but we can be an effective community".

SU President Pa O'Brien noted the environmental benefits as well as personal benefits of increased physical activity.

"These routes will benefit both personal and environmental health. We have come to a critical point – either our attitude or our world will change."

"There are over 3,500 parking spaces on campus but yet there is a daily struggle to find a space. This means there are too many people driving.

The signs are right – it is time to walk, it is time to cycle."

The group in attendance then proceeded to walk across the Living Bridge and came back via Thomond Bridge.



Colin Fitzpatrick, UL Environmental Committee, Ann Riordan, Irish Heart Foundation, and Pa O'Brien, SU President, launching UL's new Slí na Sláinte routes

Marking Aids Day

Caitriona McGrattan
Welfare Officer

Fifty-two red balloons will be released at 2pm in the Students' Centre courtyard on 1 December, World Aids Day, to represent the 52 men, women and children who were diagnosed with HIV outside the greater Dublin area in 2007 and to show solidarity with those currently living with the virus and Aids.

The Students' Union will also be selling red ribbons – the international symbol of HIV – from its reception from the last week in November. All proceeds from the sale of these red ribbons will be going the Red Ribbon Project, a voluntary organisation which provides information on the prevention, care and support services relating to HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health in the Mid West of Ireland.

The Students' Union are also encouraging the staff and students of UL to show our support for the millions of people living with HIV worldwide by wearing red on 1

December (Monday of week 13).

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV, is a virus that affects the immune system. It copies itself into your immune system cells and remains there indefinitely. HIV may be controlled, but as yet there is no cure for the virus.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is widely accepted as being caused by HIV. A person is considered to have developed AIDS when the immune system is so weak it can no longer fight off a range of diseases with which it could usually cope. HIV remains a serious concern: in Ireland alone there was a 7.4 per cent increase in the number of people diagnosed with the virus during the past year in comparison to 2006: there were 362 new cases of HIV diagnosed in 2007.

The cumulative number of people living with the virus in Ireland at the end of 2007 was 4,781. HIV remains a worldwide issue; there is currently 33.2 million people worldwide living with HIV.

Misinformation about HIV and AIDS has resulted in needless discrimination. You cannot contract

either HIV or AIDS by sharing cutlery and crockery, shaking hands, using the same toilet facilities or by being sneezed or coughed upon by someone with either disease.

Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, commented once that, "Many people suffering from AIDS are not killed by the disease itself. They are killed by the stigma and discrimination surrounding everybody who has HIV and AIDS."

The Stamp Out Stigma Campaign, which was launched on World AIDS Day 2006, has set about challenging the negative experiences of living with HIV. It aims to highlight the irrationality of the stigma and discrimination at home and abroad, while also tackling both direct and indirect discrimination experienced by people living with HIV in Ireland.

More information on HIV and AIDS can be found on any of the following websites

www.redribbonproject.com,
www.dublinaidsalliance.com
www.stampoutstigma.ie

16 Days of Action

Caitriona McGrattan
Welfare Officer

"Some men break more than their girlfriends' hearts", the disturbing tag line used by the Mid Western Health Board a number of years ago on their promotional material to highlight domestic violence, which remains as relevant in 2008 as ever.

The first ever national research into the prevalence of domestic violence in Ireland was carried out by Women's Aid in 1995. Making the Links highlighted just how many women experienced violence by a partner/boyfriend/husband in Ireland; at the time, just over a decade ago, 18% of Irish Women reported they had been abused in relationships with male partners. Today an average of one in five women experience domestic violence.

"When we think about human rights abuses we tend to think of the prisoner of conscience in a far off land... But human rights abuse also describes the violence women experience in their own homes", Margaret Martin, the director of Women's Aid, outlined the rationale behind this year's International 16 Days of Action Opposing Violence against Women; "Think Women's Human Rights-Think Home". She continued to

explain that for many women their home is not 'a place of sanctuary, love and safety' but rather a place of 'violence, rape, fear and terror.'

The 16 days of Action will begin on November 25th, the International Day Opposing Violence against Women and end on December 10th, the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Events such as talks, information seminars, and protests will take place on a worldwide during this period all calling for the same thing: the elimination of all forms of violence against women. In Ireland, Women's Aid are calling for support for their gathering outside Dáil Éireann on Monday, November 24th at 11am to highlight to our politicians that something must be done. The organisation is also running a nationwide postcard campaign designed to challenge misconceptions relating to domestic violence. These and other events from the campaign will all be listed on the 16 Days blog-www.ireland16days.blogspot.com.

Approximately 213,000 women living in Ireland are experiencing severe domestic abuse; these women are our mothers, sisters, cousins and friends. The 16 Days of Action Opposing Violence against Women ensures that we are all taken out of our comfort zones

and made think about the reality of domestic violence. The statistics speak for themselves; in 2007, the Women's Aid national helpline received 12,000 phone calls relating to physical, emotional, economic and sexual abuse; one in four perpetrators of sexual violence against adult women are partners or ex-partners yet there has only ever been one conviction under marital rape legislation since its introduction 18 years ago, and the most disturbing of all figures; on average a woman will be assaulted by her partner or ex-partner 35 times before reporting it to the police.

Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon, commented in 2007 that "Violence against women and girls continues in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women's lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence-yet the reality is that too often it is covered up." Ireland is no exception to this observation! How many more women will have to suffer before something changes?

If you are concerned about a loved one or yourself and domestic abuse more information can be found on www.womenaid.ie and the number for their confidential helpline number if 1800 341 900.

Students' Union Executive 2008-09



Aoife Breen
Vice President/
Communications Officer



Pa O'Brien, President



Caitriona McGrattan,
Deputy President/Welfare Officer



Damien Cahill,
Vice-President/Campaigns &
Services Officer



Equality Officer



**Community Relations
Officer**

Name: Paddy Rockett
Course: Science Education
Why did you want the Job? Job? don't you usually get paid for a job?... this is an undertaking I suppose it was to do a bit of work to help out really!
Best thing about the job: I'd say the cake but the chicken at community forum is pretty sweet!
Worst thing about the job: dealing with complaints and trying to explain the reason in the madness of the students – and why did you feed that dog dutch

gold.....eh!? he looked thirsty nice!
What do you hope to achieve this year? There's a negative vibe about students as a whole from the community and plans to try and abolish rag week have been core of some of the whispers – I wanna stop that in its tracks and engage in a partnership with the members of the community rather than the tug of war that's going on at the moment – students are not as bad as some of the labels attached but at the same time

'Irelands call' at 5.30in the morning.....
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I love curry chips with mayo – try it ...savage!
2. I can do most if not all voices from Family guy
3. I released a song on the internet about Spanish people
Your motto for survival: 'There's a world outside your windowhave sex with it!'

Name: Aoife Marie Finnerty
Course: Law and European Studies
Why did you want the Job? I figured it would be a good way to meet new and interesting people that I ordinarily

wouldn't have the opportunity to meet
Best thing about the job: The range of people I get to talk to
Worst thing about the job: Nothing so far.
What do you hope to achieve this year? To make UL as diverse and as appreciative of the differences between people as possible
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I used to be a girl scout 2. I'm right-handed but play sports with my left 3. I've never seen a Monty Python film
Your motto for survival: Wear sunscreen.



Faculties Officer

Name: Dave or David James Collison-Ryan for those of you who have seen my e-mail address.
Course: Business Studies and French 4th Year
Why did you want the Job? I was the Business Faculty Officer for the last two years and I dealt with many issues within that role. This year, there are even more important issues that not only affect the Business Faculty but the University as a whole and I wanted to be more involved with them for example, E.C.T.S.

Best thing about the job: Getting to meet lots of really nice people and work with them towards making life better for students as a whole.
Worst thing about the job: No worst thing – Love it all!!!
What do you hope to achieve this year? To help anyone who is in need of help. If you have any issues at all with your faculty i.e. Tutors not turning up, tutorials being cancelled, course issues I should be your first point of contact along with your relevant Faculty Officer!

Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I have been in many musicals such as "The Hot Mikado", "Jesus Christ Superstar", "Anything Goes" plus a few others. 2. I had roughly 20 – 25 Irish people from UL stay at my house in Paris after the France vs. Ireland Rugby match last February (I was on co-op)! 3. I have completed the "13 Places in no time" challenge!
Your motto for survival: If you don't live life on the edge, you're taking up too much space"



**Chair of Class Reps'
Council**

Name: Brian Donovan
Course: Applied Computing and Network Technology

Why did you want the Job? I didn't, I was forced!
Best thing about the job: Personal chauffeur
Worst thing about the job: Paparazzi
What do you hope to achieve this year? Shorter and more productive meetings.
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I was born on Machiavelli's birthday.
2. I'm a hard-core procrastinator.
3. Contrary to popular belief, I'm not bald under the hat.
Your motto for survival: Eat first, then dance.



Clubs Officer

Name: RuánDMC
Course: Construction Management and Engineering
Why did you want the Job? For the greater good
Best thing about the job: "Light Refreshments!"
Worst thing about the job: The work and the paparazzi
What do you hope to achieve this year? To finalise a generic constitution for all Clubs and Societies. To continue

work started by last years C&S Exec on compiling a sample Budget for use by all Clubs and Socs. This will help the continuing rise in the standard of budgets. Through the use of Appraisal meetings help Clubs and Socs develop to their full potential. Achieve World Domination. Push for the installation of a proper drainage system for the Maguire's pitches.

Propose a logo that all Clubs and Socs can fall under.
Pass college.
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I am a vegetarian but I still eat red and white meat
2. I have a habit of repeating myself
3. I have a habit of repeating myself
Your motto for survival: It's a job but someone dirty has to do it



**Postgraduate Students'
Association President**

Name: Emma Murphy
Course: BA History, Politics, Sociology and Social Studies (2006) MA Peace and Development Studies (2007)

What do you hope to achieve this year? To complete all of the campaigns which have been started and to leave the Association in good shape for the incoming President.
Have you fulfilled any campaign promises yet? Most of last year's are done or almost: financial stability, re-integration, events, the common room. This year's promises are more policy based and are definitely well in progress.
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I'm from Dublin and had no intentions of coming to UL but I changed my CAO drunkenly and put in the wrong code and ended up in UL
2. I badly cut myself on a chair in the Jean Monnet when I was in second year and now I have a 5-inch scar on my leg.
3. I am sports mad and have Liverpool FC and Leinster Rugby season tickets.
Your motto: To quote Winston Churchill (not something I do very often but in this case highly appropriate) 'Success consists of going from failure to failure without the loss of enthusiasm'



Societies Officer

Name: Darren Savage
Course: Repeat 2nd year BSc Economics and Mathematical Sciences
Why did you want the Job? To improve and maintain the quality of societies for its members
Best thing about the job: To stamp your mark on C & S, and the free

tickets to gigs.
Worst thing about the job: Time consuming/ clashing with work and college
What do you hope to achieve this year? To put societies on an even-par with clubs in administrative aspects.
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I'm not a "proper" ginger, because I have blonde eyebrows.
2. I support Birmingham City FC.
3. I am on the Board of Directors of the SU shop.
Your motto for survival: Get drunk, get laid, get a degree



First Year Rep

Name: Deirdre Wilson
Course: Biological Science Teaching
Why did you want the Job? The sense of power I guess, ah no, only joking! To be honest, I'm the kind of person who can't pass by somebody in need. I like helping people and I knew that I'd be able to do a good job with regards to looking out for the first years. Also, I won't lie, the idea of

the free tickets to gigs was pretty darn enticing.
Best thing about the job: Ahhh did I not mention the free tickets?! That and the satisfaction I get out of seeing a big smile spread across someone's face after we sort out a problem for them. Cheesy I know but sure what about it!
Worst thing about the job: I am currently trying to recruit new class reps for all the first year courses. The list seems to grow every time I look at it! Anyone interested in being one, give me a shout. Please!!
What do you hope to achieve this year? Basically I want every first year course to have the required amount of class reps, planning the first year ball and other first year activities comes next on the list. After all this is college, we are supposed to enjoy

Why did you want the job? I predicted that the recession was coming and needed a job for the year! I wanted to continue and complete some of the campaigns that I started last year and raise awareness of postgrad issues on campus.
Best thing about the job: The Office of Isolation....which is nicely hidden at the back of the PSA centre. A lot of people mistake it for a toilet.
Worst thing about the job: The five million committees which I sit on (they take up a crazy amount of time).

it!
Three interesting facts about yourself:
1. I don't drink milk (you can taste the cow! Ew!)
2. I get called Deebetty because I

apparently look like Betty Boop.
3. I have a thing for shoes. I have well over a hundred pairs!
Your motto for survival: Worrying is like a rocking chair, keeps you going but gets you nowhere.



GRANTS

RELATIONSHIPS

WORK

HOME SICKNESS

SOCIAL LIFE

HOUSEMATES

connect
student network 

www.ul.ie/connect

Email: connect@ul.ie • Phone: 061 23 4624

Text: 086 728 3131 • Office: Main Building C2-058

**A student run service.
We help you with stuff!**

Yes He Can

Paul Bellew

"The fairytale is over, the nightmare begins."

That was one political commentator's view in the wake of Barack Obama's election as the next President of the USA. It was not Republican sour grapes but an observation on the magnitude of the task facing the incoming administration. The weight of expectation that accompanies the President-elect to the White House is an unenviable one. The slogans of 'hope' and 'change' that have been sold so well throughout Obama's campaign are expected to be turned into an immediate political reality. Critics that have slammed Obama for empty rhetoric and vacuous speeches are lining up to say 'I told you so'. The conventional wisdom is that the challenges are too great and the crisis too many for a successful first term. His task however is not an impossible one.

The reasons for Obama's victory are already being dissected and debated with the economic crisis, Sarah Palin and campaign funding been cited as the primary factors in determining the outcome on November 4th.

While all are undoubtedly relevant, the one constant that has defined the Obama campaign since it was launched in February 2007 are the management and the organisation of the campaign itself. It also provides the model for how he is likely to govern. The greatest criticism both the Clinton and McCain campaigns could throw at Barack Obama was his inexperience. Yet Obama conducted himself with the attributes one would associate with experience namely calmness, restraint and a constant sense of being in control.

In contrast, Hillary Clinton and John McCain were irritable and aggressive when under pressure or on the back foot. If his administration inherits his campaign's capacity for innovation and efficiency, talk of his Presidency being a 'poisoned chalice' or a 'one term' may soon be dispelled.

Race was an issue never far from the surface of this campaign. It was largely interpreted as a negative factor for Obama with widespread speculation that he would need at least a seven to ten point lead in the polls to negate the 'Bradley Effect'

that deemed in the privacy of the polling booths, voters would vote against Obama on racial grounds despite outwardly saying the opposite.

Not much attention was given to the fact that the 'Bradley Effect' is a flawed concept that failed to take into account other factors in the election that gave it its name.

Instead, race had a positive impact on the election of Barack Obama as President. It led to the greatest mobilisation of African-Americans since the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Obama's election by no means discounts race as an issue in American politics or society. The fact that over 95 per cent of African-Americans voted for Obama is proof of that. It is however a powerful step in the right direction.

At this point it should be noted while on the issue of race the positive role played by George Bush in the appointment of minorities to his administration. Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and Alberto Gonzales all served in the highest positions under Bush.

Change has been the buzzword

of this election. To achieve substantial and meaningful change the new administration will need all the external help it can get as it appears likely the Democrats will fall short of a Senate majority. It is here Obama will have to turn to leaders like his Presidential rival John McCain in order to succeed.

McCain, a genuine believer in bipartisan politics went far beyond what was required in his concession speech in congratulating Barack Obama. It was an outstanding endorsement of who he called 'my President'. While there are those that will argue McCain's campaign at times descended below the level of acceptable behaviour, it was nothing in comparison to Republican campaigns of the past. It is to McCain's credit that he personally did not engage in such campaigning, especially knowing how effective it can be having fallen victim to it eight years previously.

The scene at Grant Park, Chicago, on election night was more akin to a Bruce Springsteen concert than a political rally. In terms of emotion, scale and symbolism these scenes are never likely to be surpassed



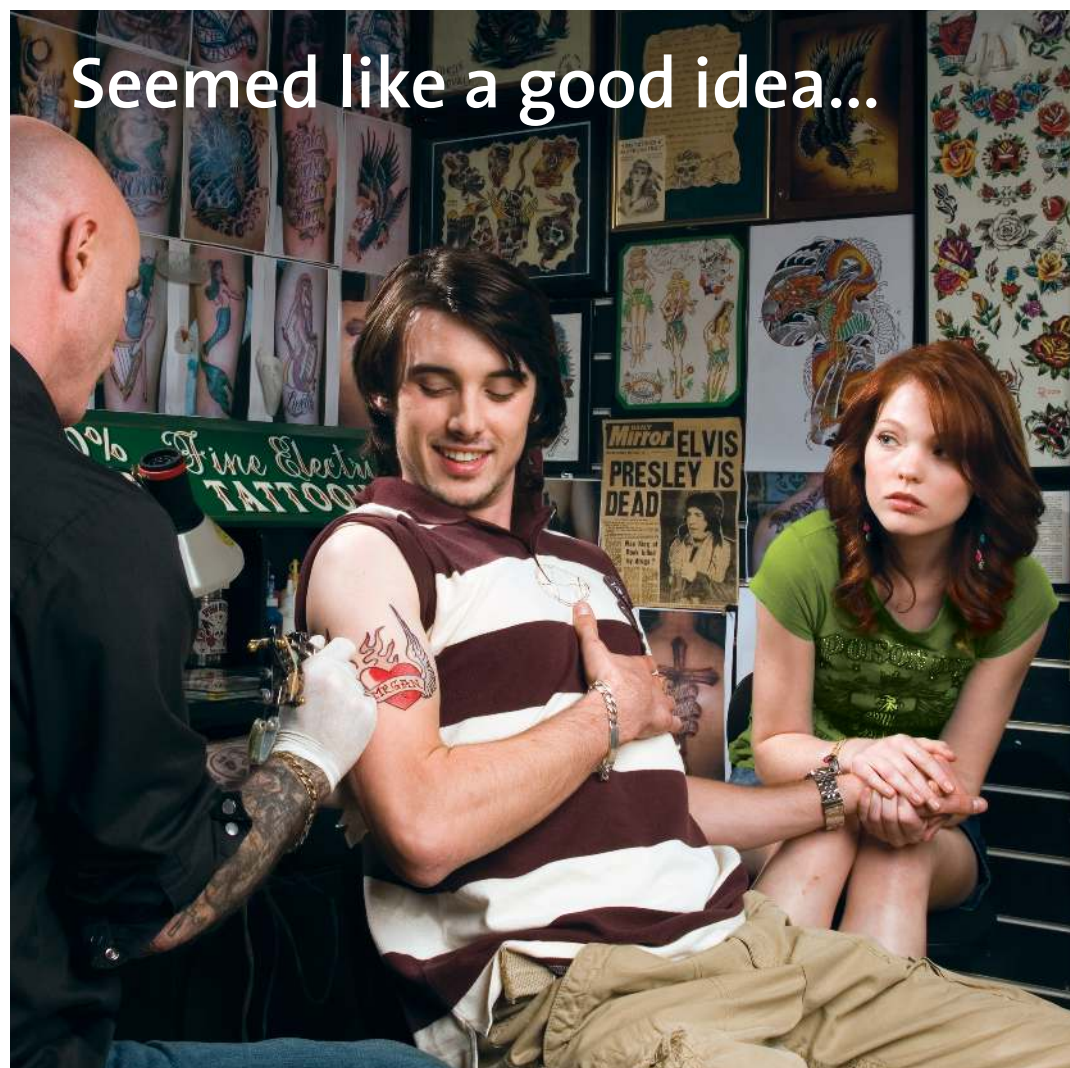
US President-Elect Barack Obama

again. That is a measure of what Barack Obama has achieved in the twenty-one months since he announced his candidacy in Springfield, Illinois, on February 10 2007.

Obama has become an icon to Americans of all creed and colour. He must, in turn, remember to become a President to all – a

commitment he has already made. The economic challenge has never been greater, while there can be no doubt that a serious test in foreign policy lies just around the corner.

Is he up to the challenge? Is it change Americans can believe in? Can he translate his campaign message into reality? To paraphrase the man himself, 'Yes he can'.



Seemed like a good idea...

...here's a better one

Student Account

from Ulster Bank Limerick

Talk to Mike Moran, Sinead Barry or Pat Egan our Customer Advisors at Ulster Bank University of Limerick or call 061 216260 for more information.



Comment

UL's American Voters

Brittany Witcher

A group of UL students made history two weeks ago by helping elect Barack Obama as the first ever black President of the USA. The group, all US citizens, are part of the Study Abroad exchange programme between the university and various universities across the USA.

Almost all are first time voters, and did so using the special absentee ballot process through the Irish postal system.

The students at UL waited the results into the early hours of Wednesday morning, hoping that their absentee vote was counted.

One, Zackary Shelton (18), a first year student at Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania, is a first time voter and a supporter of the Democratic Party. Shelton, from Massachusetts, said he nervously watched the elections all day and well into the night.

"You kind of felt like watching history in the making...I was excited, nervous, and I guess I was happy with the outcome," he said. "I do think it's crunch time now, and that the whole election process has been really 'fun', but it's now time to see if Obama's being President is going to be as fun or exciting as the whole running for it." The state of Massachusetts has not voted Republican since 1984, when it voted for President Ronald Reagan over Vice President Walter Mondale. President John F. Kennedy was once a senator for Massachusetts. The state is currently represented by Senators John Kerry and Ted Kennedy. Shelton thinks that may be part of the reason why he chose to be Democrat over Republican. "You know, you could say I'm brainwashed, because my parents are both liberal. My mom is Democratic, my father's generally Democratic, and my entire family is Democratic. But I generally like to think that I can separate myself from my family."

He voted for Obama because he believed America needed the change, especially on issues such as the economy and the Iraq war. But he also criticised the President-elect, referring to his economic plans to rescue the stock market, his lack of experience, and his position of not supporting gay marriage.

He argued that Obama was far more acceptable to the global audience because he was much more appealing than George Bush.

"They want anything but another Bush, and to them McCain is another Bush, and he's a Republican. They [the international audience] don't understand how on earth anyone could vote Republican after we've seen eight years of catastrophe." Obama was more appealing to his generation of young voters because of his relative youth, he said, when compared against septuagenarian John McCain. "He's something new, and, in general, teenagers and adolescents, people in their 20s and 30s, even 40s I guess, are more likely to vote for someone around their own age who's inspiring." The result of the election is all the more surprising, say political experts, in that millions of young Americans and first time voters turned out to vote, a phenomenon not seen previously. According to CNN exit polls, first-time voters broke for Obama 72 percent to 27 percent for McCain, while voters in the 18 to 24 age bracket voted 68 percent for Obama and 30 percent for McCain.

Shelton explained that originally his views about America were not changed, but now he's changed his mind. "I thought we were a racist country, and I guess we proved that we're not racist. We elected an African-American President...you go back 10 years, wouldn't have it, 20 years, wouldn't have it. I mean, this is now; it happens now."

The biggest lesson he took from the election, he said, was that nothing was impossible. "In politics, you can do what you actually want to do if you have the willpower and the backbone."

Net Gains

Daniel K Sullivan

When asked why he robbed banks Willy Sutton answered, "That's where the money is." In a similar vein we've seen political campaigns such as for the US Presidency go online because that is where the people are. The victory of Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential race is being hailed by many commentators as the flowering of the 'net in campaigning politics. Yet is it? And what impact might it have on our form of governance? To try and get some answers we need to look at what Team Obama did do and what was its impact was.

To start with, the Obama campaign wasn't quite as innovative as some contend but instead borrowed heavily from the methods pioneered by Howard Dean in his unsuccessful bid for the Democratic nomination in 2004. Thereafter MoveOn.org and other distributed organisations were actively looking for someone to support long before Obama declared his candidacy. These pre-existing entities were coupled with the flat organisational structure of the Obama campaign, something Brian Stokes, once of this parish, spoke in detail about in his Limerick Leader article of earlier this year. Such structures leaned heavily on the practices in the technology industries which focus less on official titles and a structured hierarchy and instead place more emphasis on flexibility and actual delivery.

Getting access to voters is much harder in a world of the long commute and TiVo. Social networks have helped do the job the humble television ad once performed. Social networks and distributed communication chains like Facebook and LinkedIn allowed for the tailoring of the message to each person or group based on their preferences. This approach took central themes and customised them for particular audiences moving beyond 'one size fits all' static web sites.

For example, if you like message X and pass it on to your friends then it is more likely that they will view it favourably coming from someone they view positively, i.e. you, and since you are friends, you should like roughly the same things. Of course, this isn't perfect and there is the bother factor to contend with. Being poked by someone you are favourable too is very different being poked by someone you don't know or even have a predisposition to dislike. People are important to the process.

Fundraising took the form of relatively small amounts but with repeated donations that all adds up. The campaign team delegated and

trusted people do the right thing by the campaign in terms of their local activities. Yet if the Republicans had used exactly the same tools in the same way they most likely wouldn't have yielded the same response. You need the right candidate to fit this type of campaigning.

The net can also be used to unearth an army of helpers to fact find, fact check, cross-reference and tease out the tedious detail. Much of this will bear no fruit but it may expedite the process of uncovering gems. In Ireland this took the form of the debunking of the notion that Sarah Palin had foreign experience

because she had visited countries including Ireland on her travels. In fact as was highlighted by one Irish Blogger, Maman Poulet, she had simply stopped over in Shannon and not entered the country at all.

Talking on the BBC on election night Arianna Huffington, of the Huffington Post, took the view that the net in this election also acted as a counter to the negative smears attacks such as those about Bill Ayers, or socialism meaning they were snuffed out quickly. The net allowed an army of a few hundred to develop lines of response with the most effective percolating upwards. In the world of YouTube everyone can be Jon Stewart or at least try to be.

That said the net can't save all boats Sean Tevis (Kansas) who made a big splash with his xkcd inspired cartoon still lost his challenge for a state legislature seat by 52 per cent to 48 per cent. The cartoon which helped him fundraise over £100,000 was ultimately unable to overcome the redness of his district. New campaigning techniques can and do make a difference but they can't make water flow uphill. The conditions have to be just right. In some sense Democrats needed to experience the harsh come-down of the last two losses before they could take the steps to support someone like Obama. It was the potent mix of recent defeat and the hope of a new beginning.

More locally, Mick Fealty from Sluggeroole writing recently in the Irish Times noted the differences in the political systems that may

make translating the usage of the tools to the Irish context more problematic. This is likely to be an evolution of existing methods not a revolution.

So what does this mean for us locally? We're probably quite a ways behind the US in terms of the penetration of broadband and the comfort that the wider population feels with interacting online. The fund raising for Obama was impressive but not nearly as many here have PayPal accounts, and there is the question of how the Standards In Public Office legislation would deal with it.

That said, with Lisbon II (Libertas vs. Godzilla) due next year we could well see a new level of net campaigning. As it was the net related stuff was just getting going as the campaign was ending. Jason O'Mahony's Spoofer's Guide to Lisbon was a personal highlight. The tools exist but people need a reason or cause to overcome their disinclined to make use of them. I suspect a few candidates in the European elections will make effective use of these techniques. For the local elections it is more worthwhile to knock on doors.

For President-elect Obama, a key challenge for the future is to continue to use the net to aid the work of increasing involvement of greater portions of society in decision making: moving us towards a more participative form of democracy. This process could be what the fireside chats on the radio were for FDR.

"Social networks have helped do the job the humble television ad once performed"



Facing the Cost of Century 21

Eric Doyle

Recently, a study found that human civilisation is currently consuming enough resources to equal one and one third the capacity of the planet earth. Quiet an astounding fact, not to mention inherently unsustainable.

The study went further and estimated that by the time the readers of this article are hitting retirement age, humanity will require two planet earths to sustain current consumption trends. This is basically down to demographic growth which sees human population expand from its current level of 6.7 billion to around 9 billion by the 2040s. The repercussions of this are equally astounding.

While certain regions, mostly in the developed West, will see a decreasing birth rate, this will fail to balance the growth in the developing world. The culmination of which is poverty and famine as our planet's resources dry up.

The earth can only supply a fixed

amount of raw materials. Oil, as the most recognisable example, is running out, yet its demand has never been higher. Oil-based technologies underpin the global economy, in particular the structure of the global agricultural industry. With depleting oil reserves the cost of food will climb.

The irony is that oil allowed us to boost food production globally to never before seen levels, this in turn has been the engine behind the incredible demographic explosion of the past century to where today it is estimated 50-75 per cent of all the humans that ever lived are alive right now.

The reserves of oil, along with all of our other fundamental natural resources, cannot sustain our current population, let alone two or three extra billion mouths to feed. This leaves us in a precarious position.

Our current quality of life allows us to live a lot longer than ever

before. Ordinarily nature would intervene with diseases to check population growth, but with the advent of modern medicine, most people, especially in the West, can expect to live long into their sixties, seventies and eighties.

Birth rates on average across the world are less than they were a few decades ago, however, the numbers of women of child-bearing age continues to rise and due to medicine are more likely to live longer and have children. This is a disastrous combination for demographics. With more people living longer because of better medicine and more people being born than ever before, the strain on the limited and scarce resources of the planet is ever worsening.

Add to this the impact of climate change. First of all, there are the rising sea levels eroding low-lying coastal land which is home of much of the world's agricultural base. Less land is available for cultivation,

and then there is the land used to grow bio-fuels, again at the cost of food production.

Changing climate renders regions unsuitable for specific crop types or at worst completely infertile, reducing supply of particular products. Unpredictable weather patterns destroy or damage harvests, as we saw here in Ireland this summer and autumn as upwards of 150 million Euros worth of produce was lost to torrential rain and flooding.

In truth we can only guess at the full repercussions of what is to come if current trends continue. But the harsh reality is that few governments in the world today are factoring much of this into their policies.

This is evidenced enough by the complete lack of preparation or planning. Even efforts to slow or reverse climate change have been hampered by political expediency and even denial. The recent



Burning up our resources

economic problems have not helped either.

But the costs of ambivalence today are too great to ignore. As resources dry up and populations expand, the scope for violence and warfare expands. As such resource wars can be seen to become more common and increasingly dominate the international environment as powers struggle to monopolize ever-shrinking reserves.

Nine to 11 billion are the estimates of the ceiling at which the population will collapse. This will either be the product of mass starvation, global war or catastrophic environmental destruction – either

one is not something we want to endure.

So this leaves us with a choice to make: carry on as we are, or arrest the situation by taking remedial actions now, starting by reforming our relationship with nature. Otherwise, nature will make that choice for us and it will come at an extremely high cost, with nothing less than the future of our very species at risk.

We have to start prioritising the future over the here-and-now; to date, each generation has never been able to see beyond its own welfare. We cannot afford to make that same mistake anymore.

California's No Amidst America's Yes

Aoife Ní Raghallaigh discusses the irony of the passing of the anti-gay marriage proposition in California on the same day that the United States of America voted in its first African American president.

Everyone will remember where they were on 4 November, 2008. Most will remember it as the day Barack Obama was elected as American President, but few will remember it as the same day Proposition 8 was passed.

In 2000, homosexuals were denied the right to marriage when 61 per cent of voters opted to change California Constitution by voting in favour of Proposition 22. Proposition 22 clarified that only marriage between that of a man and woman would be recognised by Californian law. This decision would legally prevent anyone in a gay relationship from marrying. This decision was rightly overruled by the Californian Supreme Court on 15 May of this year. The Supreme Court decided – with a 4 to 3 vote – that denying homosexuals the right to marry was in violation of the equal protection clause of the California Constitution.

Yet, less than two weeks later, on 4 June, the same Supreme Court decided that Proposition 8, which would again remove the right for any gay person to marry, would be included on the 4 November Presidential ballot paper in California. Anyone voting for a new President in the area would also be required to decide if gays should or should not be allowed to marry.

60.86 per cent of Californians voted for change and a new day in American politics when they voted for Barack Obama.

However, 52.3 per cent of Californian voters decided to take a blatant step backwards by voting to deny the right of marriage for gays. Thousands of people are being denied a basic human right simply because of their sexual preference, something they have no say in.

In the run up to the vote on Proposition 8, two organisations from either side of the argument set up websites to publicise their respective campaigns. Protectmarriage.com was in favour of Proposition 8, while noonprop8.com wanted people to vote against the proposition. Both organisations are clear in their stance on the issue, but one thing that isn't clear is why anybody would want gays to not marry.

'Protect Marriage' tried to allude to the fact that their campaign was not motivated by homophobia. While this may possibly be true, their arguments do have homophobic connotations, and are blatantly ignorant. The one argument that came up on both websites was education. Those for Proposition 8 did not want their children being taught about gay marriage in schools, and they believed that if gay marriage was legalised than it would also become part of the education curriculum.

The 'Protect Marriage' organisation believes that by teaching children that marriage is between any two people that society will become open to 'any kind of marriage' and that this in turn will lead to a complete undermining of the value of marriage. The way the

'Protect Marriage' organisation talks about marriage is unbelievable, and although it does not say it outright, I believe it is extremely homophobic.

They constantly make reference to gay marriage as something which will undermine the marriage that straight people have. They say this like the love between a gay couple is something lesser than the love between a man and a woman. They also allude to the fact that being open to gay marriage will logically result in people being open to any kind of marriage, like say, a marriage between a man and a dog.

In other words, they seem to be saying that the love between gay couples is as abnormal as a man feeling sexually attracted to an animal, or an inanimate object. I'm not denying that humans love their pets very much, but hardly enough to want to marry them and to even make any sort of comparison between sexual love and pet-human love is homophobic, pathetic and uneducated.

The fact that Proposition 8 has been passed in California shows that, as a race, we have not come as far as we like to think. We are still caught up in the idea that homosexuality is wrong and undesirable, or something that can be changed. We also believe that being gay makes someone a lesser person than we straight people and that because of their sexual makeup they do not deserve the same rights as us.

It is about time that it became universally accepted that being homosexual is not a crime, or something that someone decides to do. People have no choice in whether they are to be homosexual or straight, and they should not be punished as a result.

Columnists

Pete's Pet Peeves

What really p*sses me (and many other staff and students alike) off are the food prices here on campus. It would be very simplistic to just blame the one particular catering company that serves UL because such an argument excludes several non-affiliated dining establishments and watering holes here on campus.

The first variable at play would be the level of inflation in the Republic of Ireland – coupled with the fact that this is a highly privatised and market-driven university. If one were to go to the EU Institute in Florence, Italy they would find that they could get a cup of coffee for the price of 30 cent as compared to the €1.80 they would pay in a place like the Café Allegro in the Foundation Building. Stables Club or any SU-affiliated establishment here on campus must necessarily worry about turning a profit.

If Stables were to attempt to implement 30 cent coffee prices, they would not be able to keep their doors open for business – the prices are often reflections of a larger economic situation at the state level. Ireland is one of the most expensive countries, as far as cost of living, in the whole of Western Europe.

To drastically drive the price for food and non-alcoholic refreshment down would necessarily involve the state subsidizing on-campus food prices i.e. it would take the state compensating the Stables Club for providing drastically cut-priced teas/coffees/sandwiches/meals in order to keep such establishments open for business.

The alternative for purchasing high-priced cups of tea and coffee here on campus would be the SU facilitating more “common room” areas throughout campus – equipped with an army of kettles and volunteers to either bring their own tea bags or instant coffee granules and biscuits.

If the University was to provide more “open” or “common” areas then the question becomes: will students really take that one extra baby step and actually use them? Would they mobilise in order to make a statement of non-participation in the market-driven nature of this institution? Only a test would be able to determine this.

This was very much the spirit behind the Postgraduate Students' Association providing a common area (with a kettle and a fridge for milk) for such separatist activities. Many postgraduates take advantage of this, and many couldn't be arsed one way or another.

Another alternative would be for one or a group of students to start the ball rolling towards a “hot water day.” The SU could take the lead on this, but it could easily be done without the interference of the SU as well. It would just take a well-promoted month long campaign of awareness and action.

The idea would be that for one day (or as long as it takes) all students (and some staff) could simply request cups of hot water at every food/drink establishment here on campus—and have brought in their own tea bags and/or instant coffee granules. Everyone would be paying roughly 20 cent for cups of hot water, and you may well see some establishments lowering their prices. Food is a much easier issue. As far as I know, there are no “homeless” students attending UL. If that is indeed the case, then there ain't no harm or shame in “brown-bagging” your lunch or dinner!

That boils (no pun intended) down to personal lifestyle and spending choice. No one is holding guns to our heads telling us to buy goujons and chips once or twice a day. For those of y'all who can't make a sanny without your mummies, then sausage baguettes are still one of the cheapest sources of protein-rich foods on campus and they are available in the SU shop.

The moral of this story is: stop moaning and do something about it collectively...or just don't participate on the receiving end of price gouging—go ahead and start the “hot water campaign” on your very own. Lead by example for



I Spy



I wasn't sure what to do this week so I had a think about what's relevant at this time of year. With exams fast approaching (boo-urns), I've noticed that I'm spending much more time on campus. This means that I'm eating a lot more on campus and spending my (mother's) hard earned cash in various campus eateries. In my efforts to find out which on campus eatery represents value and gastronomic flare, I spent last week munching hard in various restaurants with various different attractive ladies (well John and Mike mostly). So where is good to eat on campus you say? Well, let's start at the top.

On Monday I decided I would go with the old reliable, everyone eats there on open days and although it's too dark to eat your dinner in there it's still strangely frontroomy: the Stables. I have to say the Stables is generally quite basic fare with spuds and meat and is never over-fancy, but I have noticed some interesting dishes lately and they seem to have improved their variety quite a

bit.

For dinner I had chicken and bacon pasta bake, which was really good, and was only €4.50 as it was the tea time special.

The Stables is always good for comfort food and I know more than one who attend on Fridays for the chicken curry religiously. All in all, I'd have to say you'll get a satisfactory feed in there.

I next ventured to the immediate competition, that being the pub formerly known as Java's. The Scholars', as it's now known, did their homework before coming on campus, realised they had to go a bit fancier to catch a different market, and they've prospered since. You will spend an extra €1.50 in there on your meal though.

What I would say is that sometimes its very worth it when you get an extravagant dish like lamb torpedos (WTF?), other times when you have a basic auld chicken Maryland or something you can feel a bit short-changed.

The only thing I would say is that I don't wanna eat chips all the

time which is one thing which stops me going there more regularly. So if you want something a bit different and are prepared to pay then Scholars' is your man. I would just recommend you avoid the 1 o'clock rush especially with the recent inclement weather conditions.

The Paddocks do the same menu most of the time which could be seen as either boring or reliable depending on your own perspective, but they do it well and the staff are really nice (not to say that the Scholars and Stables aren't!). In fairness those chicken wraps are tasty and decent value too there's lots of eating in them and they're never stingy with what they produce.

The hidden gem of the week for me was the main restaurant at B1 level. Campbell's are often, and rightly so, attacked for their prices. When I entered on Thursday they had a lamb dish for €8.50 which was way out of my league price-wise. What they did have though was a delightful lamb Korma for €4 which hit the spot in a big way.

They have a different dish there every day for four quid so it's worth a look.

On Friday I was running low on bucks so I just had a sandwich before I left the house, nothing really to report on that it was pretty standard. I tell you what though, I know I spent last week's article complaining about Superdine's prices and yet where did I end up on Thursday night? Yes, you guessed it. I dropped €20 in there and woke up covered in Taco sauce. I thought I'd had a massive nose bleed in my sleep. Hence the reason I couldn't afford to eat on Friday – you know the story.

I know, I know, I never actually come up with a definitive answer in this column. It technically should be called, “how to sit on the fence over things you're meant to be reviewing”, but I Spy like it that way. I ain't here to tell you what to do, instead I'm here to tell you what you probably already know! I would say that if I could get away with a decent feed everyday for €4 I would be well happy! Happy eating.

Notes from the Bath



Being something of a hygiene freak (I have spent the last eight weeks sitting in a bath tub) I was deeply disgusted by a piece of news which appeared on the front page of the last issue of this fine publication relating to a case of 'defecation' on a nearby resident's car. If this was a tabloid newspaper, in content as opposed to size, it would have run with the headline, 'Student poo-nion threatened with RAG week veto'. You see what I did there? Or possibly something even cleverer, I am after all a mere columnist. We don't do headlines, but the pooing would have been the main focus of the story.

Instead of describing the incident in the politically and anatomically correct broadsheet journalese of 'defecation' it would have given it its proper name and called it crapping, pooing or perhaps evening shitting – although it would probably come with a star and exclamation to make sh!*ting, or something like that.

It wouldn't have ended with that though. The good thing about tabloid reporting, and there are a considerable number of good things about tabloid newspapers other than that a number of my former classmates are now employed by them, is that they are not afraid to say what they really think, and often with pretty clever headlines to boot.

Jingoistic or not, when The Sun printed 'Gotcha' about the sinking of the Belgrano, it was because a lot of British people thought the same thing. When mass-murderer, Harold Shipman - see how I'm getting into the swing of things - committed suicide/topped himself, the same paper went with the terrific/great 'Ship, ship, hooray' – a sentiment shared by many.

Aside from clever, and often rather nasty, headlines, a tabloid isn't afraid to stick its neck out to criticise what they think is wrong and perverse. It may seem overly generous but they have a more heightened sense of justice than many broadsheets who worry about appearing too one-sided. So therefore, being surrounded by sensible types not interested in writing or thinking tabloid, let me make a most tabloid-y interjection.

Crapping on a car is sick, psychologically sick, and whoever did it should be exposed (metaphorically), pilloried and maybe even thrown out of university. Most importantly however, because I'm assuming that whoever did it probably wouldn't have made it through college anyway and therefore his (let's be honest here) leaving college prematurely would be inevitable - given some cruel and

unusual punishment.

But before proposing the punishment, it is necessary to first dissect the crime. For those of you who are squeamish, or uncomfortable talking about the act in question or poop in general - look away now.

So what have you got to do to crap on a car? Assuming it was on the bonnet – it wasn't mentioned in the article – despite the fact that everyone who read the story probably had the same thought as me - 'How the hell did they manage that?', a question which would have largely been answered by knowing the make and model of the car and where the poop was located on the car. If for example it was on the door we can imagine that perhaps someone was using it for cover and perhaps got a bit carried away, but I'm going to guess it was on the bonnet. If it was a four-wheel drive, it becomes

even braver a deed as some climbing would be required. However, if it was a sports car with a low slung bonnet it begins to get easier to do it on the bonnet.

Anyone who has ever poo-ed in a French or other Third-World-country-without-a-toilet-bowl scenario (think hole in the ground for those of you lucky enough not to have) you will be aware of the squatting required for safety. So imagine the scene. Picture a male, with his lad hanging out, face reddening in determined concentration, stinking of Superdine and Lodge (aka. Heaven and Hell), producing forth a pile of steaming poop, and in the recent cold weather it would have been steaming like hot apple pie.

This all takes some time to do. The culprit would be 'busy' for at least thirty seconds and that's without wiping but I think we can safely assume that this was not a

priority for our super pooper.

So what was this sociopath's motive? Assuming a degree of rationality, which may indeed be a dangerous thing to do, we can suggest three possibilities – revenge, quadruple dare, or to use its more common name a double-double dare, and the result of lost bet. None amount to a great defence. In the event of it being nothing more than malice, then we have a seriously deranged individual on our hands. We're talking cuckoo-clocks.

So, in the event that this person doesn't require serious psychiatric treatment what about a punishment. For the tabloid journalist, this sort of nastiness is their specialised subject. Not being a fully-fledged

member of their club (you have to have sold at least one of your grandparents for a story about a celebrity before you learn the handshake) I propose a relatively benign, but classically medieval, sentence, aside from at the least suspension from University for a year based on their giving a full apology to the resident. The individual, and any accomplices involved, should be forced to appear in stocks in the Students' poo-nion courtyard and have manure rubbed on their faces. Probably best done during the summer. Good old fashioned justice. You just can't beat it.

I feel dirty after all that. Rupert Murdoch sucks eggs.

That's better.

From The Working World

The innermost thoughts of a co-op student

Finn McDuffie

29 October 2008

Tonight a group of us co-op students ended up in the Oireachtas bar, interrogating Ministers Batt O'Keeffe and Brian Lenihan. It wasn't something we'd planned. But then, the ingenuity of a bunch of students is as unpredictable as its lust for free stuff and road cones. It all started as we waited outside Leinster House in the dark and rain after work. The odd car passed sounding its horn. There was a teachers' protest - 5,000 people strong. But we weren't here for that. The protesters were across the street behind Garda barriers, while we were at the front gate checking in for a tour of Leinster House. Once inside, one of the Senators showed us around and eventually led us to the Oireachtas bar. This is where the fun started.

In the bar, we started Minister-spotting. The Senator got us drinks. (Mark Daly - I have yet to meet a more charming, witty and patriotic politician). The drinks only fuelled our enthusiasm for Minister-spotting.

The first we noticed was a blonde woman with glasses and a red coat. Mary Hanifan had just walked in. Next came Mary O'Rourke, Brian Lenihan and Batty O'Keeffe. They all assumed tables next to or around our own. The Senator had left and this is when we bought more drinks and came to the conclusion that we would corner these politicians and barrage their ear drums on studenty budgety issues.

But not before we'd done much banter about it and consumed much more alcohol. Dutch courage would be required. There were after all, only five of us. But we had to do this. We had to be strong. For the greater student good. And for our own.

We had our sights set on O'Keeffe. He'd decided he'd toddle to the bar for another drink. A perfect opportunity. Suddenly, Sinead of our group wheeled around, asked him for a minute of his time and introduced

him to each of us as 'poor students of UL'. He flushed. His eyes indicated a sudden realisation. Perhaps his pupils contracted; I hear the mention of students makes him lose his appetite. His body language took on the bizarre quality of a gazelle that's wondering if there's a leopard in the grass. He replied very quickly. He'd obviously decided the best way out of this would be to dodge the awkwardness with a joke.

"I must be a right son of a bitch so."

We didn't deny it. It was a satisfying confirmation by silence.

Batty was counting change for his drink at this stage. A nice sign that he was on the run and looking for a distraction. But couldn't rightly leave our group at this stage as there were too many chairs or people in his way.

"You haven't got a spare €1,500?", asked Darragh, another guy in the group.

The Minister's expression turned stony. His joke hadn't worked and Darragh's question had hit a nerve. He took on a cold bitterness. "You got away with murder," he said, briskly. He found a parting in the crowd behind him and left. I could use the word fled. But I don't think he was really that worried about us at all. We'd made it plain that he'd get a hard time if he stayed. He'd made it plain that we'd get more charm out of a shamrock.

Our next target was Minister Lenihan. He was sitting nearby. We formed a semi-circle around him. Unlike O'Keeffe, Lenihan knew how to deal with us. He had a little savvy and foresight and didn't need us to say it before he realised we were students with an agenda. He shook our hands, smiled, made drawn out pleasantries before suddenly having a pressing engagement in the direction of the bar store-room. Fun times.

A Fresh Approach

Jason Kennedy

Diary of a First Year

The bouncers up here must love seeing me come. They must say to each other: "Here's that little blonde lad again. He's hardly 18, let alone 19. How will we wind him up tonight?" Whatever form of ID I give them, it's never good enough. If I hand them my student card, they want to see my age card instead. If I show them my age card, they want to see my student card. They'd then always ask me my date of birth, before shrugging, telling how lucky I am that they're in a good mood and eventually let me in. My friends find this great, and so did I at the start, but irritates me now. Yet there's one thing that I found out during the week that grates on me even more than bouncers; exams on a Saturday. The weekend should be out of bounds for testing. It's a time to relax, kick back and not worry about the weekdays. We shouldn't be told to go to some stuffy exam centre and do tests. It's inhumane and it definitely wasn't in the prospectus. At least it means we might get off a few days earlier. I also survived my first all-night assignment write-up and somehow managed to semi-function the following day. It was a sociology assignment on the college student subculture and I had five weeks to do it. I had great intentions of having it all done and dusted before the week it was due. That never happened. Instead I spent half the day thinking about what to write and the rest of the day typing it up. By 3am I was so tempted to go to bed, saying to myself that I'd just finish it in the morning, but I kept on going and finished at around 5.30am, knowing I had a 9am lecture in a few short hours. The only good thing about all of that is that I like sociology, but I'm rapidly losing my interest in German. It was one of my best subjects in the Leaving, but the standard has rocketed, and I don't know if I can reach it. I'd be asked a question that would apparently be considered simple and I wouldn't have a clue what the answer is. It's the only elective that I'm having trouble with and it's too late to change to politics, so I guess I'll just have to work through it.

Nightlife's gone down the drain since they started piling on the assignments. In the last two weeks I only went out three times. What kind of student am I? I still really like the course, but it's much more intense than I had expected.

In Focus: Making the Exam Survival Guide

It's week 11. The e-word is on everybody's lips. They're just around the corner. Some of you may be choosing to ignore until after next week's Christmas Days. Some of you may already be finished your revision. Most of you are probably somewhere in between, doing the odd bit now and then but still focusing on how you'll celebrate the upcoming festivities. We need to prioritise here.

I'll never forget my first set of exams at UL. In particular, I'll never forget sitting a couple of rows from the back in FG-042 in one of the final lectures of my politics module. There I was, carelessly doodling on my notepad occasionally jotting down bits of information the lecturer was spewing out, when, all of a sudden, he snapped into an exam brief. Out of nowhere. It was a guerrilla attack. Not really fair at all if you ask me.

"Don't start learning anything new at this stage; just consolidate what you already know," he boomed.

I felt my lower lip quivering. I shrank into the seat. Suddenly, the steepness of FG-042 became a cliff edge over which I was dangling, and this lecturer was a shark circling below only too willing to clamp down on my lack of information.

If I don't learn anything new, I won't know anything at all, I thought. Double-merde.

It was week 12 then. I passed. You will too.

And here are some tips to help you through.

1. Tea becomes your best friend. Stock up well. It's good way to get away from the desk for five minutes to make a cuppa without distracting you too much.

2. Organise your notes for each module asap. This is the fun part. You feel like you're really doing something. Colour-coordinate them

if you want. Beautiful. Beg or borrow anything you're missing if it's essential.

3. Now read them. All of them. Not so much fun.

4. Make sure you go to your week 12 lectures and tutorials. Lecturers/tutors often give out valuable information and advice about their exam and it's a good opportunity to ask any questions you might have (tip: the module title is on the exam paper so no need to ask that one)

5. Have a cup of tea.

6. Get past papers – they should be on public folders. There are only so many variations of questions that a lecturer can ask. You'll find the most commonly asked topics and how questions are phrased. Pick a topic, revise it then go through all papers for questions on it. Don't do out full answers – just your main points or arguments or important diagrams.

7. Be realistic in your goals. You might have covered six topics this semester. This does not mean you need to cover six topics in your revision. Be wise. See point number 4 for further advice.

8. If you find yourself floating along in a canoe up a creek and, alas, you have no paddle, don't panic. Prioritise. If you've to answer two questions, pick the two most popular topics and become religious if you're not already. Main points. Again. And again. And again. Basic information is what they're looking for to scrape a pass.

9. Take regular breaks beside tea-making dashes. See your friends. Seeing other people going through the same trauma you are really does help. Go to the cinema. Play a round of uni-golf (great fun). Race against each other on the Living Bridge. Whatever. And don't forget to laugh on occasion

10. Eat well, especially before an exam. Slow-release energy is what



you need so stock up on your carbs.

11. Get sleep. Exhaustion is not a good friend in the exam hall. Staying up til 7am cramming for an exam at 9 is probably not the brightest idea in the world. While you might survive that one, you need to think about the other exams you have as well. You're in for the long haul here, so don't wear yourself out on the first hurdle.

12. On the day, make sure you have your ID card. You won't be admitted into the exam hall without it. No excuses. Bring it.

13. Check you have your ID card again.

14. Really. Have you got it? If you do forget, you'll have to go to SAA and have them do up a new one for you. Do you really need that extra hassle and stress? I don't think so. Sort it out beforehand – bring your card!

15. UL has a clean desk policy. That means nothing on the desk bar permitted items. So, no pencil cases or mascots or module notes...er, not that you'd be bringing them anyway, right? And invigilators

will check calculators too. Don't say I didn't warn you.

16. Try and have a notion of the format of the exam – is it short questions or multiple choice (MCQ)? Will you have to draw diagrams? Will you have to write essays? How many? Or is it a combination of all? How long is the exam? Emmm...what module is it?!

17. Bring a pen and a few to spare.

18. Read through the whole exam paper before kicking off. Start with your best question. It'll settle any nerves you might have and leave you feeling more at ease to tackle something you're not as confident about.

19. Get rough work paper once you go in from the invigilator. Jot down ideas as they come to you. Even if you're in the middle of a different question you might have a eureka moment for another question.

20. Post-mortems are not necessary. Leave the exam behind you in the exam hall if you think talking about it will worry you. It's done; forget about it.

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.

Name: Eimear O'Malley

Course: 2nd Year, Graduate Medicine

Have you started revision for exams? We don't stop studying; we barely sleep!

Do you prefer having assessments before or after Christmas? After, I think.

What assessment are you dreading the most? Any neurology-based questions.



Name: Neasa Starr

Course: 2nd Year, Graduate Medicine

Have you started revision for exams? Since September – we can't avoid it.

Do you prefer having assessments before or after Christmas? Before; get them over with.

What assessment are you dreading the most? Anything to do with fertility.



Grade: Exam Survival

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.



Name: Briain Moriarty

Course: : 3rd Year, Architecture

Have you started revision for exams? ? Not really, we've mostly continuous assessment.

Do you prefer having assessments before or after Christmas? Definitely before.

What assessment are you dreading the most?

Our final presentation-it's a week long, so there'll be no sleep that week.



Name: Jer Cahill

Course: : 3rd Year, Architecture

Have you started revision for exams? No exams either

Do you prefer having assessments before or after Christmas? Before – get them out of the way.

What assessment are you dreading the most?

The final presentation as well



Student Speak

As the festive period draws upon us and Ber starts his Christmas compilation in the Stables, Eamon Heavey asks UL how they will spend Christmas Days 2008.

Brenda O'Connell
1st Year Psychology and Sociology
I'm going to be in the library.



House 72, Groody Student Village - We're having an Ann Summers party!



Laura O'Neil
Nothing...I'll be studying.



Jason Kennedy
1st Year Journalism & New Media And
Gillian Brown, 1st Year Science Education
We decorated for Halloween so we'll go all out for Christmas



Larissa Mirtschink
1st Year - We're all going home,
boo hoo!



Seamie Kyne
I don't really want to be in
a picture...



Conor Kerins & Das
Lane 2nd Year Business I suppose
it being Christmas Days we'll
probably get loaded...



House 74,
Groody Student Village
A big orgy...and maybe
the Lodge after.



Editorial

An Focal

University of Limerick
Students' Union

University of Limerick, Plassey, Co Limerick
Volume XVII, Issue 6
Tuesday, 18 November, 2008

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.



Wearing Maguire's Muck

It's past 7pm on a Thursday evening. Armed with an expensive camera, a tripod and a flash along with a photographer who knows how to use this equipment, the SU President and Communications Officer trundle through Kilmurry Village towards the floodlit section of Maguire's pitch. The air is mild and a light mist falls. At the edge of the playing field they see two members of the Outdoor Pursuits Club and a member of the kayaking club waiting for them. Prepared, President O'Brien strides onto the pitch in his knee-high wellies. A little less prepared, photographer Hugh O'Brien and Communications Officer Aoife Breen glance at each other, their clean shoes and the glistening muck just waiting to envelope their feet. But there's no choice. With a shrug of their shoulders, they step onto the route up to the main playing area. It's a little more difficult to walk than expected. The mud has already seeped up and covered their feet entirely. It becomes a necessity to clearly think out where the next step should land so that the watery sludge doesn't slide its way into their shoes. It only gets worse as they make their way out to join with the wellied OPC members and President and shoeless kayaker, standing eagerly, awaiting direction for An Focal's next front page photo. The photographer ably instructs the subjects into various positions and shoots. The Communications Officer can feel the damp rising in her socks and wonders about the increasing level of mud, creeping ever-closer to her ankles. Amid the banter and laughter that, understandably, arises as O'Brien the Photographer shoots, there are some light-hearted comments that question the over-used, attention-grabbing name that UL is ever-so fond of: "Ireland's sporting campus".

O'Brien the President yelps, "I think I'm stuck! If I am, don't leave me here".

Hearne the Kayaker later comments, "I've kayaked in waters at least as shallow as this".

Burke the OPC member adds, "I've come out cleaner from caving".

Amusing remarks, especially as one is standing in a floodlit mudpit on a misting Thursday evening splashing in murky waters and mucky clumps.

The facilities made available to clubs really are a laughing matter because they are nothing more than a joke.

Although the UL Arena's website boasts that, "From the basic beginner to the Olympic Champion, Ireland's Sporting Campus provides the facilities and the expertise to ensure you enjoy a quality experience at your particular level while achieving your goals and aspirations", the opinion amongst campus clubs differs greatly.

Aside from the fact that clubs train on this pitch on a weekly basis, aside from the fact that home games have to be played away because the facilities are unplayable, aside from the fact that the UL bowl is gleaming over Maguire's, taunting the players, the real fundamental shame here is that every time a player runs on that pitch he or she is putting himself/herself at risk of a serious injury because that pitch is a safety hazard.

Shying away from maintenance and a proper drainage system is putting every student who subsequently bears the UL crest on their jersey in jeopardy.

"Ireland's sporting campus" is but for a select few; elite athletes training here won't ever be wearing the muck of Maguire's.

"games have to be played away because the facilities are unplayable".

Pa's Propaganda

Something struck me during the week as I walked past the Arena and saw the Irish team training. I thought how lucky we were to live on Ireland's "Sporting Campus", but then I snapped out of that sh*tte and remembered the actual reality of the situation. That being, that although we have the best facilities in the country at our University, how many of us actually get to use them? The reality is that we, the students, contributed over €4 million to the construction of the Arena yet we don't seem to reap the benefits. Even our Sports Science students are expected to pay for the use of the weights room which is vital to their course – although it was students who paid for it in the first place!

Not only are we not reaping the benefits of living on Ireland's sporting campus, we are actively being treated as second class citizens when it comes to the usage of facilities on campus. While our GAA teams are forced to travel to Cork to play home matches, the University allows local GAA clubs to play their games in UL.

While our primary pitch is given over completely to external rugby teams our own rugby team – along with our soccer and GAA teams – are expected to train in what can only be described as a swamp. Maguire's field is potentially dangerous to the teams that play on it and there have

been many reported ankle breaks and ligament damage already this year.

UL has a reputation as the place to come if you wish to study and play a good level of sport; this reputation is wholly undeserved. With the facilities that are actually made available to students it's amazing we can compete at all. This means that our reputation is slowly lowering and will eventually disappear. I'm told that visiting University teams can hardly believe that a University with such a reputation for sporting excellence has such appalling facilities for its own students.

In the next two years we will see the development of new artificial pitches on the North Campus, but these will not alleviate the need for a quality, properly drained playing pitch.

We as students are done paying for University facilities (such as the Arena and the boathouse). It's time that the University afforded its students the respect they deserve by not expecting them to compete on unfit playing fields. Surely the University should afford its own students the same opportunities as it does to outside interests, or is money more important than the UL student experience? I would like to think not..

Pa



Don: What they mean there's a problem with the pitch?

Frog: What do you mean, 'pitch'?
Get off my swamp!
Cartoon by Larissa Mirtschink.

The Advice Bureau

The Access Office

Caitriona McGrattan - Welfare Officer

One way of describing the work of the Access Office is to say 'The University of Limerick Access Office works to promote and support the participation of students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups who have been under-represented in the University sector.' In layman's terms that means the Access office team of Joanna, Deirdre, John, Donal, Josephine, Elaine work tirelessly to achieve in equality here in UL.

The work of the Access Office may be divided into three areas, namely pre-entry school activities, student support while at UL and outreach work in the community. The Access Office runs the AccessCampus, an outreach facility which supports second chance learning and back to education initiatives. The AccessCampus is a unique partnership initiative between Education (University of Limerick), the local community (LEDP), and the technology sector (Dell) creating a mini-campus which supports Limerick people in realising their potential through outreach educational opportunities. The AccessCampus caters for a diverse range of learners, ranging from primary school children to mature learners. In line with Access Office policy of raising an interest in University education among young people and the wider community they engage in a number of community activities designed to demystify UL and encourage aspirations to enter third level education. Their community initiatives are carried out in partnership with community groups and School Completion Programmes. The Access Office is also active in 45 primary and post-primary schools. Their activities with schools include, amongst others, study clubs, orientation days and shadowing days.

In relation to supporting students in UL the Access Office has put in place a range of support services including financial, academic and personal supports as access students sometimes need extra support, in particular during the first few months of study. Financial supports available to Access students include the Student Assistance Fund (available to all registered students) and advice and assistance on other sources of funding, for example the Millennium Fund and the Bank of Ireland Scholarship Trust Fund. Academic supports available to Access students include a dedicated Access library service where they aim to loan our students with some of their course books for the semester to avoid the high cost of purchasing academic texts. They also provide free photocopying and a laptop loan scheme. Students taking new or challenging subjects may avail of group or individual focused tuition.

The Access office operates an open door policy, which encourages the ongoing development of students throughout their time in UL. As part of the Student Affairs division they work closely with the other support services within the university.

The Access Office is located in EM 008 and they can be contacted by email at access@ul.ie.

A guide to safer sex... Abstinence

Description

Abstinence, i.e. no naked shenanigans whatsoever, is the only way to protect yourself and your partner from contracting STIs and/or becoming pregnant.

How it Works

Individuals and couples choose not to engage in any form of oral or penetrative sex.



Advantages

- You can be more intimate in other ways with your partner; emotionally, mentally, spiritually
- You do not have to be a virgin to abstain from sex; it has nothing to do with whether you have lost your virginity or not
- If strictly followed, with no slip ups (no pun intended), abstinence is the only 100% effect birth control available
- Clothes-on fun, like kissing, cuddling and dressing up, is perfectly acceptable for abstintee-ers and can often be more fun!

Drawbacks

- Peer pressure is a terrible thing and people may not understand why someone would choose not to have sex
- Abstinence is often associated with certain right-wing religious groups, and if that isn't your scene it can be an awkward situation to explain yourself out of
- Abstaining from all sex does involve giving up the sexual pleasure gained from having sex

Let's talk about sex baby!

An Focal sex columnist Annie Glyde-Dammes

This week, on the grounds of getting complaints about last week's column being way too serious and relationshipy, I decided to lighten up a bit. So...this week I'm talking about the development of condoms. Yes, believe it or not there have been developments in the wonderful world of condoms since the times of linen sheaths and animal tissue (mmm...hygienic).

See, there was a time when condoms were purely for protection. I don't remember it, but I'm told it existed. They were only available in off-white in colour and smelled strongly of rubber (well duh!). Nowadays though they're actually made for pleasure, or at least that's what is says on the tin – literally.

Gone are bog-standard condoms; now it's ultra-thin for natural feel, g-spot ribbed for her pleasure, dual ribbed for mutual pleasure, strawberry flavoured for safer and more pleasant oral sex, XXL for the larger gentleman, super-lubricated for the lazy who couldn't be bothered with foreplay, heat-sensitive magic ones which make your male partner last longer and glow-in-the-dark for those who prefer the 'no lights on' approach. Let it never be said that the makers of condoms don't care about both your pleasure and safety as well as their profit margins... and the safe-sex lovers amongst us are like veritable children in sweet shops in large chemists and online.

So the point of this column really is to say that nobody is confined in his or her choice of condoms. The Welfare Office has a broad range of condom types but if you don't want to go there, there's always the chain chemists or online (make sure you go to reputable site and not eBay... please!).

And trust me when I say this, many an amusing afternoon can be spent trying out various types of condoms to see which ones suit you and your partner best.

As soon as people see modern condoms for what they really are (fun, yes fun and safety) then their use will be far more widespread. They don't have to be about mundane and boring safety – they can be about 'spot the body part' using glow-in-the-dark condoms (yes, I'm easily amused), or about 'guess the flavour' during oral sex or even just figuring out what kind of ribbed condom you and your partner prefer.

One of my best friends finds particular types of ribbed condoms sore and unpleasant, the same type that I find particularly nice. There are so many types of condoms out there that it's very rare that someone can turn around and say "I don't like condoms" – seriously you'd have to have tried them all to say that with any conviction, something which very few people can really claim to do!

So what should one take away from this column? One line – if you can take the time out of your busy work schedule, spend a weekend just trying different condoms out. If you don't already have a condom type and brand that you can definitively say is enjoyable, then it will definitely be worth your while!



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PLASSEY CABS

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Annacotty Co. Limerick
plasseycabs@eircom.net

Register today at the Students' Union for the Safe Cab initiative and never be stuck on a night out. A safe way home - guaranteed

PSA Notes



Hello All,

I hope you are all keeping well. Well it's the busy part of the semester so I hope the assignments and studies are going well.

PSA Executive

There are two vacant officer positions and 3 association council position therefore as per the constitution :

If an Officer's position, other than the position of President, becomes vacant during the year, the position may be filled by a bye-election within twenty-one calendar days. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called to hold a bye-election in accordance with Schedule II to this Constitution. If no candidate comes forward to contest such an election the vacancy shall be filled by co-option by the Executive Committee.

Therefore as the PSA Executive positions of Treasurer and Mary I rep have been vacant since the

AGM on Wednesday of Week 8 (allowing for 21 calendar days) applications for candidates can be made through the office of the PSA president in writing or by e-mail to emma.murphy@ul.ie by Wednesday, 31 October at 5pm.

Should there be no interested applicants then the vacancy shall be filled by co-option by the PSA executive.

The non-officer positions in the Kemmy Business School, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Engineering of the PSA are available to be filled by co-option. Interested candidates again can contact me at emma.murphy@ul.ie

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Paddy Rockett, ULSU Community Relations Officer to the team as the ULSU representative for this year.

Student Parent Christmas Party

The ULSU/PSA Student Parent Christmas Party will take place on Friday, 28 November. Invitation Packs are available from the Reception in the Students Union or from the envelope on my office door! Please RSVP to Caitriona or myself by Wednesday 19

November, using the RSVP card in the Invitation Packs. Should you need any information, please contact either of us at welfare@ulsu.ie or emma.murphy@ul.ie.

PSA Christmas Night Out

The 'Festive Period' is coming around quite quickly so just to give you a date for your diary the PSA Christmas Night Out will take place on Friday, 5 December. We will begin festivities in the PSA Common Room from 6pm with a Mulled Wine and Mince Pies Reception and then we will continue into the Stables with a DJ from 8pm or so! Finger Food, Vouchers and Santa Hats all complimentary! It should be a great night so come along and enjoy.

That's all from me for this edition. I hope you come along to the events and meetings scheduled.

Best of luck with the next few weeks! If you have any questions, queries, concerns or comments just pop in, drop me an e-mail or give me a call.

Details as always,
emma.murphy@ul.ie
and 086-0435305
Beir bua,
Emma

NOKIA



Get your Mobile Phone collected at the Students' Union and have it repaired for free at...
Nokia Service Centre, 66 Catherine St, Limerick.

Text 087-9531975 or email info@nokiaservicelimerick.com for more information.

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

Caught on Camera



At the Halloween Ball



Doing some ghostbusting at the Halloween Ball



Eager to start the festive cheer queuing for Christmas Days tickets



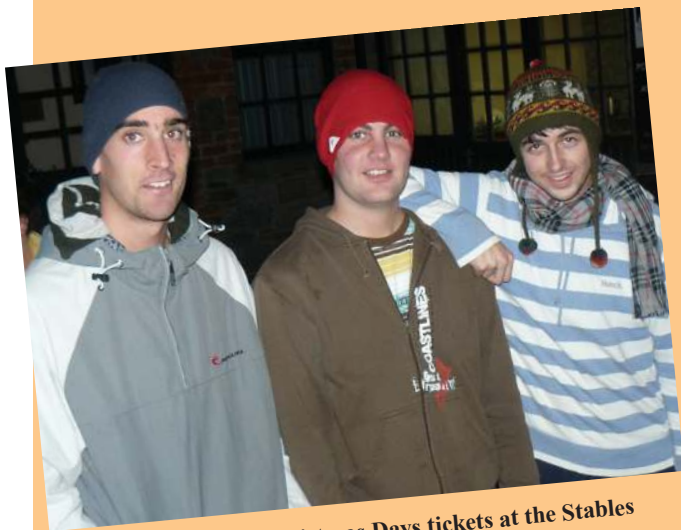
First year Arts students in the Stables



Early graduates of the medical school.



Mr Lightweight frontman Des Foley performing onstage in the South Court



Queuing up for Christmas Days tickets at the Stables



Somehow this cereal killer made it past the Ents Crew



Weathering the cold to get tickets for Christmas Days



Dressed up in the South Court

Halloween Ball photos taken by Michael Johnson, UL PhotoSoc

Sport

Softball IV Wash- Out

Eoghan Reade

It is never easy to compile a report on a full weekend of intervarsity action; the difficulty of that task is obviously compounded when the tournament is abandoned on the first day. Unfortunately this was the case for the first leg of the Irish Softball Intervarsities, held in Waterford on 8 and 9 November.

The tournament began on Saturday morning with the great grudge match of the league, UL's first team, the 55s, taking on the club's alumni team, aptly named, the Ori-ginals. As always, this past and present meeting was closely fought, with the Ori-ginals eventually winning in extra innings.

UL's second team, the DTs, did not fare quite so well in their opening game against UCD. After starting off evenly matched, the DTs began to struggle mid-way through the game, with the worsening weather conditions making a comeback increasingly unlikely. UCD coped admirably with the strong winds and rain and pulled away to record an impressive victory.

Experience became vital to the teams as the conditions continued to deteriorate, experience which can be found in abundance on the Ori-ginals team. It showed when they played the DTs, who had decided to field several beginners in the hope of giving them vital game time ahead of the tournaments in the spring. The Ori-ginals proved far too strong for the DTs side and won comfortably despite several impressive plays by the

students.

The final game to be completed was between the 55s and UCD, the IV champions and runners-up respectively. The two sides, as has been the case in the majority of their meetings over the past few years, were inseparable and after 5 innings were tied at 4 runs each. The 55's found their form in the closing stages, scoring 2 runs and conceding none in the 6th inning to take the lead at 6-4. They scored a further run in the top of the 7th inning to give themselves a 3 run cushion as UCD came up to bat for the final time and despite conceding a run to the first batter, the 55s held on to win the game 7-5.

The weather took a turn for the worse early in the next set of games and play was suspended. With no sign of a let up, and the forecast for the Sunday looking similar, it was decided not to continue the competition for safety reasons. As far as the league goes, a meeting in the near future will decide the validity of the results from the weekend.

Despite a disappointing end to the competition, UL will take encouragement from a number of impressive performances from players making their debuts on both the first and second teams. Attention will now turn to preparations for the spring tournaments, where UL will travel to UCD first before coming back to Limerick to defend their national title in the final leg of the Intervarsity season.

UL Defeat Rivals Sligo UL 3-0 I.T Sligo

Richard O'Brien

UL women's soccer recorded an impressive 3-0 victory over rivals Sligo on Tuesday of Week 9, making it three wins out of three for the team. Despite a comprehensive victory in the end, UL squandered the many chances that they created in the first half. UL controlled all the possession in the opening quarter, and confined Sligo to one or two long range efforts, which failed to trouble keeper Laoise O'Driscoll.

UL went in at half time feeling a little frustrated, no doubt, having failed to capitalise on their domination. It took a goal line save from O'Driscoll to spur UL into action, and when Jenny Critchley beat her marker, she delivered a perfect pass across the box which Richard O'Brien connected with to make it 1-0.

It wasn't long before Kacey O'Driscoll added a second, the ball

breaking to her from a Sarah Considine delivery, and she made no mistake, putting the ball through the legs of the Sligo keeper. Sligo had one final chance for a consolation, but the UL defence, who had smothered most attacks all day, pressured the Sligo forward into shooting wide of the target.

UL put the result beyond doubt ten minutes from the end, when good work from Lynsey McKey put Jenny Critchley through, and last season's top scorer made no mistake with the finish.

The management team of Mike Considine and Sean Hehir were very satisfied with the high tempo the UL girls established early on, but will hope that the team can be more clinical in their finishing, especially if they are to beat UCD next week.

This game will be played on Thursday of Week 10 in Dublin, and is likely to be one of the toughest encounters of the year, with UCD having defeated Sligo by a similar margin in their game.

Five Medals for UL Judo

JT Deenihan

The newly reformed UL Judo Club travelled to Macroom, Co Cork on 9 November for the annual Munster Open Judo championships. The event was attended by a large population of Judo fighters from Munster and also those from Galway and Dublin including some fighters from Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Four fighters represented the club on the day, coach J.T. Deenihan, Brian Power, Gwennoline Jade, and Jai Chan. They won a collection of 3 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze medal. Jai Chan started off the team's action by winning a silver medal in the Women's under 63kg category. It was a great result for Jai in her first ever Judo competition but who has a strong background in Jujitsu.

Gwennoline Jade a black belt from France fought in the under 52kg category and made easy work of the competition eventually winning gold. Gwen's superb skill and strength was no match for the Irish competitors who although having a weight advantage couldn't throw her once during the competition.

Brian Power another black belt fought in his first competition in 15 years of absence from the sport and won a very respectable bronze medal in the under 90kg category. This was despite having to pull out of the competition due to injury and having to concede points to other fighters.

The day ended with J.T. Deenihan winning two gold medals for his performances in the under 81kg category and the open weight category which consisted of competitors from any weight category.

It was a fantastic start for the UL Judo Club which has only started training again this September. The club now look forward to the Irish Closed Championships in December and the Intervarsity's in the New Year.

The UL Judo Club train every Monday night from 6pm to 7:30 pm in the PESS (Old Sports Building) in UL. Everyone is welcome to attend from beginners to black belts. If you have any queries please contact club Secretary Kevin at 085 1058533 or e-mail uljudoclub@gmail.com.

Full details of the club are now available on our website which is <http://sites.google.com/site/uljudoclub/>.



Club

Killarney '08: OPC Living the Dream

Fergal Dempsey

The Morning of All Saints Day saw quite a few walking dead as a group from OPC left the campus to go climb Ireland's highest mountain and enjoy a weekend of debauchery along with it! The group some showing up in costumes from the previous nights festivities were not long getting ready for the day that lay in front of them. The hike itself was a trek up Caurantoohill the highest peak in Ireland standing at 1039m above sea level. Due to weather conditions the brave posse from the OPC couldn't hit the top that day but that was OK. Everyone still got to stretch their legs and admire the beautiful Hags Glen and the roof of Ireland as it was blanketed in snow.

That night the gourmet chefs employed by the OPC conjured up a traditional Spag Bol that warmed the cockles of every heart that had been in the hills that day. Halloween

was once again celebrated with people breaking out in costumes such as Cavemen and Monkeys. We were even graced with the Statue of Liberty all the way from the US of A. The next morning saw a few fuzzy heads but these were swiftly forgotten. The weather had cleared and it was now good enough for us to head to the top of Ireland. Some of the more experienced guys headed for a day of Rock Climbing as the weather had turned out that good. Needless to say with the wind at our backs we reached the Summit. The group photo taken we trekked back down the mountain contented that we had achieved two great days of hiking and had gotten some good experience under our belts for future trips, namely Scotland '09.

We practice our skills every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday night's at the climbing wall in the PESS between 7 and 10pm. More info can be found on www.ulopc.com.

Kerry - the Kayaking Kingdom

Siobhan Hinchy

November 1st – November 2nd saw more than 30 UL kayakers heading off in the early daylight hours for the kingdom of Kerry for the first big whitewater trip of the year. The cold weather and low river water levels did little to deter the enthusiastic kayakers from the 8am Saturday departure after the previous nights Halloween festivities. Despite a few delays en route, there was a colourful display of people and boats at the starting point or "get-on" of the Lower Carragh River, located just outside Glenbeigh in Co Kerry. The Lower Carragh is a friendly grade 2 beginner whitewater run and the perfect introduction to an exhilarating sport. The new members of ULKC styled their way down the river with only a few wet heads by the end of it all. After getting changed, the scenic route was taken home in a bid to find the Upper Carragh, a higher, more advanced section of the same river and determine if water levels would allow another run. This wasn't the case, unfortunately, so the group headed back toward Killarney for the evening.

A few navigational anomalies led to a scenic bus ride through some of the best parts of the ring of Kerry, a treat for both the native and overseas

kayakers on the day.

The UL Outdoor Pursuits Club also shared the hostel in Killarney for the night so there was plenty of familiar faces and banter for the evening. Sunday morning caused a change in direction, back to Limerick and the club stopped at a river closer to home, the Deel, located in Askeaton. Water levels were much better here, due to the constant rain cloud that hangs over Limerick, much to the kayakers delight. This was a slightly trickier grade 3 run with a number of weirs to negotiate before a challenging gorge section. It was a really step up from the previous day's adventure but one that was handled really well with a bus load of paddlers grinning from ear to ear the whole way home. The next trip away is the whitewater weekend to Wicklow Friday 28 November – Sunday 30 November. It's the end of week 12 and the perfect release before hitting the books for study week. This will be followed by a weeklong trip to Snowdonia in Wales in the first week of January. Sign up at pool sessions every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:45pm – 10:45pm in the sports Arena or on the website www.ulkayak.com.



ULKC in the Kerry waters

Senior hurlers stroll on

Liam Togher

UL 0-16 GMIT 1-9

A four-point victory over GMIT in their final group game at Pitch 1 took UL senior hurlers into the knockout stages of the League. Both teams had won one and lost one prior to this meeting, so the objective was mutual – victory or elimination. UL were slight favourites to come out on top, although a GMIT side who reached last year's Fitzgibbon Cup semi-finals and could boast Andrew O'Shaughnessy in their line-up were never going to be taken lightly.

On a bitterly cold afternoon UL took the early initiative with scores from Brian Carroll and Ainle O Cairrealain. The home side had complete control of proceedings

in the opening minutes as keeper Paddy McCormack watched the game in comfort. By the quarter-hour mark UL had four points without reply and then hit a four-minute scoring streak to double their convincing lead. GMIT could not even do the simple things well and had a litany of UL wides to thank for not being further adrift. At least the visitors managed a couple of points at the end of the half, a deficit of 0-8 to 0-2 not doing justice to the home team's domination.

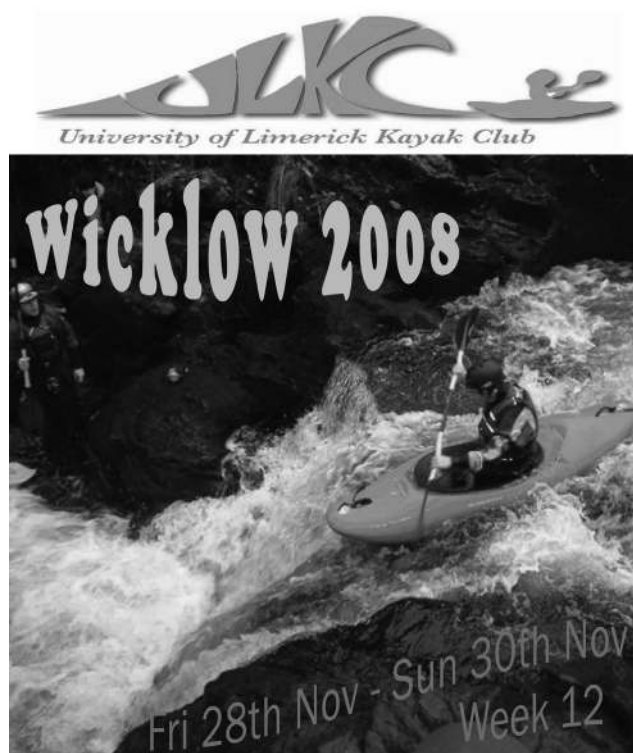
UL hit the ground running after half-time as Martin Walsh and Ryan O'Dwyer restored the eight-point gap. GMIT slowly managed to assert themselves a little more but the Limerick side could still

glide through the gears whilst keeping their opponents at bay. UL manager Ger Cunningham introduced several substitutes with 15 minutes to go and a lead of 0-13 to 0-5. They began to ease off just as GMIT went on a salvage mission that yielded 1-2. UL needed a strong finish to ensure that they didn't throw the game away in spectacular fashion and ultimately came out on the right end of a 0-16 to 1-9 scoreline.

Aside from the ten-minute spell near the end when they took the foot off the gas, UL played excellently. All of their starting forwards scored with Carroll helping himself to 0-6. Their work rate was enviable, they had far more of the possession and they

forced numerous errors from GMIT. However, the home side hit a worrying number of wides and such profligacy might cost them dear in the latter stages of the competition. It was an ideal all-round performance from UL, who will surely be taken seriously by any team they meet this season.

UL: P McCormack, S Wynne, P Codd, B Fox, K O'Gorman, JB McCarthy, S O'Brien, C Mahon, F Galvin, M Walsh, R O'Dwyer, E O'Mahoney, B Carroll, A O'Cairrealain, G Scales. Subs: A Ryan for O'Cairrealain, J Campion for Galvin, P O'Dwyer for O'Mahoney, D Stapleton for Wynne, J Mackey for Mahon.



www.ulkayak.com

Sign up at the pool and on the website

Contrasting football fortunes against CIT

Liam Togher

On the last week of October the UL senior and intermediate football teams took on CIT at a rain-sodden Pitch 1. The seniors needed victory to maintain their League interest while the intermediates could focus entirely on topping their group.

Cian O'Neill's senior side had to settle for a 1-13 to 2-10 draw against the Cork college, leaving UL with only a meagre chance of reaching the quarter-finals. They had begun with victory over Tralee IT but a resounding 11-point defeat

to UCC left them with it all to do.

Elsewhere in Group 1B, Cork IT topped the group with little bother while only a shock UCC defeat to already-eliminated Tralee would offer UL a passage into the knockout rounds of the competition. This will come as a disappointment to the seniors, who had serious

aspirations of at least a semi-final place in this year's League campaign.

There was better luck for Davy Jones' intermediate charges. Having easily accounted for Tralee IT, a narrow win over UCC, combined with results elsewhere, was enough to take UL into the quarter-finals by they time CIT came to Limerick.

The equation was simple – winners topped the group. In the event of a draw, UL's inferior scoring difference would leave them second in Group 1B, but a 1-10 to 0-12 for the home team left them with three wins out of three and the comfort of playing their quarter-final clash on home soil as reward for winning the group.

“This will come as a disappointment to the seniors, who had serious aspirations of at least a semi-final place in this year's League campaign.”

Freshers blow hot and cold in CIT

Mike Considine

The UL fresher footballers were out playing again in Week 9, this time against CIT. Both the A and B games took place down in Cork on Wednesday, 5 November.

The B game was first up and UL got off to a blistering start scoring 2-4, both goals coming courtesy of the boot of Mike Togher following some impressive work out the field from Willie Ambrose and Mike Geaney. Were it not for some silly frees, they would have been further ahead at half-time.

Despite this, UL got to the interval with a healthy lead of 2-4 to 0-4.

However, CIT upped the ante in the second half and managed to blow UL out of the water, scoring 2 goals and 11 points from play. Were it not for a consolation goal from Mike

Geaney at the death, UL would have lost this game by more.

The final scoreline was 2-15 to 3-7 in CIT's favour.

UL will look to some poor kicking in the first half and the overall work rate after the interval as the reasons for their downfall. Nonetheless, they can take heart from a good footballing display in the first half and hope to replicate it over 60 minutes when UCC come to Limerick on the final group match day.

In the A game, UL were hoping to build upon their hard-fought win over WIT in their opening game by beating CIT to increase their chances of progressing to the League quarter final. The first half was nip and tuck all the way with chances few and far between.

However, with the post-interval relocation of Mike Tim O'Sullivan to centre-forward and Paul Kennelly to full-forward, the game opened up a little, allowing Paul Kennelly to use his pace and expertly shoot home the goal which put some daylight between the teams.

From here UL were able to turn it up a notch and further points from Jonathan Lyng and Edmond Walsh among others left UL ahead at the finish on a scoreline of 1-13 to 1-8, leaving them in prime position to advance to the knockout stages.

UL Ladies football looking up

Liam Togher

These are good times for the game of ladies football in UL. While it's generally been a profitable start to the GAA season so far for the college's many teams in several disciplines, the progress being made by the ladies' football club has been remarkable and there is tremendous credit due to everyone involved – the management, the players, the club officials, everyone.

The senior ladies footballers maintained their winning start to the League campaign on 30 October by defeating UCC 1-8 to 0-10 on Pitch 1. This proved to be a much tougher game than the previous week's rout of Mary Immaculate College, although the win over the Cork side showed the UL ladies' resilience and battling qualities.

The UL intermediates have also made a flying start in their bid for League success with a 100 per cent after two games. Like the seniors they began with an emphatic win over Mary Immaculate College and followed that up by smashing seven goals past CIT in Newtown. The home side managed four goals of

their own but UL were distinctly the better side in a highly entertaining game.

This year has seen UL enter three top-level ladies football teams for the very first time, a feat of which the GAA club in this college is very proud. Their first League match showed that even UL's third team can impress greatly as they hammered UCC on a scoreline of 5-12 to 1-7. Not surprisingly given the inception of a third ladies football team in the university, participation levels in the sport are at an all-time high. Already there has been serious progress made by the club and I'm sure there is a lot more to come.

UL's third team can impress greatly as they hammered UCC

Worth his weight in gold

Liam Togher speaks with Ireland's strongest man

UL has played host to many well-known sporting personalities in its time and it also incorporates some remarkable athletes whose noteworthy achievements escape the attentions of so many. One of those is 4th year Production Management student Pat McNamara, who has won a number of prestigious awards for bodybuilding and powerlifting. He can justifiably claim to be the strongest man in Ireland in his field, the 82kg class.

Pat recently came out trumps in the senior under 90kg category at the Republic of Ireland Bodybuilding Federation (RIBBF) championships, an event he looks back on quite fondly. “I started off in competitions last April and I found it very enjoyable. The response and enthusiasm of the crowd is special, it puts a smile on the face. I was quite nervous at the start but the confidence grows with a positive reaction from the crowd. I was delighted with the RIBBF success and I'll definitely continue with the bodybuilding. Hopefully I can tack on another few pounds of muscle.”

Pat was also victorious in the GPC World Powerlifting Championships in Birmingham, which he claims to be no mean feat. “I was particularly happy with this success as it's a lot harder than the bodybuilding. Powerlifting can be very stressful. I missed my first two squats and if I failed a third time my competition was over. I set a personal best with my third squat so I was thrilled with that. I managed to beat participants from countries like Britain, Germany, Ukraine and Georgia. There were some excellent competitors at the event.”

Pat took part in the European Championships in Germany earlier this year and found the experience extremely memorable. He was also successful in two national competitions in 2008, so he has been a busy man over the last few months. “I need a rest now, my knees are killing me!” he conceded. “Since January I've been training twice a day. Luckily I've never been seriously injured, no major knocks ever picked up.”

All of Pat's success has been self-funded and he's always worked behind the glaring eyes of the media. “To be honest, money never really motivated me. It has cost a fair bit, though, so hopefully I can get some sponsorship next year. Most of my achievements have gone unnoticed apart from the odd local newspaper.” And then he was the subject of a civic reception from the Mayor of Limerick. “All of the Birmingham competitors were invited. We were very well looked after.”

So how does Pat feel about his achievements to date and what lies ahead? “I've got what I wanted, to reach the top in powerlifting. I'll go back to the bodybuilding next year and see how that goes, maybe enter a few competitions. I just want to get college out of the way first. I'll have to cut back on the training and focus on my course work, with all my projects and an FYP to do. Training time is fun time for me; it gives me a break from my other stuff.”

Here's hoping that Pat's last year in UL goes well for him and that his remarkable sporting success will continue into the future.

Comment

Rebels By Name, Rebels By Nature

Tomás McCarthy

Here we go again. It's take three of the Cork hurlers versus the county board. We all know the characters, we all know the storyline and we all know the ultimate bloody ending. This is not going to be pretty.

This time Gerald McCarthy has been caught in the crossfire. The players argue that their voice wasn't heard when the manager was appointed. The two players on the seven-man committee opposed McCarthy's appointment but they were ultimately outvoted. Since then the battle lines have been drawn in the media. The players say they will not play under McCarthy and are even threatening early retirement. The county board is refusing to budge on the matter.

The Cork players claim that at every opportunity since the first strike in 2002 the county board has

tried to gain revenge. John Gardiner said that after the successful first strike Cork hurling experienced some great victories in 2004 and 2005.

While there is no doubt that this Cork team contains some great hurlers it could be argued that they have got carried away with their two in a row in these years. The current squad is full of bloated egos like Donal Óg Cusack, Sean Óg Ó hAilpin and more recently Ben O'Connor.

During the football controversy last year Michael Cussen heard of the strike through a text message. The so-called 'squad' is being represented by a select few. Journalists have been contacted by Cork players volunteering to give interviews and statements. Usually it works the other way around.

These are all fine hurlers no doubt but you can't escape the feeling that

they should be concentrating on winning All-Irelands. Kilkenny are the greatest hurling team in the modern age and Cork should remember that.

The ultimate question is do the players want to play? The threat of early retirement is a little far fetched. For thirty talented hurlers to quit inter-county hurling so young is never going to happen. To be honest, this threat is bordering on childish. It is certainly an unwelcome distraction when both parties should be negotiating rather than trying to talk tough in the media. There must be so many young hurlers who would give their right arm to wear the red jersey. At the moment the senior players are showing total disrespect for this honour.

Gerald McCarthy is so unfortunate to be caught up in this situation as Teddy Holland was last time out. McCarthy might be victim of this

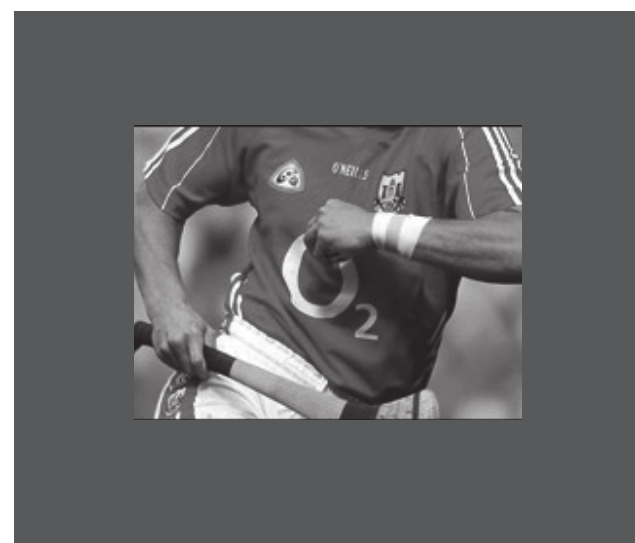
battle. He is a decent hurling man who has represented his county with pride down the years. He doesn't deserve this.

The county board is not without fault in acting in such a stubborn manner. They will argue, though, that the manager was put in place in the appropriate fashion. However, they have not broken the binding agreement put together by Kieran Mulvey. The players have.

Also, why didn't the players get rid of Frank Murphy at the first time of asking in 2002? With Murphy still in place the players were shooting themselves in the foot.

For everyone outside the Rebel County, the sense of irritation is reaching boiling point. We are sick to the teeth of it, to be honest.

Unfortunately, I can see myself writing a similar article in a year's time. One hopes that they won't



University Arena's expansion to have health benefits

make a mess of the National League as they did last year. To say that the players are a disgrace to the GAA is a bit over the top. A laughing stock would be more like it.

If it doesn't work one way...

Liam Togher

Once again, European club football is getting an overhaul. Five years after the most recent changes to UEFA's club competitions, the continental governing body is ripping it up and starting again. The biggest alteration concerns the UEFA Cup, which this season is operating under that guise for the last time. From 2009-10 Europe's secondary tournament will be rebranded the UEFA Europa League. It's not just

the name being changed, though. The competition now incorporates the messy Intertoto Cup in the qualifying rounds and will begin properly with a 48-team group phase. Gone will be the awkward five-team groups that have proven unpopular under the present UEFA Cup format.

The Champions League is also being remodelled slightly. The group stage and knockout rounds will remain as they are at the moment, but the qualifying rounds have been revamped. There will be ten group

phase berths on offer from the qualifiers, five for domestic champions and five for teams who came second or third in their national league. In terms of qualifying automatically for the group stage, English teams have a boost in that the top three (as opposed to two at present) will bypass the qualifiers. Only the Premier League's fourth-placed side will have to face another European club to book their place in the Champions League proper.

Obviously the changes were made in response to voices proclaiming unhappiness with European competitions and their current formats. At least Michel Platini and his cronies have done away with the overly complicated earlier phases of the UEFA Cup. Playing a two-legged tie to go into a group phase and then back into another series of home-and-away rounds is illogical and has led to a diminishing quality of football in this tournament. Allowing three teams from five to remain in the competition does little to weed out those who are struggling to make headway in Europe.

However, the Champions League revamp is likely to make the dominant continental powers even stronger. We will probably see more and more the same lucky few year after year in the latter stages of Europe's top tournament. Indulging the major players in the top leagues at the expense of those from 'lesser' nations such as Ireland will serve only to further the already alarming gap between the top eight or ten clubs in Europe and the hundreds of others. As we've seen with the GAA, life will not automatically be made easier by simply tweaking with the way things are run. The jury remains out on UEFA's new order until the first Europa League has been completed.

“...changes were made in response to voices proclaiming unhappiness with European competitions and their current formats...”



The Score

Tomás McCarthy

Party Fever

Fair play to Djibril Cisse, Pascal Chimbonda and El Hadji Diouf for going to Obafemi Martins' party just 48 hours before they were due to play to Chelsea. I'm sure Roy Keane was delighted with them!

Feed Me

Does anyone else think that Luka Modric is a bit light for the Premier League? At 65kg he is 11kg thinner than Frank Lampard and 17kg off Steven Gerrard. Would someone give the man a dinner?!

For Sale

If you have a bit of money to spare at the moment you should consider buying Blue Square League side Lewes. The club are currently bottom of the table with 2 wins in 17 games as well as being tens of thousands in debt.

Loan Shark

Ross Turnbull is a patient man. After arriving at Middlesbrough in 2002 the English keeper has gone on six loan deals before finally making the number one spot his own at The Riverside.

Paying the Penalty

Mike Dean just loves to point to the spot. In his ten Premier League games so far Dean has awarded an astonishing six penalties. Keep up the good work Mike!

Cillian (aka Sillian) Who?

A lot of people including myself had never heard of Celtic's Cillian (or Sillian according to Jeff Stelling) Sheridan before he appeared in the Champions League against Man United. He is only 19 and was on the Cavan minor football team before moving to Parkhead in 2006. Sheridan has made a rapid rise to the first team so maybe Trappatoni should keep an eye out!

Name Game

There have been some terrible and unusual nicknames given to footballers down the years. Tore Andre Flo was known as 'Flonaldo' and Davor Suker was called 'Sukerman' to name a few. The best (or should that be worst) though was given to Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano who was given the nickname 'Ivan the Terrible'.

GAA round-up

Liam Togher

McCarthy scouts UL for backroom team

New Limerick hurling manager Justin McCarthy has added two of UL's leading GAA personalities to his backroom team for the 2009 season. Dave Mahedy, UL Director of Sport, has been recruited as trainer, making this his third spell with the Limerick set-up. Freshers' co-manager Liam Garvey was also taken on board by McCarthy as a selector. Congratulations to Dave and Liam on their deserved call-ups to the inter-county scene.

Freshers' hurling

The Fresher 1 hurlers had a busy week in late October/early November with three games in just eight days. They began with a 2-14 to 0-11 defeat away to UCC but responded well to defeat WIT and LIT in their next two matches. The final group game is at home to CIT. Meanwhile, the Fresher 2 hurling team built on their defeat of Mary Immaculate College with an emphatic 3-12 to 0-9 win on home soil against LIT. They end the group stage with a visit to Tralee IT.

Senior camogie

UL made it two wins from two on 4 November with a convincing 3-12 to 1-9 victory over their CIT counterparts in Newtown. Having seen off Na Gardai with embarrassing ease two weeks' earlier, the Limerick side didn't entertain any thoughts of complacency in Cork as the girls' League campaign goes from strength to strength.

Sports Quiz

John Condren



1. How many European Cup medals does Paolo Maldini have?
2. By how many points did Lewis Hamilton win this season's Formula One championship?
3. What club does Tyrone star Sean Cavanagh play for?
4. Who is the only Irish boxer to have won Olympic gold?
5. Cristiano Ronaldo made his Man Utd debut against which club?
6. Who was Hurler of the Year in 2007?
7. How many Group One races did Aidan O'Brien-trained horses win in 2008?
8. Which famous former Tour golfer has recently spent some time in hospital?
9. French out-half David Skreela plays for which club?
10. How many miles per hour was Kieran Richardson's freekick against Newcastle clocked at?
11. What is the second nationality of England and Aston Villa player Gabriel Agbonlahor?
12. How many Leinster counties have never won the All-Ireland football championship?

Magic Numbers

Liam Togher & Alan Keane

- 13 Dismissals in Roy Keane's professional career after he was sent to the stands in Sunderland's 5-0 hammering by Chelsea. After two years this was his first sending off as a manager.
- 3 Own goals scored by Jamie Carragher in Tottenham's favour. This puts him around 7th in the Spurs all-time scorers' list.
- 56 Months since Chelsea had lost at home in the league until Xabi Alonso worked his magic at Stamford Bridge three weeks ago.
- 26 Points scored by Cork hurling champions Sarsfields in their demolition of Clonlara in the Munster championship. Who knows, they might even give Kilkenny a good game!
- 40 Champions League goals for Alessandro Del Piero after his double against Real Madrid at the Bernabeu. The Juventus striker is still lethal after all these years.
- 1 Corner left to turn in the Brazilian Grand Prix when Lewis Hamilton nabbed the drivers' championship. Sucks to be Felipe Massa
- 22 Years that Sir Alex Ferguson has been in charge of Manchester United. Nothing like a bit of job security, is there?

Quotes of the Edition

Liam Togher & Alan Keane

"Champions League? You're having a laugh!"

Hibernian supporters taunt their Celtic counterparts after the Bhoys surrendered a 2-0 lead in their SPL clash.

"SPL? You're having a laugh!"

Celtic fans retort after the champions go 4-2 up.

"You're not singing anymore!"

An inebriated Celtic supporter taunts a load of empty seats that had been occupied by Hibernian fans, many of whom had left before the final whistle.

"And the fans are singing as one 'ooh ah Dalbeattie Star!'"

Jeff Stelling after each goal scored by the Scottish club in a cup match. Dalbeattie won 6-0, so Jeff got plenty of mileage out of this one.

"I see Lynx Powerade O2 still has the armband."

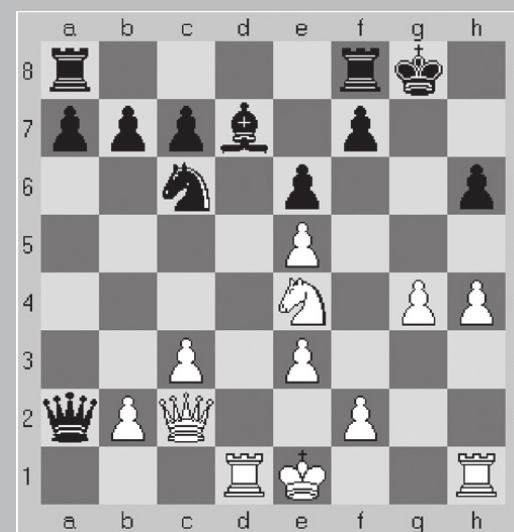
A rather cynical view on Brian O'Driscoll's retention as captain of the Irish rugby team

"They got beat by an international phone number."

Forget 'they were hockeyed', this is the new way of describing a comprehensive defeat.

"Sheffield United didn't so much snap him up as got burdened with him. You say that as if they wanted to get him."

The sports editor was recently asked what happened to Anthony Stokes. I answered that the Blades snapped him up on loan.



A. Lopez – K. Young Limerick Open 2008

Black has just played g7xB, and has fallen for whites sacrifice. How did white continue?

The UL Chess club meets every Thursday from 6pm to 7pm. Training offered to all members and beginners.

Solution: 1. Nf6+ Kg7 or 1. Nf6+ Kh8
2. Qh7# 2. Qh7#

Answers to Sports Quiz

1. Five
2. One
3. Moy
4. Michael Carruth
5. Bolton Wanderers
6. Dan Shanahan
7. 22
8. Seve Ballesteros
9. Toulouse
10. 73 mph
11. Nigerian
12. Six (Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Longford, Wicklow, Westmeath)

Under the Spotlight

Under the Jiu-Jitsu Chokehold

Brian Furey

Brazilian Jiu jitsu is a grappling martial art which focuses on chokes and joint locks as a way of submitting an opponent. It works on the premise that regardless of size, with technique and skill a smaller weaker person can overcome a larger foe by taking them to the ground to negate their reach advantage and punching power. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu has become a phenomenon, becoming one of the fastest growing sports in the world and the fastest growing martial art. It is a necessary part of mixed martial arts and has been manipulated for one on one combat by American troops in Iraq.

In 1914 Mitsuyo Maeda (aka Count Coma) arrived in Brazil from Japan. Maeda was one of the top 5 Judo practitioners in Japan, which was known outside Japan as Kano Jiu-Jitsu. In 1917 Maeda met a local businessman named Gastão Gracie who helped him establish a base for an emerging Japanese community. It was Maeda who trained Gastao's children , who later re-invented the martial art which came to be known as Brazilian Jiu Jitsu or Gracie Jiu

Jitsu.

On November 12th, 1993 the very first UFC was held, it was the brain-child of Art Davie and his Brazilian Jiu Jitsu instructor and Vale Tudo expert Rorion Gracie. The concept was to find out which martial art was the best, could a boxer beat a sumo wrestler, could a karate expert beat a Judo expert, all in a gloveless competition with 2 rules, no biting or eye gouging, fish-hooks and groin strikes were allowed but frowned upon. Rorion saw this as a chance to show the effectiveness of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and enrolled his younger brother Royce. Royce won 4 of the first 5 UFCs to the disbelief of all who watched.

Currently the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu community in Ireland is small, but with the sky rocketing success of MMA, the popularity of the sport is beginning to match the early growth of the sport in other countries in Europe and in the US. With the UFC coming to Dublin in January, the sport looks set to explode, with opportunities for Irish fighters becoming a serious possibility. The growing interest in the sport particularly in Universities has



Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a new martial art in Ireland

presented the opportunity for an all Ireland student intervarsity competition, giving students the ability to socialize and compete with students of their own skill level and weight category.

The UL Brazilian Jiu Jitsu club

trains in the PESS building on Mondays at 9pm and Wednesdays at 7pm under Fergal Quinlan. Fergal is a purple belt under Rodrigo Medeiros, and a silver medalist at prestigious PanAm championships. The UL Jiu Jitsu club is a satellite

club of BJJ Revolution in San Diego under Rodrigo Medeiros and associated with Revolution MMA in Northside Dublin. Members of the club include Alan "the Canon" Hannon, who has a MMA record of 5-1-1, and UL Kickboxing trainer

Mark Fairman who has a perfect MMA record. Whether it's for self defence, fitness or fun Brazilian Jiu Jitsu provides excellent training in a competitive and safe environment.

Back to the Past

On Wednesday, 27 October, the recently rejuvenated History Society held its annual trip to the Bunratty Castle medieval banquet. About 20 society members attended what turned into a fabulous night of wine, food and song. The members were particularly impressed by the traditional Irish mead on offer. One stalwart was heard to remark sheepishly when he resurfaced two days later that it was "lovely stuff, but feekin' strong!"

Later on, some of the more mature (in years) students took it upon themselves to provide a group of bemused American tourists with an impromptu display of traditional Irish singing and continued to serenade the bus-driver with a rousing rendition of 'Garryowen' on the way back to town. All in all it was a hugely entertaining and enjoyable night. The staff at Bunratty is to be commended on their professionalism and the marvellous pageantry and welcome provided.

The History Society was founded back in 1997 and quickly became one of the most vibrant societies on campus. It was set up to promote the enjoyment of history and rescue it from the

confines of the classroom. It has traditionally drawn its membership from across the spectrum of courses in the college with engineers, business students, Erasmus students and, of course, history students coming together to explore a shared interest in our past.

Past events have included a re-enactment of the landing of the Vikings at Limerick and the construction (and use) of a set of stocks outside the Students' Union building. Visitors to the Foundation Building can see the fully functioning reed raft built by members using traditional methods a couple of years ago.

The society marked the ninetieth anniversary of the Somme and the Easter Rising with a hugely successful, thought-provoking exhibition based on the lives and poetry of those involved in these conflicts. We also had a witty and informative walking tour of Limerick last year conducted by Dr John Logan.

Each year the society publishes the History Studies journal, a collection of essays gathered from postgraduate and undergraduate students in universities across the country.

The eighth edition of the journal is currently being edited by J. P. O'Connor and is expected to be launched in April 2009. It is the only journal produced in Ireland by a student body.

The society organises lectures and discussions with guest speakers from across the country giving talks on a whole range of historical topics. We are delighted to announce a lecture by eminent historian Dr Brendan Bradshaw, an expert on the dissolution of Irish monasteries in Ireland under Henry VIII.

He is a member of the Marist religious order who started his teaching career in Mary Immaculate College. He went on to spend the bulk of his teaching career at Cambridge University where he became the first Catholic Don since the Reformation.

He has kindly agreed to give a speech to the society on the topic of "Patrick Sarsfield and the two Sieges of Limerick: Was there a hero in the house?". This will take place in the library boardroom at 5.30 pm on Wednesday, 26 November, and is an opportunity to hear one of Ireland's foremost historical minds in action.

Other events planned before the end of the semester include a talk on Oliver Cromwell by UL's own Dr Pádraig Lenihan (as seen on TG4's recent documentary!)

We have also planned a trip to the Rock of Cashel and the Bolton library in what we hope will become a regular feature called "Show us yours"; whereby members are invited to showcase items of historical or archaeological interest in their own locality.

Next semester will see a host of lectures and discussions on themes as diverse as the Iraq war and the French Revolution.

A trip to Dublin for a 1916 walking tour is also on the agenda. We are also hoping to host an event commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the first Dáil. And of course we will be organising a fundraising drive during the year.

Details will be announced on all events through posters and email.

If you have an interest in joining the society please contact, Jeffrey, Vincent or Robert at ulhistorysociety@gmail.com.

We are always delighted to see new faces and hear new ideas.

