

AN FOCAL

STUDENTS' UNION

ULSU

THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE STUDENTS UNION
University of Limerick



Sabbatical elections p14 -16

RAG Week off with a bang p23

Student kidnapped from UL campus

DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY & DARRAGH BOURKE

STUDENTS and staff have reacted with concern to the news that a student was kidnapped from the UL campus last Monday. The student was forced into his car and made to drive to Dublin airport after being accosted in the main car park on Monday 5th March at 8.30 in the morning. In a bizarre twist, the student was given €500 by his kidnappers upon reaching Dublin airport. He then reported the incident at Finglas Garda Station.

An Focal spoke to a family member of the student, who said that the victim would like to put the entire situation behind him as it has been a very stressful time for him and his family. However, the spokesman added that he would call on the Students' Union to campaign for the improvement of CCTV systems on campus so that nothing like this ever happens again.

Students' Union President St. John Ó Donnabháin told

An Focal the Students' Union had been lobbying for improved security for some time, with new CCTV cameras due to be rolled out over the coming months. He added that "the Students' Union is completely committed to helping [our] students in any way we can. We hope that the improved security will guarantee students' safety into the future."

The 18 year old's assailants were both wearing

children's masks, one a Barney the dinosaur mask, the other one of 'Baby Bop', a character from the Barney programme.

Gardaí are treating the matter very seriously, as are the university authorities, who refused to make any other comment. Gardaí have also appealed for help from students, some of whom may have seen the incident taking place.

Accident at Groody Roundabout

DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

A student was hospitalised after being knocked down at the Groody Roundabout last week. Fourth year Business student Deirdre O' Connell was on her way to the library at 6pm last Monday evening, was attempting to cross the road on her bike when she was hit by a silver Nissan Micra. An ambulance and the gardaí were called to the scene but her injuries were not serious.

Ms O' Connell told An Focal 'I think there should be a pedestrian crossing there because there are streams of people going up and down

from Groody to college all the time.'

The lack of a pedestrian crossing has been a campaign issue for some time now. Students' Union President St. John Ó Donnabháin stated: 'This is an example of the dangers on this very busy road. The Students' Union has been looking for a pedestrian crossing at this point for well over a year now, and this girl is lucky she wasn't much more seriously injured.' Mr Ó Donnabháin added that the Students' Union is calling on the County Council to take immediate action and put a pedestrian crossing into place at the junction.

RAG WEEK - The winning team in the raft race - Photo by Huw Thomas



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SUPERQUINN

EDITORIAL

AS editor of this newspaper, I have learned that there are many factors influencing a newspaper's editorial policy. The Students' Union is the owner and operator of An Focal and that must be An Focal's first constraint.



BY DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

Despite this, An Focal has and will continue to print articles criticising the Union, because free speech should not be subordinate to political interests. However, this is only one of many considerations: overall quality of the newspaper; the readership and their interests, and; advertising income and the sensibilities of the clients who provide it.

Despite the commercial interests outlined, something no An Focal editor has to think about is the bottom line. The financial bottom line can unfortunately lead to a lowering of standards in other areas - selling newspapers can too often be the primary consideration of some media, so An Focal is blessed in that regard.

The particular example of standard lowering which prompted this editorial was the Sunday Independent lead story of March 11th. The story, an entirely unnecessary intrusion into a mourning family, was about the tragic and untimely death of Tania Corcoran. Tania Corcoran was a Garda who died in childbirth, and whose baby son, Zack, also died. Her husband, also a Garda, was involved in the incident in which psychiatric patient John Carty died. Despite the fact that Tania Corcoran's husband was exonerated of any wrongdoing, and the fact that this had nothing whatsoever to do with her death, the Sunday Independent editorial team decided to run with a story entitled 'Garda who lost wife and son in childbirth shot John Carthy.' This headline was printed on the day of her burial.

While anyone involved in the media must be able to separate head from heart, it takes a particular brand of callousness to even print a story like this, moreover to print it with such a disgraceful headline. The Garda Commissioner himself has released a statement condemning the actions of the Sunday Independent, and in this writer's opinion the NUJ should not be far behind. An exercise in cynicism such as this only serves to put the journalistic profession as a whole into disrepute, not to mention the heartbreak and unnecessary stress inflicted on a grieving family.

Financially, the bottom line must always be the aim. Filling coffers is the purpose of business. The bottom line should not be a target for morals too.

Quotes of the fortnight

- **Is Paddy's Day on the 16th or 17th of March?** A student at SU reception is clearly not the patriotic type.
- **This is completely ridiculous. It's not doing Campbell's any favours, it's not doing students any favours.** St John Ó Donnabháin on the price increases being brought in by Campbell's Catering
- **Look, there's no more room for movement on it.** Linda Stevens, CEO of CLS at the same meeting.
- **That's not a USB stick, that's a USB branch!** An Focal photographic editor Hugh O' Brien on Alan Higgins' massive piece of equipment
- **I have no idea what the prize is... I don't even know if there is a prize CSO** Alannah Turner on the Great Race
- **I get jokes.** Fourth year BBS class rep Dave Hennessey tries to prove himself to the sabbats.
- **I would like to know why the SU feels it should pick up where the University leaves off? I mean, we're not going to start teaching the students and paying the staff...** Societies Officer Judith Lynch asks the hard questions at Exec.
- **Isn't there a gay bar?... oh wait that's a golly bar** A 2nd Year Law and Euro Student contemplating the sexuality of ice cream
- **I woke up last night with ketchup in my ear** Derek Daly of UL Ogra FF tells of his RAG week exploits
- **I have no desire to go and watch the next former leader of Fine Gael Oisín Collins of DeBU.**
- **I already got sick once today, do you want it to happen again?** Editor of this newspaper Deirdre O' Shaughnessy when asked if she would take a (male) class rep's garter off with her teeth.

AN FOCAL EDITORIAL TEAM

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Dear Ulster Bank,

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Thanks,
 Desperate in Dromroe

Dear Student

I am delighted you enjoyed RAG Week and that you have fond memories from it. In relation to your dilemma as a result of this week, my recommendation is for you to make an appointment with one of our Customer Advisors at the branch. We would need to access your financial situation in detail and see what we can do for you. As we have limited information regarding what your actual financial situation is from your question in relation to income and other outgoings one solution may not fix all. A lot of other students are probably waking up today and realising they are in the same boat as yourself, our advice is to make an appointment with our Customer Advisor. You mentioned you do not want to borrow any more money, you may need to do so in order to ensure you can cover all other bills and expenses. We will look at working out a repayment schedule with you and ensure you are not under any financial pressure going forward. As we have already mentioned the best thing to do is contact one of our customer advisors and they will be able to help you out.

Ulster Bank

HEALTHY EATING

Student Affairs Office Health Promotion






Student pushes for Alcohol referendum



BY AOIFE BREEN
NEWS EDITOR

THE students of UL will decide the fate of the University's Alcohol Policy if a proposal to have a referendum on the matter that was presented to Class Reps' Council by 4th Year student Patrick McHugh gets the go ahead. The Irish Music and Dance student told Council in week 4 that, 'The University has failed to keep

its commitments, despite the fact that [students] have kept [their] side of the bargain'. He has suggested that the students of UL should decide, by referendum, whether or not the SU should continue to implement the policy.

The proposal, if it goes to a referendum and is passed, would see the Students' Union withdrawing from the Alcohol Policy 'until such time that' the University adheres to its terms under the policy which include, but not exclusively so, the provision of an alternative venue for students and outstanding funding for clubs and societies. McHugh told members of Council at the meeting that, 'We are committed to this; we have implemented this; we have

policed this. The University, for their part, have only shown negligence'.

The suggestion was generally welcomed by Council, with a number of members voicing their opinions on the subject. Sinéad Hickey, SU Welfare Officer told those in attendance, '[The University] isn't taking it seriously. The whole idea of the Alcohol Policy is to reduce high-risk drinking, but having failed to provide any alternatives, [the University] has merely pushed students off-campus where they can drink as much as they want'.

The possible implications of going ahead with such a referendum were raised at Council, with some class reps

airing their reservations. Ger Dineen, 4th Year Science Education, told Council, 'If this is put to the students, then the SU needs to get behind it and it needs to be backed up. A quorum [sic] referendum is absolutely necessary if a clear message is to be sent to the University'.

Caitriona McGrattan, 3rd Year HPSS, highlighted the potential consequences of withdrawing from the Policy and how ultimate re-affiliation could cause problems for clubs and societies should they secure sponsorship during the period of withdrawal. However, Mr McHugh pointed out that if this situation arose, and the University had realised its commitments in the interim,



then a suitable arrangement would have to be discussed with the authorities to find an appropriate solution for all parties.

Patrick McHugh now has the responsibility of acquiring

200 signatories to allow for the proposal to go to referendum. The referendum will coincide with the sabbatical elections which will take place on Thursday of week 7.

Campbell's prices up 10%



BY ALAN OWENS
CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT

AS readers will be aware, the last edition of An Focal detailed planned increases of food prices by Campbell's catering. This article listed what have now been revealed as 'proposed' or provisional figures, with revised figures currently being implemented in their place. The new figures provide for approximately a 10% increase on most items.

Campbell's hold the contract to provide food on campus in UL, in the restaurant and canteen areas, but not in the Stables, Paddocks, Plaza or Sports Bar. Responsibility for regulation of this area lies with the Catering Committee, composed of representatives from the relevant bodies: Campus Life Services; Campbell's, Amicus and the SU.

Campbell's, which is not subsidised by the University,

is citing 'increases in fuel and electricity costs and the National Wage Agreement' as reasons for the increases. Extra charges have also been levied on the caterer by the University, as well as increased VAT charges. Ms. Linda Stevens, Director of Campus Life Services further outlined to An Focal that 'the price increases are in direct relation to rising costs'.

The increases across the units are of the order of 10% but, in the main restaurant and the cafeteria, some items are to be increased by up to 15% says Ms Stevens. She points out that 'the prices will still compare well with the other restaurants operated on campus'. It is important to note also that the student special meal will increase by 11%, from €3.85 to €4.25, and not €4.90 as originally proposed and as outlined in the earlier article. Ms Stevens also points out that 'it is still the cheapest hot meal on campus'.

An Focal is informed that Campbell's raise their prices every year, and last year maintained an average 6% rise on prices. Taking recent rising inflation rates it is not unreasonable to assume that some increase in prices must take place. However, SU President

O'Donnabhain is not too convinced.

'These price increases are not reflective of inflation rates, or indeed increases in quality' he says. St.John outlines how he contacted the Central Statistics Office (CSO) with regard to this matter. The CSO operates the Consumer Price Index, which is used to calculate inflation rates. Part of this includes a category known as 'canteen inflation' that specifically examines University canteens and calculates the level of inflation in relation to them. 'The CSO calculated this rate to be 6.1%, and taking an average figure from Campbell's projected increases, of 12.5% (between the stated increases of 10-15%) we can see that Campbell's intend to increase their prices at twice the rate of inflation' he says.

'If Campbell's are running their business at twice the rate of inflation, that is their problem, and this should not be passed onto students' says St.John. An Focal has seen a comparison of college canteens nationally. While NUI Maynooth is clearly the most expensive, UL students might be quite surprised to discover that, on average, UL is second most expensive on the list.

On the majority of prices, UL clearly ranks as more expensive than UCC, UCD, DCU, TCD and NUIG. Some examples of this: The student special which will now cost €4.25, is priced at between €3.15 and a maximum of €3.80 in the other Universities, with the exception of Maynooth. A bowl of chips, to be raised to €2.20 in UL, costs between €1.75 and €2.05 in the other Universities.

'If Universities in Dublin, which is acknowledged as the most expensive city in Ireland, can afford to give meals at affordable prices, then so should we. The fact that we could be more expensive than some of these Universities is crazy' says St.John. The SU and AMICUS, the staff trade union for UL, are planning a joint campaign in the weeks ahead. 'We are aiming to inform the students about these facts and increases, and are talking about things like a "bring our own lunch to the restaurant day" and so on' says St.John.

Again it is up to the students and patrons of Campbell's campus restaurants to decide if these increases are fair and in line with increases in quality.

Great Racers raise €7,000

DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

THE twelve teams which competed in a 'Great Race' around Ireland have raised €7000 in aid of ULSU's four RAG week charities: Milford Hospice; the Red Ribbon Project; Midwest Spina Bifida and Southill Domestic Abuse. The winning team, made up of Diarmuid Reid, John Kearns, James English and Charlie Nolan, managed to visit every county in Ireland as well as every inter-county GAA field. They also visited Wales in their attempt to win prizes including VIP tickets to all RAG week events, a VIP night in the Trinity Rooms and the prized Great Race cup.

Each team was required to raise €500 in sponsorship in order to enter the competition, and one team, made up of Helen McGuire, Edel Carberry, Siobhán Horgan and Suzanne Horgan, made a special effort for the charities and raised a further €1,200 on their trip around the country. The girls received sponsorship from JP McManus, who also lent them his private plane to complete another task.

Other teams managed to meet Minister for Transport Martin Cullen, comedian Tommy Tiernan, The Blizzards and Lorcan from Fair City.



The winning team on the bull in Macroom

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Kenny in favour of educational philanthropy



Enda Kenny speaking in the John Holland theatre. Photo: Hugh O' Brien



BY DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY
EDITOR

FINE Gael leader Enda Kenny spoke to a large crowd at UL on Thursday 1st March. The event was organised by the UL branch of Young Fine Gael.

When asked what he perceived as the biggest challenges in third level education today, Deputy Kenny cited funding of

universities and other educational institution as a major issue. He remarked on his disappointment that only two of Ireland's universities are in the top 250 internationally, and added that this was partly due to financial problems. Deputy Kenny mentioned the culture of philanthropy present in American education, and expressed the hope that this would soon begin to grow through cooperation between business and education in Ireland.

Deputy Kenny was quick to mention his participation in the government that abolished third-level fees. However, when a questioner from the

audience pointed out that the abolition of fees heralded an unprecedented widening of the gap in access to third-level education between rich and poor, he was equally quick to accept that this has been the case. His solution to this problem would be to increase resources for disadvantaged children at pre-school and primary school level, in order to give them a more equal chance at third-level education.

Local candidate Kieran O' Donnell, Senator Mary Jackman and Councillor Diarmuid Scully were all in attendance for the Fine Gael leader's speech. Despite his absence,

Deputy Kenny was quick to point out Michael Noonan as the senior Fine Gael candidate in the constituency and to wish both him and Councillor O' Donnell luck in the forthcoming election.

Deputy Kenny spoke to the assembled crowd about Fine Gael's programme for government, his faith in Labour's adherence to the Mullingar accord, and his hopes for Fine Gael and Labour in the next election. He spoke particularly to the students in the audience, telling them they were the next generation of leaders and they would be guardians of the country in years to come.

Healthy Eating for Healthy Living

AOIFE BREEN
& SARAH NAUGHTON

UL Student Affairs Office is to launch a Healthy Eating Booklet to coincide with ULSU's Detox Week, taking place across the campus during week 6. The campaign will target students in an effort to encourage a healthier approach to dietary habits, which have been shown, in their current condition, to be detrimental to a student's energy and general wellbeing.

Specifically chosen for the launch, week 6 follows RAG Week, a week when many students choose to overindulge and have more late nights than usual. The free booklet, sponsored by the UL/ULster Bank

Enablement Fund, will be distributed from the Main Canteen on Tuesday 20th and from a promotional stand on Thursday 22nd March.

A fitness instructor and a nutritionist, among other experts, will also be available to speak with students about their activity levels and dietary regimes at the stand on the 22nd.

The on-campus restaurants have also agreed to participate in Detox Week and will put healthier alternatives on their menus on Tuesday and Thursday. The Paddocks will serve up roast breast of chicken with mushroom sauce while the Plaza will offer quiche and vegetarian pasta. Baked cod and paella are on the menu at the Stables while

the main Restaurant will also encourage healthy eating.

According to the Student Affairs Office, 'Many students for whom the task of cooking a meal every evening may seem daunting run the risk of not receiving enough nutrients essential for healthy living, which in turn can have a detrimental effect on weight and concentration levels as well as impacting on skin, hair, nails and bones. As the semester moves into its latter stages with deadlines and exams looming, it is crucial that students think of what they eat on a daily basis.'

Red faced and Red handed



BY ALAN OWENS
CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT

AN Focal has recently learned that vending machines installed in the various on-campus student villages have been the repeated targets of sustained acts of vandalism. Unbelievably this has culminated in the discovery of a student caught, quite literally, 'red-handed'.

The vending machines are installed in the various houses of the on-campus student villages, Dromroe, Thomond, and Cappavilla. However, it has become apparent that these vending machines have been the focus of repeated acts of vandalism over the course of this semester.

It is believed that the machines are quite expensive to fix, and as a result of the repeated damage done, the operator is considering

removing the machines. An Focal spoke to Mr John O'Rourke, Campus Life Services Manager about this issue. He confirmed that 'Machines across all three villages have been repeatedly vandalised in the past 6 months'.

'Each vandalised machine costs in the region of €2,500 to fix as the supplier has to send them to Italy where the manufacturer carries out the repairs' he said. Mr O' Rourke continued by saying that 'As regards the future, the operator is considering in disbanding the service and removing all machines. As you can imagine, the operator is quite aggrieved and to my knowledge has removed all products from the machines for RAG week'.

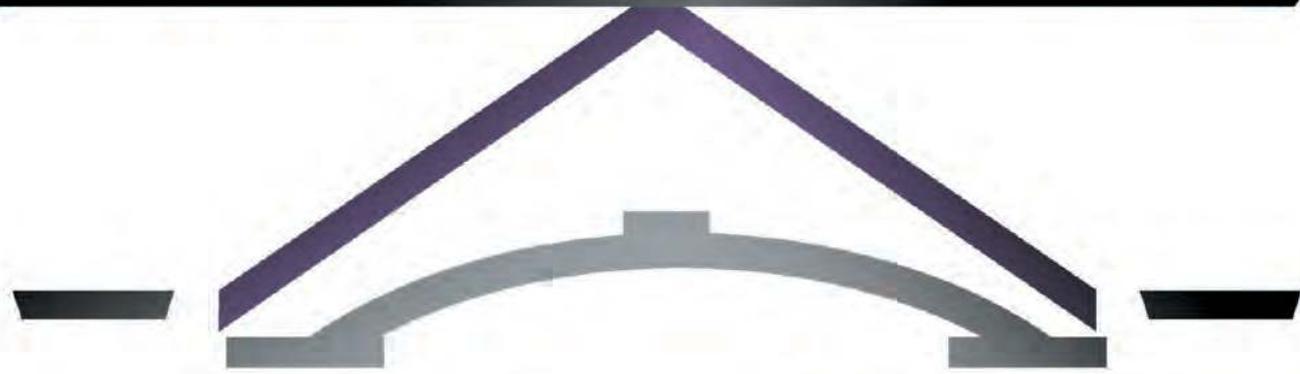
It is extremely unfortunate that things have got to this point with the operator considering removing the machines as An Focal has spoken to several residents who appreciate the service provided by these machines. Mr O' Rourke told An Focal that they were considering installing cameras over each machine, but admitted this was unlikely to happen.

The culmination of these repeated acts of vandalism

was the situation where a student was found with his arm caught in a vandalised machine. It is believed that Security was in fact called to help free the offending student. The student has been dealt with by the Village manager, and according to Mr O'Rourke is 'obviously very embarrassed and sorry for the damage caused'. The student is now carrying out community service in the Village. It is not known whether the student was responsible for the damage done to the machine, and whether, as a result, is liable for any repair costs.

This is an unsatisfactory situation that has seen the actions of a few potentially threatening a service that many appreciate, and has damaged the business of the operator. Coming soon after a number of students caused damage and destruction to houses in Plassey Village, one has to wonder if there is enough security on campus to deal with these offenders. It also must be considered that repeated actions such as these will see more stringent measures implemented, to the detriment of all students living on campus.

AONTAS NA MAC LÉINN



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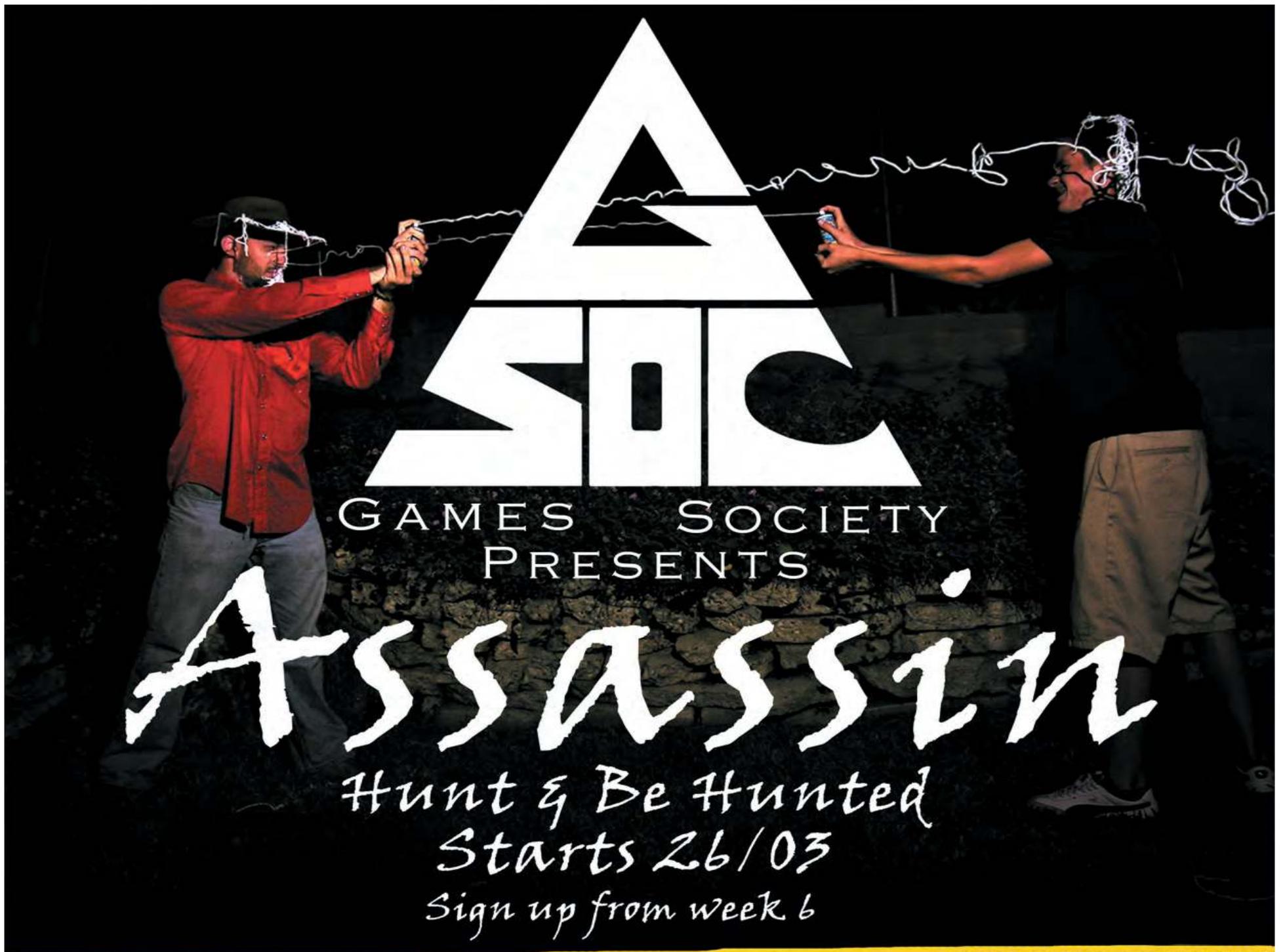
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Hugh O'Brien

International and Irish Students Buddy Up



BY AOIFE BREEN
NEWS EDITOR

OVER a hundred students gathered in the Sports Club on the 6th March under an initiative to integrate Irish and international students studying at UL. The Postgraduate Students' Association President, Maja Niebrzegowska and the President of the Students' Union, St. John Ó Donnabháin collaborated on the scheme that saw 48 pairs of 'buddies' meet up on the night.

'There were far more people interested in the Scheme than we expected, so it took a while to create a database and pair off the students,' explained Ms Niebrzegowska, 'More than one hundred students replied to the first email alone.'

The Scheme was set up to allow international and Irish students mix on a social level and to allow for both parties to become more aware of other cultures. Students were invited to sign up for the Scheme and received details of their 'buddy' prior to the initial event. Ms Niebrzegowska went on to add that, 'This scheme helps international students learn English and integrate with Irish community but also gives Irish students a great opportunity to improve any foreign languages that they speak'.

The PSA President was happy with the outcome of the evening, which she deemed to be a success. She told An Focal, 'Everyone seemed excited and happy to be around people who shared similar experience. International students were complimenting the idea and they were happy to meet other international and Irish students'.

SU President St. John Ó Donnabháin was equally pleased with the outcome of the night. 'I was really happy about the brilliant response to

the launch of the Buddy Scheme. There were so many students from lots of different countries meeting up and enjoying one another's company,' commented Mr Ó Donnabháin, who also signed up to become a Buddy.

Both Presidents agreed that the response from the Buddy Party showed that such a system is welcomed by students, both international and native. Mr Ó Donnabháin pointed out that, 'I think this kind of international integration is just the kind of thing that UL should be promoting, both to Irish students and to visitors from abroad.'

Ms Niebrzegowska continued to say that international students who attended the event gave positive feedback and enjoyed the evening. It is hoped that further events will now be arranged between the buddies to ensure an ongoing relationship. The SU President added, 'There has been even more interest since the launch and as someone who has made a new friend through the system, I'd say go for it - get involved!'



Peer Support Network gets started

AOIFE FINNERTY

Saturday 10th March saw UL's first Peer Support group training. The Peer Support Network is a system that offers a trained student to guide, help and sometimes just listen in times of trouble or hardship. Spearheaded by Sinead Hickey, the Welfare Officer and UL Student Counselling, Peer Support is there for the biggest and smallest problems of the student body and guarantees confidentiality except in extreme circumstances.

The training spanned Thursday evenings and an intensive weekend, over 9th and 10th of March. Peer Supporters were trained on all the basics of student counselling, including body

language, which all the Peer Supporters found hugely beneficial. Ger Dore, Margaret O' Brien and Michael O' Mahoney of UL Conselling Services gave their time and energy to what has to be said is a very worthwhile service.

According to Welfare Officer Sinéad Hickey, 'The Peer Support Network was part of my manifesto and I felt that there was a need for it. It's up and running in UCC and in Trinity, where I observed how it was run. I was so proud and delighted that I received such enthusiastic responses from the Peer Supporters and I'm hopeful that they can be of benefit to students who need a friend and someone to talk to.

A massive amount of credit and appreciation must go Student Counselling who have been so enthusiastic about this project and without whom none of it would have been possible.'

All information about Peer Support can be gotten from Sinead in the Welfare Office in the Students' Union and from Student Counselling. Students can get the details about the Peer Supporters for example their age, their course of study and their experience. This is a valuable resource for any student who's feeling down at any point in time and who just needs someone to listen without judgment or pressure.

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SkyCon 2007 & Wavehunt UL

DAVID DOLPHIN

SKYCON was a three day conference organized by the Computer Society to celebrate 15 years of activity. Thirty speakers flocked to UL from all over the world to talk, chat and socialize. Founding members of Skynet also returned to UL (some had left over a decade ago) to give a talk on how the Society was formed. Talk topics ranged from Online Privacy and Emerging Mobile Technologies to Electronic Voting and Linux Virtual

Memory Management. Microsoft's Bill O'Brien gave a talk about "Microsoft's view of Open source & Open standards". He also brought along an Xbox 360 and a few copies of Vista which he raffled off at the end of his talk. The Xbox was won by Eoin O' Brien of 1st Year MMPT.

The talks were recorded and most of them are now available to download, free of charge, from the Skynet website (<http://skycon.skynet.ie/>) There was also Video taken at the event which is in the process of being edited and

will be online shortly. Wavehunt UL is a wireless manhunt taking place around the UL campus. The idea is that you have to track down and identify someone carrying a Wireless Access Point. The Competition will take place on Wednesday of Week 6, kicking off at 15:30 in the B1 Canteen (Red Raisin). Laptops with wireless access are required to play. The game will consist of three half hour rounds with a 15 minute break between each round to recharge Laptop batteries.

Ógra forms Policy at UL

DEREK DALY

ÓGRA Fianna Fáil members from around the country gathered at UL on March 10th to formulate a sustainable environmental energy policy. The policy will be presented to An Taoiseach; Bertie Ahern by members of the Con Colbert Cumann on Friday the 23rd of March at a designated Ógra meeting with him during the Fianna Fáil Ard-Fheis in Citywest Hotel.

High profile National Youth Committee members

descended on UL to aid in the formulation of the policy. Leas-Cathaoirleach Ógra Lorcan Price was in attendance and in total there were 8 members of the youth committee as well as two candidates for the Committee of 20 positions on the Fianna Fáil Ardchomhairle. Though environmental policy was the focus, organisational policy and Fianna Fáil's Northern Ireland policy were also discussed. Policy Coordinator for Ógra Fianna Fáil Morgan Shelly was extremely

interested in the views of the grassroots members of Ógra.

As part of the event, environmental scientist Dr. JJ Leahy addressed the Ógra members who attended. All attending found his presentation extremely interesting, with passers by also sitting in and asking questions about the presentation. The recommendations of the UL Policy Paper on Environment - Energy Focus will be publicised over the coming weeks.

Art in Residence

HELEN STANLEY

ON Wednesday 21st March, the 'Art in Residence' exhibition will open in Dromroe Village Hall for 2007 whereby residents from the 5 villages on campus are invited to come along to the exhibition and choose works for their living rooms in their apartment/house.

Richard Wood, the established art collector from Cork came up with the idea for the scheme last year. Campus Life Services who manage the villages is happy to support the scheme, aided by the Visual Arts Committee. Together they have purchased a number of artworks for the collection which will be exhibited each year.

Susan Arkins and Oisín

Collins who work for Campus Life Services are organising this exhibition. Susan is an Assistant Village Manager and says, "I am very happy to be involved in this project as I am interested in both contemporary and Renaissance art. I think it is a great idea to provide artwork for the students as it really brings culture to student life." Oisín is a 3rd year co-op student on work placement with Campus Life Services. He agrees and says, "The Art in Residence programme is a wonderful idea. It gives the student a chance to experience art and to add a touch of personality to their own living space. Having been involved with the programme as a student, it's really nice to give

something back." Application forms are available from the village receptions for students to indicate their choice of works from the exhibition. Following the exhibition the works will be installed in the apartments and houses.

The 'Art in Residence' Exhibition will be opened by St. John Ó Donnabhain, Students Union President, on Wednesday 21st March at 12.30. The exhibition will run until Wednesday 28th March, open daily from 12pm-3pm in Seminar Room 2 in Dromroe Village Hall All residents on campus are invited.



Students Taught to Defend

AOIFE BREEN & SARAH NAUGHTON

RECENT weeks have seen 20 students participate in self-defence classes as part of the ongoing Health Promotion campaign underpinned by the University's Student Affairs Office. The Sexual Health Working Group sponsored the classes with funding it received from the HSE Mid West Region, and also managed to raise almost €100 for Limerick Rape Crisis Centre.

Run by experienced martial arts instructors with

black belts, students had the opportunity to learn a wide range of defence skills varying from basic moves and blocks to more advanced techniques. They were also given advice regarding the mindset of attackers and how best to react should a situation ever arise.

The University has already assisted in pushing for students' safety through initiatives such as the Nitelink bus service and Campus Watch. The self-defence classes have proven to be another project to further the personal safety of students

both on-campus and in the wider community by enabling them with the necessary skills to protect themselves in case of attack.

Students who participated in the classes also discussed how to avoid finding oneself in a potentially threatening situation and how to remain vigilant, as well as receiving information regarding how to deal with being a victim of attack. According to the Student Affairs Office, the students who took part in the classes found them to be beneficial and worthwhile.

AN FOCAL NEEDS YOUR VOTE!



- Register with www.oxygen.ie
- Send an email titled 'People's Choice' to smedias@oxygen.ie with 'An Focal' in the text box.
- Voilà! An Focal is the People's Choice!

STUDENT SPEAK

This week, Thomas Dee asks - 'What do you think of Michael O Leary been given an honorary doctorate?'

Dj Shane Linehan, 1st yr Metalwork Teaching - 'He's a total ring piece'.

Colin Tuohy, 3rd yr Sports Science - 'He's a top man, I approve'.

Mark Bradley, 1st yr Pub Admin - 'This is outrageous'.

Shane O' Callaghan, 1st yr European Studies - 'That would be an ecumenical matter'.

Pius McGrath, 2nd yr Insurance & European Studies - 'There's no bullshit with him, he should be in charge of this country'.

Denis Stapleton, 2nd yr Business Studies & Darren o Dwyer, 2nd yr Wood Science - 'When are we going to get a cheap flight to San Francisco?'

Henrietta McGrath, 1st yr Law and Euro - 'We are giving these doctorates to the wrong people!'

Deirdre O' Shaughnessy, An Focal Editor - 'I think it's a publicity stunt'.



To give or not to give?

THE controversy surrounding the awarding of an honorary doctorate to Ryanair Chief executive Michael O'Leary has left students and staff divided into two opposing camps, those who are in favour of such an award and those against the decision. The mood around the campus this week has provided some entertaining sound-bites on the issue with one student, Shane Linehan proclaiming that Michael O'Leary 'is a total ring piece'. Another student Colin Touhy however, approves of the decision declaring that O'Leary is 'a top man and he approves'. (See Student Speak)

Michael O'Leary seems to have controversy following him on an almost daily basis and it is thus no wonder that an award such as this would be met by support on one side and condemnation on the other. In order to convey the views of the two opposing sections of the student population Niamh Clowry and Daniel Sullivan offer their opinions.



YES!

Dan Sullivan says O' Leary's contribution to European integration has been second to none

ASK anyone what they think of Michael O'Leary and you will get many responses: brash, arrogant, a successful trailblazing business man, a childish attention seeker, a showman, a fighter against excessive regulation, anti-union oppressor, an icon of the Celtic Tiger, or just plain stinking rich. Whatever your own opinion it has to be admitted that it is hard to not have an opinion. Now UL has decided to grace him with an honorary doctorate.

A graduate of TCD Michael worked as a barman while attending college. His early professional career was with accountants KPMG, but he left early on to set up his own newsagent's business. Since taking over as CEO and having absolute control over the running of Ryanair in 1994 he has revolutionised air travel to and from Ireland. Much of his approach has been borrowed from SouthWest airlines in the US. There is an element in many people's thinking that what he has achieved could well have been done by just about anyone yet no one dared try it before he did.

The presence of Ryanair has done more for to foster European integration than perhaps any single act legislation that has been handed down from the

EU commission. Be honest how many Munster supporters do you think would be able to fly to away matches were it not for the presence of Ryanair? Certainly, some of his business practices might be regarded by some as less than equitable but, he's not exactly JR Ewing.

There are those who might say that he doesn't have a strong association with Limerick, well King Juan Carlos was a recipient of an honorary doctorate from UL in 1990 and he isn't exactly noted for the frequency of his trips to the Mid-West. Kagayaki Miyazaki was actually dead when we got around to honouring him. Michael O'Leary is tax resident in Ireland and pays his taxes unlike many other major figures in Irish public life that are often lauded in the media for their charitable works. And his daring in business is best exemplified by his purchase of new planes in aftermath of the collapse of the Twin Towers, a statement and commitment that he would keep faith with flying in the face of worldwide panic.

NO!

Niamh Clowry sees the proposal to award O' Leary an honorary doctorate as 'fundamentally flawed'

THE name Michael O'Leary evokes a wide range of unspeakable comments that are not suitable for print. While he has his many supporters and those who believe his business acumen is second to none there are also those of us who react with distain at the mere mention of his name.

The decision of the Governing Authority to award an honorary doctorate to him is fundamentally flawed. The SU, as a body which often represents people without a voice to a more powerful organisation, is of the opinion that honouring him and his undermining of collective organisation in Trade Unions would be against the principles on which the Students' Union is based. Michael O'Leary is bringing unwanted attention to the University and the university shouldn't associate itself with his antics.

Ryanair may be a cheap way to get from point A to point B, but what has Michael O'Leary done apart from introducing low cost flights into the marketplace? His achievements in the business world do not balance with the negatives of his disregard for trade unions, which provide an essential support system for any employee.

Whilst some of the past recipients

of the honour may not have been deemed worthy choices, the situation regarding Mr. O'Leary is about the here and now. Rather than regressing to past deeds the key concern should be about the kind of image the University and its students wish to convey to the wider audience. The recipient of the honorary doctorate should be someone unrecognised, and it should be given as a reward for hard work gone previously unrewarded. People who work in the community, those who address real needs, rather than those in pursuit of their own gains.

The University is setting a precedent in awarding the honour to Mr O'Leary, it is conveying the view that self-made millionaires should be praised and honoured, whilst those who strive to help the less fortunate and make no gains of their own will only be praised by those who seek out their work and compliment them without offering any kind of accolade.

El Presidente

The Library Book Fund

UL is great for many things, academically and socially, but there's plenty of areas which could do with a bit of improvement. Or with loads of improvement. And the amount of money the University has spent on books over the last few years is one of those. Thankfully, after lots of work by the Library, the Students Union, and a number of Governors of the University as well as academics, we've managed to reverse that.

We are currently the University with the least amount of books in the country, so one would think that catching up would be top of the agenda. Not necessarily. Unbelievably, a few years ago, the Book Fund was almost nothing - zip - €0 - not a bean (well, maybe a few...). This happened due to massive inflation on journal costs, and the lack of foresight in failing to put specific money aside just for books, alongside the obvious issue of underfunding.

But, we've finally managed to put the Book Fund back at the heart of what the University does. It was put at €420,000 for this year, and will rise at a rate of €250,000 per year for the next three years until it reaches the figure of €1million. So, €670,000 for Academic Year 07/08, €920,000 for 08/09 and at least €1million for 09/10 (the exact figure here isn't finalised - we'll try to make it as high as possible!).

This should help the Library to catch up with the gap caused by the problems of the last few years, and hopefully start to catch up with the other Universities in providing the best facilities for students! And with the new Library Phase 2 extension coming in the next few years, the Students Union will keep pushing for students to have top priority in everything that the University does!

St. John Ó Donnabháin



Letters to the editor

An Focal, UL Students' Union, UL, Castletroy, Limerick.
Phone 061 202363, Fax 061 213476, Email deirdre.oshaughnessy@ul.ie

*An Focal will endeavour to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible.
All parties have a right of reply to letters printed herein.*

Madam,

I am writing to object to the editorial decision to describe me, in my capacity of News Editor, as a "grammar Nazi".

I dislike this specific description as it has links with the political party that condemned much of Europe in the last century.

I understand that the expression was used in humorous terms, but in such a situation I would prefer if the phrase "grammar fascist" would be considered as a more appropriate alternative.

Perhaps this is just another example of my pedantic nature!

Yours, etc.,

Aoife Breen
News Editor, An Focal

Madam,

In relation to the issue of vaccinations for cervical cancer (dealt with by Rose Barrett) in the last edition of An Focal (Wk 3) It should be further noted that Ireland has yet to implement a national screening system for the detection of cervical cancer. For those of you who believe that such a system already exists, that is because you are one of the lucky few who live in the Limerick area covered by a pilot scheme. Almost 20 years after countries like the UK (1988) introduced national screening, the Irish government still do not cover cervical smears for medical card patients. In fact most Irish laboratories have still not updated to Liquid Based Cytology (LBS), the modern method of testing used successfully throughout the World. Brendan Drumm, Chairman of the HSE, has and will claim that it is HSE policy to screen for cervical cancer; however the HSE fail to cover the costs of processing smears. Even if GPs agree to carry out their part of the process for free, it will still cost the patient up to €80 to have their samples processed in Irish laboratories.

This is one form of cancer that can be detected and prevented in its early stage (in 70% of cases), but for it to be truly effective we need a free national screening system for all private and public patients (like the pilot scheme in limerick). Is this not a preferable alternative than vaccinating primary school kids for a disease that they may not understand? Regardless, the choice is yours because it will be you who has to pay for it!

Yours etc

Name and address with editor

Dear Madam

In response to your article in the previous edition entitled "USI debate sparks controversy" and the ensuing discussion through various forums I felt compelled to clarify a few issues.

Firstly, your comments in the article which state that I had apologised to Ms Morrisroe for failing to properly control the debate are not entirely accurate, and paint an incorrect picture of the events which followed the meeting. I made contact with Ms Morrisroe following the Council meeting in question and I gave her a chance to air her grievances with myself and with the running of the meeting as a whole. After this, I apologised that she felt unhappy following the meeting but wholly refuted and still refute any claims that I failed to control the debate. On a similar point, I also fully refute claims that I personally prejudiced the meeting through my behaviour as Chair and at no time did I indicate that this was the case.

As a former Students' Union Executive Officer for the previous two years my professionalism has never been called into question but unfortunately this incident has sparked widespread criticism and allegations of bias across the ULSU Website in particular. As I have already responded in that forum I do not feel it necessary to go into great detail by way of a response, merely to say that in my capacity as Chair of that particular Council meeting, I behaved in an entirely professional and unbiased manner. It seems that if challenging questions are posed to a speaker then it is due to the "bias of the Chair" and not simply that the issue is not popular and the speaker themselves not capable of answering it effectively.

On a final note, I was disappointed to read this news in your publication, as the quality of articles and the background research into the topic is generally quite high. I would implore you as editor to see that in future, rumour and slander does not rear its ugly head in what is otherwise one of the most effective tools of the Students' Union and a fine bi-weekly paper.

Regards,
Oisín Collins

RAG week is only just past us, the sabbatical elections are up for decision next week and full scale rebellion is in the air! Between food fights, election campaigns, USI, alcohol and behaviour on the forum, it has been a very full fortnight since we were last here. At Throat Towers we've been trying to sift through the waffle to bring you the key events of the last two weeks

USI

First off let's dispose of the USI controversy which is dragging on and on and on. After the last Class Reps meeting at which it appeared all thoughts of USI had been put to bed, there was the small matter of a class reps training weekend. And I really mean small fact in that less than 20% of reps attended. True many may well have been at the one last semester, but surely a free weekend could entice a few more reps out of the woodwork. Anyhow, at this weekend the issue of USI got a bit more in depth discussion but also the manner in which Q & A had been conducted at the Class Reps Council (CRC) got aired too. There were heard allegations of bias and rudeness, of innocence lost, of emotional scars that would last a lifetime. The upshot was that the debate was debated at the following CRC.

Personally, I've seen worse treatment of local councillors at a resident's committee meeting or of clowns at a toddler's birthday party. It was hardly Abu Ghraib.

The debate over the debate has lasted longer than the actual debate over USI itself. It is always the cover-up isn't it that catches people out. So the upshot is that ULSU has apologised not alone to the USI rep but to USI itself. I'm not at all clear why, maybe because USI would get huffy and ignore us in the playground in future and we might not get invited to the cool parties.



The throat - thethroat@gmail.com.
Telling the truth so you can go on lying to yourself.

Booze!

When I was a lad (before the op), my mom would make deals with me that if I would, say, do things like tidy my room, stop dragging the garden into the house, or nailing the local wildlife to the porch door while their little hearts were still beating that she, in turn, would do things like cook me my favourite meal, return my teddy, or loosen the shackles enough to allow me to fully stretch my legs. A few years back the college did the same with the students by way of the SU in the form of the Alcohol policy. Sadly, unlike my mother the college is not to be trusted and it has reneged on practically every aspect of the policy they were to live up to while we've been real nice and confined our drinking to our houses, the lodge, the occasional ditch or the city centre meaning the college can deny it has anything to do with us.

As part of this agreement or the Long Boring Good Friday Booze Treaty as it is commonly known, there was to be a review of how the policy was getting along, kind of like a school report. This happened last year and strangely the college chose not to participate in review of the policy. We suspect not participating is UL Administrative-ese for "yeah, whatever, whatcha

going to do about it?" Now, I'm not saying the college is a shower of no good untrustworthy ne'er do wells, I'm really not. Just that if you are going to be so blatant in calling the students "suckers" then you never know what might happen.

Well, it seems that ULSU might be forced into doing something drastic as there is a militant mood amongst the students if CRC is anything to go by. The leader of the Alcohol Insurgency movement appears to be Paddy McHugh who may yet prove to be a challenger for one of the sabbatical positions, and will he combine this with fighting for your right to par-tea? If he shows some taste in music he could prove to be the perfect sex, drink and rock 'n' roll candidate.

Food

Campbell's are jacking up the prices again, by amounts that ticket touts would be embarrassed by. Who do they think they are Bord Gáis or the ESB? There again I have gotten a few shocks from the food in my time here and sure I may be a bit gassy afterwards but I didn't realise I was meant to paying for the pleasure. Haven't they heard only state agencies are allowed to screw the public with their pants on. Their

argument is that things like inflation and the profits of other companies have gone up so why can't theirs and if we're not careful that they'll be off to Lodz before we can say "this pizza is cold!"

In an odd coincidence, the lecturing staff are up in arms over the off hand manner of the increases and rumours of surliness on the part of a cook or two. The Millstream Café is operating a policy of take it or leave when it comes to meals. None of your, "Can I get a side salad with that?" there. Kevin Thornton of "Now you eat them chips, you expletive deleted!" would be so proud. That harsh love thing is so BDSM, you'd normally pay more for that in the places I frequent on my away weekends in Amsterdam.

The increase in the price of coffee has actually varied across the campus. With the folks in the Schuman having to pay the most, I really don't think that is what ould Robert meant when he talked about an internal market. The folks in the Health sciences building aren't even allowed buy regular sandwiches they have to make do with specialty fare at speciality prices! Like I said there is talk of rebellion and taking to the streets with homebrew coffee and thick homemade Hang Sangwidges.

Election campaigns

Ever since watching the rise of Tracy Flick in the movie Election, I've had a keen interest in political campaigns (and a terrible fear of bees). Be honest now, teenage girls offering muffins for votes how much better could it get? Here at UL, you get offers of lollipops and sweets. It isn't really the same. For the sabbatical elections this year we're being promised all kinds of prospective candidates, a clean shaven incumbent gunning for the presidency, Ger (William the Mouthy) Dineen, Paddy McHugh, Alan "what time do you call this?" Higgins, Eamon Gardiner will run for something even if it is just a bus, Eoin Kelly might finally give someone a laugh by running for President, Judith Lynch has taken a vow of silence as to her plans, and Niamh Clowry and Seamus Ryan both of this parish want to run the paper and publicise, publicise, publicise. All we are prepared to say at this time is - for God's sake vote or who know who might get elected!

There is talk of telling Campbells to stick the increase where the e-Voting machines have gone and that people should bring their own lunch and eat it in the canteen and restaurant. At long last, we finally get to see some old school student activism! And it's only right on the eve of the sabbatical elections too!

An Focal Briefs

New VP- Academic and Registrar to be appointed

Following the appointment of Vice-President Academic and Registrar Don Barry to the position of President, his current job has been left vacant. The vacancy was announced last week by the University's Administrative Secretary Callista Bennis to the Campus Community. An internal competition has been announced and interviews for the position will be held in April.

New Dean of Graduate Studies

Dean of Graduate Studies Nick Reese is stepping down from his position from April 1st. This position will also be the subject of an internal competition and members of faculty have been invited to apply.

Dromroe break-in

The windows of an apartment in Dromroe Student Village were removed on Monday of RAG week. The apartment is on the ground floor facing the river. The apartment's windows were removed from their frames at 11pm on Monday evening during a time when security operates in the villages. The only item stolen from the apartment was a hurley.

Sabbatical elections

DAN SULLIVAN GIVES YOU THE LOWDOWN

The upcoming sabbatical elections promise to be some of the most keenly contested in recent years. There are five positions up for contest and the people elected take a year out from their studies and serve from 1 July to 30 June each year. So let's do a round up of the runner and riders for the ante post betting.

PPO

As is the tradition some few souls tend to emerge during the course of the year leading up to the elections from the purgatory that is the An Focal writers room and this year it appears to be Niamh Clowry (have to get the spelling right or she'll have my head) and Seamus Ryan (not to be confused with the guy that ran for education last year) that are angling for the title of the insider candidates. There is a possibility that one or two more writers are considering running, but An Focal couldn't get any more out of them...

The PPO is mainly responsible for the development and implementation of Union Communication policy and for Union Publications, including the Union Handbook, An Focal and Review. They are also responsible for development of Union communications and publicity tools. They're kind of like the Mouth of Sauron from Lord of the Rings.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT - WELFARE

Paddy McHugh appears to have put himself in the frame with his championing reform of the Alcohol policy. Coupling a history of union activism with a hot current issue is not a bad ploy. There is an expectation that SVP will find someone and we have hints and teasers from Eamonn Gardiner. As mentioned above Judith Lynch is a possibility for this one.

The role involves deputising for the President in his/her absence. Primarily it involves administration of the Financial Aid Fund and dealing with day-to-day student issues including Accommodation, Finance, Sexual Health and so many, many more. Seriously, if you are not much of a people person then this is not the job for you.

CSO

Ger Dineen appears to be the front runner if only because he is the only person who has announced he is running. Paddy McHugh might change tack and decide that this is the place to make a stand on our right to party. Breandán Ó hÉamhaigh has also been mooted for this one.

The CSO is responsible for co-ordination and implementation of Union Campaigns, oversees the Operations of the Union Ents., seeks to represent the interests of Union members in the provision of Union services and develops and promotes Union Services, including the Shops, Reception, ULSU Print, the Common and Games Rooms, Vending Machines, Second-hand Bookshop, Nitelink, the implementation of Union Customer Service Policy and much, much more.

EDUCATION

Alan Higgins is to run again and another suggestion of Eamon Gardiner being interested in this position.

The education officer is responsible for the development and implementation of education policy. They also deal with day-to-day student academic problems, and monitor Course curriculum and lecturing standards and the library, computers, laboratory and language-lab facilities. This person chases up individual students' academic problems - academic appeals and monitoring the tutor system.

Late declarations - Breandán Ó hÉamhaigh the former Oifigeach na Gaeilge is tempted to run for something but he can't seem to make up his mind which position to go for. It has been suggested that the USI southern rep Katie Morrisroe might also try her hand. Keep checking <http://ulvoteforme.blogspot.com/> or the forum at <http://www.ulsu.ie/forum/index.php> for updates as they break.

policy matters, is the co-signatory with the Secretary General on all contracts and other legally binding agreements and is responsible for financial matters. So they are the one that ends up in the big house if there are any financial problems.

Nominations close on Thursday Week 6 so the final candidate lineup will be declared then, both on www.ulsu.ie and <http://ulvoteforme.blogspot.com>. You can question the candidates on Wednesday Week 7 at the Election Hustings. These will be held in the Stables at 1.30pm. Keep an eye out for special publication 'The Heron' to fill you in on all the candidates election promises and profiles, from Friday Week 6.

"STUDENTS COME IN ...YOUR TIME IS NOW UL STUDENTS' UNION IS HERE AND IT'S ALL YOURS"

★★★★★
EMPIRE



Choose ULSU



A Question of Power and Authority

Philip Murphy considers the need for change in the SU Constitution to strengthen the bargaining powers of ULSU.

THE Universities Act (1997) provides for representation of students at the decision-making level at all universities in Ireland, including UL. The SU has representations on a number of committees within the University and this is to be welcomed. Participation by student representatives as provided by the Students Union greatly help further the aims and objectives of the Union and, by extension, the students of UL.

But problems nonetheless arise. While staff and administrative representatives sit on these committees for a number of years, and indeed are able to see through any policies they wish to pursue during their term of office, the annual re-election of officers to the SU is, by its nature, limiting in the way that the SU can pursue its own objectives.

Although sabbatical officers can and have run for second terms of office, often the new academic year brings many new faces in the Union. And with these new faces, certain problems inevitably arise as a result of this annual 'cabinet reshuffle'.

Three Problems

There are three major problem areas which arise from having the term of office set at only one year. These are: (1) restrictions arising from the limited number of Class Reps. Councils that can be held in one year; (2) projects spanning a number of years; and (3) short turnover period of SU representatives on college committees. I propose to briefly discuss each problem before offering one possible solution.

With respect to class reps councils, the problem is simply a lack of time. To get any policy through Class Reps. Council involves extensive preparation time, and also requires a report to council to ensure that members are aware of the policy in a timely manner before a vote can be held to adopt or reject the policy. If quorum cannot be achieved, then there are delays to getting the policy through. If the motion is defeated, it must be reexamined and changed and re-submitted to Class Reps. Council. All these steps take up time, and lots of it.

Accordingly, the SU Exec-

utive is limited in what it can achieve, considering the constraints of having a limited number of Class Reps Councils in its year of office. This limits the ability of the SU in putting forward its policies during the year. In short, the single year term creates a bottleneck which makes it difficult to effect all changes envisaged at the start of the year.

Secondly, an annual period of office plays havoc with any projects which are envisaged as taking a number of years to complete. These might include items where significant capital expenditure is involved, for example funding for a new wing for the SU building, or funding for essential student services such as the medical centre, or even establishing an internet podcasting service for students.

While the SU continues to exercise its authority in such matters regardless, it is difficult to maintain consistency in negotiations if the negotiation team changes every twelve months or so. It introduces uncertainty in the minds of those who are dealing with the SU. It also leaves the SU open to exploitation by the less scrupulous who may use such uncertainty to take unfair advantage of the change in leadership in negotiations.

By far the most crippling limitation, however, is that the year long term of office results in weakened representation. While university committees have permanent members for a number of years, those representing the Students Union, while entitled to be represented, change on an annual basis.

Why is this a problem, you may ask? Firstly, it introduces an unknown element into an environment where people have worked with each other for up to a decade on university committees. SU representatives do not possess the same authority because they lack the long term experience in dealing with issues of this nature. This is not a failing of the individuals but of the limitations imposed by the term of office as stated in the SU Constitution.

Indeed, a huge weakness is present during the transition period between the end of the academic year and the resumption of lectures, when the changeover of sabbats takes place. In this situation,



the university, if it desired, could enact policies at odds with student interests during the summer changeover period. This is not to suggest that the University would do so, merely that the possibility exists and it is a weakness that should be addressed.

A Radical Solution?

How do we resolve these major difficulties. Well, I have one solution to propose. Let us suppose that the SU consider making the Presidential term two years at a minimum, and possibly all sabbatical officers. The average degree length in UL is 3-4 years, so the student body should always get at least two opportunities to vote in the election.

While some may argue that this reduces the democratic rights of students to choose their leaders, the benefits that could result would more than compensate for the reduction in the number of times a person votes during their time in UL.

Sabbatical Officers running for a two year period would allow for more major policies to be passed in their period of office, reducing the pressure to 'rush' issues into Class Reps. Council without proper debate beforehand. The benefits of this cannot be understated.

A two year period would also enable sabbatical officers

to better tackle any projects which would involve a multi-year timespan. This would lead to greater certainty amongst all parties involved in such projects, and a greater likelihood of successful conclusion.

Finally, a two year period of office would compensate

somewhat for the current difficulties in seeing through SU sanctioned initiatives on college committees, as well as better protecting the SU from any policies which are judged not to be in the best interest of students on campus.

If we are to have the power and authority to pursue

those objectives which the SU sets ourselves, these weaknesses need to be addressed. I have offered one solution to the problems, doubtless there are others, but I honestly believe that this offers the best solution to the problems I have identified here.



Thinking of running for a position?

Here's all the information you need to make an informed choice

President

- Represents the interests of Union members at representative bodies within and outside of the University.
- Coordinates the day-to-day work of the Union.
- Co-signs with the Secretary General all contracts and other legally binding agreements.
- Provides initiative on policy matters.
- Responsible for financial matters.
- Has final say on the interpretation of the Constitution.

Committees: Governing Authority, Academic Council, GA Library Development Committee, GA Finance Committee, Nominating Sub-Committee, Residents Forum, Partnership, Plassey Campus Centre and Sports Arena Board of Directors, Campus Development Committee, Stables Management Committee, Scholars Management Committee, Faculty Boards, Discipline Committee, Equal Opportunities Committee, Boathouse Building Committee, Electoral and Referenda Board.

ULSU has not had a female President since Maura Adshead sat in the hotseat in 1989.

Presidents since 2000:

- 2006/07: St.John Ó Donnabháin - running again.
 2005/06: Fintan Breen - currently working in IT. Still involved with ULSU Services Ltd & ULAA.
 2004/05: Timmy Hennessey - now working in Community Development in Limerick.
 2003/04: Eoin Ó Broin - a well known face in the Shell to Sea campaign.
 2002/03: Eoin Ó Broin.
 2001/02: Michael Phelan
 2000/01: Michael Phelan

Deputy President/ Welfare Officer

- Deputises for the President in his/her absence. Administration of Financial Aid Fund.
- Dealing with day-to-day student issues including Accommodation, Finance, Sexual Health and many more.
- Development and promotion of Union welfare policy.
- Campaigns on issues such as Sexual Health, Healthy Living and Safety along with the Campaigns & Services Officer.

Committees: Governing Authority, Academic Council, Governing Authority Access & Equality Committee, Alcohol Working Group, Sexual Health WG, Equal Opportunities Committee, Financial Aid Committee, Student Affairs Committee, Students Affairs Alcohol Support & Monitoring Working Group (amongst others).

Welfare Officers since 2000:

- 2006/07: Sinéad Hickey - going on to further study.
 2005/06: Frank Fogarty- now Action Centre Manager in Southill Community Action Centre.
 2004/05: Rosey Healey
 2003/04: Dave Garrahy - currently in further study.
 2002/03: Gráinne Heffron
 2001/02: Tara Curley
 2000/01: Siobhán O' Connell

Vice President / Education Officer

- Monitors course curriculum and lecturing standards.
- Dealing with day-to-day student academic problems.
- Responsible for the development and implementation of education policy.
- Monitors Library, computers, laboratory and language-lab facilities.
- Individual students' academic problems - academic appeals and monitoring the tutor system.

Committees: Academic Council, Academic Programme Review Committee, Academic Regulations Committee, Faculty Boards, Quality Steering Committee, Discipline Committee, Library Information Resource Development Group, Student Affairs Committee, Scheduling Review Committee, Orientation Working Group, Advisor Working Group, Co-operative Education Committee.

Education Officers since 2000:

- 2006/07: Alan Higgins - running again.
 2005/06: Paddy Pratt - currently in further study
 2004/05: Fintan Breen - see above.
 2003/04: Madeleine Molyneux
 2002/03: Margaret Ryan - working in Limerick.
 2001/02: Tom O' Donovan
 2000/01: Tom O' Donovan

Vice President / Campaigns and Services Officer

- Responsible for coordination and implementation of Union campaigns.
- Represent the interests of members in the provision of Union services.
- Development and promotion of Union services, including the shops, reception, ULSU Print, the Common and Games Rooms, vending machines, second-hand bookshop, Nitelink, and more.
- Development and implementation of Union customer service policy
- Oversees the operations of the Union Entertainments.

Committees: ULSU Services Ltd. BOD, Stables and Scholars Management Committee, Environmental Committee, Academic Councils, Appeals Committee, Campus Watch Committee.

Alannah Turner was the first person to hold the position of Campaigns and Services Officer. She is planning further study next year.

Vice President / Publications and Publicity Officer:

- Responsible for the development and implementation of Union Communication policy.
- Responsible for Union Publications, including the Union Handbook, An Focal and Review.
- Maintains ULSU Website.
- Development of Union Communications and Publicity Tools
- Acts as Union Press Officer
- Oversees advertising in the Union and On-Campus
- Publicises all Union meetings, elections and events.

Committees: Appraisals, Postgraduate Students' Association Executive, Campus Watch Committee, Community Forum, Marketing Committee, IT Steering, Scholars Club Management Committee, Electoral and Referenda Board, Stables Club Management.

Deirdre O' Shaughnessy was the first person to hold the position of Publications and Publicity Officer. The position was preceded by that of Campaigns and Communications Officer, which was split in 2005 to create Publications and Publicity Officer and Campaigns and Services Officer.

Publications / Communications Officers since 2000:

- 2006/07: Deirdre O' Shaughnessy - soon to be working at the Galway Independent.
 2005/06: Anne Sheridan - working at the Limerick Leader.
 2004/05: Sandra Gannon - working as a technical writer.
 2003/04: Sarah Ryan - working at Lyric FM.
 2002/03: Paddy Buckley - lecturing IT in UL.
 2001/02: Patrick Kennedy - sports editor at Aertel.

Choose life. Choose to run for a position. Choose making a difference. Choose to stop complaining and do something about it. Choose to act. Choose to stay in college another year. **Choose President.** Choose representing 12,000 UL students on a hundred different issues. **Choose Welfare.** Choose giving out condoms and providing a shoulder to cry on. **Choose Education.** Choose letting fourth years graduate with their classes. Choose to tell the University what courses need fixing. Choose to develop class reps. **Choose Campaigns and Services.** Choose to campaign for students' rights. Choose a better shop. Choose to extend the Nitelink. Choose RAG Week. **Choose Publications and Publicity.** Choose to get UL a better image. Choose An Focal. Choose Review.

Choose your future.
Choose ULSU.

Elections 2007

The UL Alcohol Policy

DAN SULLIVAN

Background...

The UL alcohol policy was approved by Governing Body on June 25th 2002 and has been in effect since that date. The origins of the policy lie in a combination of desires on the part of the university authorities and the students to curb on campus rowdiness, ostensibly to promote a healthier and more mature culture of alcohol consumption, and to facilitate wider participation in clubs and societies activities by freeing up more time and funds.

Why it's in the news...

Over the course of the past 12 months it has been the subject of a wide-ranging review process. Draft results were made available to ULSU in the late summer of 2006 but the final results were only made available in Jan 2007. Both the process of this review and the results of the review have become the subject of considerable debate amongst the student of the last few months. The university executive chose

not to participate in or comment on the review process.

What the policy says...

The policy itself states from the outset that "The public health or health promotional perspective on alcohol problems, which provides the theoretical rationale for the alcohol policies proposed in this document, is perhaps best understood through comparison with the disease concept of alcoholism." The policy takes the view that alcohol contributes to a spectrum of health, behavioural and social problems - in terms of its toxicity, its potential to create dependency, and its negative impact on human behaviour. It sees consumption levels and drinking patterns as being highly predictive of the incidence and prevalence of problems in any given society or social group.

Acute alcohol-related problems, such as accidents, violence, injuries and deaths, are linked to excessive drinking on any one occasion. In many cases these problems occur among light and moderate drinkers who engage in heavy drinking on some occasions.

In essence it is not solely concerned with alcoholism but all aspects of the consumption

of alcohol. It seeks to stress the wider societal context in which the policy must operate. The adoption of the policy involved a negotiation of an interlocking process of quid pro quo on the parts of the student body acting through ULSU, on campus businesses and the university authorities.

Results?

At this point it should be readily observed whether the university, the students or on campus businesses have reneged or upheld their commitments in a number of areas, most strikingly in the area of timetabling to facilitate activities, the provision of an attractive, non-alcohol alternative venue on campus, and low cost non-alcoholic drink alternatives. As no base line figures on consumption were collected at the time of the adoption of the policy the policy provides no metrics to assess if the policy has had an impact positive or negative on alcohol consumption amongst the student body.

Why the Alcohol Policy is a bad deal for students

EAMONN GARDINER

FOUR years ago Clubs and Societies signed away our independence to the University when we agreed to abide by the terms of their proposed Alcohol Policy. And in return for not promoting events with alcohol and by not seeking or accepting sponsorship from alcohol producers the University, agreed to pay Clubs and Socs €60,000 a year to replace the loss in revenue that we might suffer due to the cap on sponsorship. It sounded pretty sweet at the time; of course at the time we all thought they were actually going to cough up!

But this is not about the €60k. It's not even about the fact the University has got one up on the C&S; it's about the fact that the University, for some very unknown reason, has decided to shaft every single one of the students in this University by not applying any of its other promises outlined in the aforementioned Policy. Why have they not, as promised, provided students with an alternative late night alcohol free venue? Why have they not, as promised, been able to see their way towards freeing up Wednesday afternoons so that students might actually be able to go with Clubs and Socs and train or take a field trip, or actually do something outside the mind-numbing classroom?

Mens Sano in Corpore Sano, or did those in Plassey House not fare well in Latin?

Since the Alcohol Policy has come in there has been a noticeable downturn in the social life on campus. Everyone has seen it. And so students are buying their drink in supermarkets and off-licences and are drinking themselves into a stupor at home and (in the case of a guy I lived with) getting themselves hospitalised in the process. A few beers before heading out = OK. A shoulder/bottle of Smirnoff = not ok/very bad.

In conclusion to this brief assault on our budding social-reformers sa teach bán, I must ask; you forbid, you condemn, you ban. Yet do you engage? Where are the proactive dedicated alcohol counsellors? Where are the action groups? Where is the ban on wine receptions in Plassey House at every single function I have ever attended? Perhaps they should attend to their own back garden before they renege (again) on deals with their students or criticise us over our lifestyle choices.

The Value of Serving the Community



BY ALAN HIGGINS
EDUCATION OFFICER

IN a recent development in the difficulties encounter by the UL Discipline system, murmurs are afoot that Community Service may not continue as an option in the

suite of penalties available to the Discipline Committee when hearing cases.

As a student you may ask: What difference does it make? There are a number of reasons why Community Service should remain a penalty. The alternatives to Community Service currently available are: academic penalties ('F' Grades), fines, suspension and expulsion. Some of these penalties can be too harsh or not appropriate to the offence, thus placing the Discipline Committee, the student and the University as a whole at a severe disadvantage to not have some sort of restorative justice available.

There are cases of both an academic and non-academic nature in which Community Service is used. It is chosen for the purposes that it is appropriate that some sort of restorative justice be implemented. For example if there was an offence relating to a disturbance involving residents it's appropriate that a penalty be carried out in the community. A second reason is that due to the circumstances of the student that Community Service is the most appropriate penalty. For example a student's circumstances may mean they are unable to pay a fine.

This issue surrounding Community Service arose following a decision by Academic Council that the University should

take responsibility for Community Service, which had been the responsibility of the Students' Union. The decision was the result of concerns raised by the Students' Union that there were difficulties with the operation of Community Service and that guidance, support and some sort of ownership should be taken by the University. Now the University has taken a u-turn on the merit of this penalty, simply on the basis that they will now have the job of administering it.

While resources are always an issue facing a public body like a University, it also has many

responsibilities. To abandon Community Service as a penalty with the University Discipline process is a disservice to the whole University community, both on and off campus, and is unfair to those who must appear before the Discipline Committee. To begin to suggest that Community Service should be abandoned, citing resourcing and not consulting with those currently operating the system fully and seek means by which it could be operated efficiently is reactionary and is seeking an easy way out of their responsibilities on the part of the University.



UL to the fore of Gaelic Revival

CHERLEY KANE AND ALAN OWENS

WHEN one thinks of the 'Gaelic Revival' we are reminded of Yeats and Synge and the GAA, and events at the beginning of the 20th Century. However, there is significant evidence that a more subtle revival of Gaelic, and all things Irish, is taking place in society today. Thanks to stricter broadcast laws, radio stations must now have a certain percentage of programming in Irish, and events like Seachtain na Gaeilge, and good quality Irish language television programming have added to the rise in pride toward our national language and culture. Added to this are proud sporting achievements, particularly in rugby, and most notably, the rise in interest in Irish traditional music.

Nowhere is this reflected more noticeably than here in UL. There has been a sharp rise in traditional music on campus, thanks notably to the on campus presence of 'The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance'. The academy is part of the College of Humanities which presents a B.A in Irish Music and Dance, which is the only degree

of its kind in the world. There are approximately one hundred students enrolled in this B.A, and range from instrumentalists to singers to dancers.

There are also a number of students studying for the M.A in Traditional Irish Music Performance and the M.A in Traditional Irish Dance Performance.

Each Tuesday at 1.15pm these musicians and dancers gather in the Performing Arts Centre in the Foundation Building for Trad music performances, and aim 'to infuse their love for Trad into the campus atmosphere'. At the forefront of this concerted effort to raise the profile of Traditional music on campus are 'Gan Ainm' the Traditional Music Society.

They are proud to say that 'people from all over the world who have studied in UL have been welcomed with open arms into the "Mad Trad and dangerous to know" club!' The society feels that music is one of the central aspects of the resurgence in passion in Irish culture, helped immensely by the impact of iconic performers such as Christy Moore, the Chieftains and Sharon Shannon. They believe that Irish music and dance have never enjoyed

such interest and popularity, and would urge those interested to 'immerse themselves in this world'.

There are several ways to do this, according to the Society. If you play an instrument there are 'sessions' happening all over town, such as Squire Maguire's on Tuesdays at 9pm, or the Groody Bar on Wednesdays also at 9pm. Dolan's also have Trad nights on Thursdays, and having recently been to a Kila gig myself, I would recommend it to anyone who has not really experienced Irish Trad music before to check it out.

Gan Ainm also hold music lessons for beginners in a wide range of Traditional instruments. Also being held by the society is Campus Trad, a music festival featuring a 'feast of fabulous musicians for your delectation' over the weekend of Week 6, from the 23rd to the 25th of March.

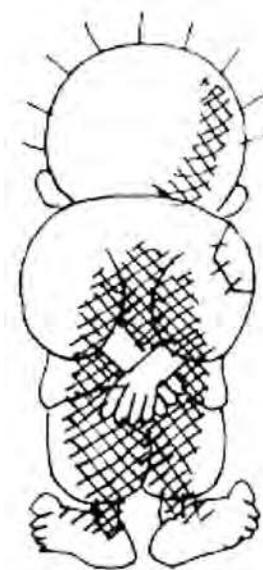
For more information on all of these events and more, contact tradsock@gmail.com for additional information.

Handala

MARÍA ESCRIBANO

IF you go to Palestine or the Palestinian refugee camps in neighbouring countries, you will be stricken by the recurrence of a picture everywhere, as graffiti, in publications, T-shirts, CDs...

when you ask about it, you will be told it is 'Handala', the 'signature' of the Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al Ali. Handala is a refugee child that will not grow up until he returns to his homeland. "He is showing his back to us because he is so sad he doesn't want us to see his face" explained Mohamed when I



saw it in an ornament at his house in the Old City of Al-Quds (Jerusalem). There was something written underneath the image in Arabic: "Our struggle is born from within a very deep suffering". Handala is barefooted like the poverty stricken refugee children.

Naji Al-Ali was 10 years old when he and his family were expelled from Palestine to Ein Al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon in 1948, with the creation of the State of Israel. This marked all his life, as it happened to all Palestinian refugees (750,000 is the official UN figure for 1948) and continues to happen today. Naji Al-Ali became the most important cartoonist in the Arab world. He created Handala in 1967, the year of the start of the current occupation, and this became his hallmark from then on, present in all his cartoons. Handala's mother is called Nakhbah ('The Disaster'), the name in Arabic for the ongoing tragedy that has fallen on Palestinians since 1948).

Naji Al-Ali wrote: "Handala was born ten years old, and he will always be ten years old. At that age, I left my homeland, and when he returns, Handala will still be ten, and then he will start growing up. The laws of nature do not apply to him. He is unique. Things will become normal again when the homeland returns. I presented him to the poor and named him Handala as a symbol of bitterness. At first, he was a Palestinian child, but his consciousness developed to have a national and then a global and human horizon. He is a simple yet tough child, and this is why people adopted him and felt that he represents their consciousness."

Al Ali portrayed the Palestinian question through the eyes of this refugee child in his cartoons. Today Handala has become a symbol of the struggle of the Palestinian people for justice and self-determination.

The Palestine Solidarity Society will be proud to host an exhibition of Handala cartoons on campus during week 7, offering a native insight on the current occupation of Palestine.

For more information please contact us at ulpalestine@eircom.net. www.skynet.ie/~ulpalestine

Gan Ainm University of Limerick Traditional Music Society presents...

Campus Trad '07

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An exciting and exuberant weekend, packed with engaging and vibrant performances of traditional Irish music!

FRIDAY 23rd
The Stables

GERRY O'CONNOR, BRENDAN O'REGAN & TONY BYRNE
Support from Aidan O'Donnell, Kieran Munnely, Shauna Mullin, Ryan Molloy & Sean Óg Graham

SATURDAY 24th
The Stables

NORTH CREGG + TRAD DISCO!!!
Support from Gan Ainm members

Tickets : 12 Euro per night or SPECIAL OFFER 20 Euro full festival pass

SUNDAY 25th
The Groody Bar
FREE EVENT!!!

Free food + Session with traditional music societies from around Ireland

FOR MORE INFO : EMAIL tradsock@gmail.com RING 085 140 7220

Humanities placements not good enough

AOIFE FINNERTY

AN English & History student working in car rental? Something like this can make you really question what some graduates do with their degrees. Then you read on and realise this student received this placement as part of her degree.

Co-op, according to the description on the UL site, 'gives you the chance to experience a real work environment before you graduate. Your Co-op should help you to make decisions about your future career.' So why do we have HPSS students in car rental, Law and European Studies students in financial services and Language and Cultural Studies students in IT?

Seosamh Hurley, a Humanities graduate, paints a very negative picture of his

experiences with the Co-op office, 'I found the whole experience bad. The Co-op office was thoroughly unhelpful. They lack interest in getting students a relevant placement. I enjoyed my job but it had nothing to do with my course or future employment prospects. The Co-op office doesn't do what it's supposed to.'

A contrasting experience was that of Harry McKillen, graduate of the college of Informatics and Electronics, who details a very positive experience of co-op and the office: 'I worked in Transitions Optical in Co. Galway. I found the Co-op office really good because they organised loads of interviews for me. I really disliked the programming aspect of my course before my Co-op but enjoyed

it after because I suppose I was forced to work in the environment. All in all it was very good.'

These two opinions probably make you think that one is a bitter student who gave a bad review while another speaks positively and echoes the views that most students have of their co-op placements. However, countless other students in the College of Humanities and the College of Science have had similar problems with the co-op office and its 'irrelevant placements' for the College of Humanities along with sharing 'disorganisation and unwillingness to help' with the College of Science. This sentiment is echoed in the opinion of Public Administration students who see it as hugely unfair that law students are 'taking [their]

jobs in Civil Service and other administrative offices.'

This quote from a third year Sport Science student highlights some more of the flaws, 'There are lots of relevant co-ops for my course. I haven't really been in mine long enough to know just how relevant it is but it so far so good. I would have to say though that I got my co-op in spite of the co-op office. I was notified at the last minute about my interview and was told the outcome two weeks after the decision had been made. My placement officer seemed nice but had little to do with my actual placement. I asked to be put on an interview list for one particular job, she failed to do so. It could have cost me my co-op. The way they do things where your first offer is accepted for

you on your behalf is absurd, in the real world you can choose your path and whether you take a job or not.' The point of the mandatory acceptance seems to be a sensitive one with a lot of students. Some do awful interviews just to avoid a job that they don't want.

Students' Union Education Officer Alan Higgins admits that the opinions of these humanities students is quite a worry, 'This is an obvious concern for humanities students, who make up a significant part of the student body. I hope that a constructive solution can be found in conjunction with the Co-op office and the college of humanities.'

Students' Union President, St. John Ó Donnabháin, concurs, stating, 'We know that the co-op office is under pres-

sure but the situation is unacceptable for humanities students. Co-op is a very important part of every student's degree in UL and they have a right to be given a relevant co-op, one that helps their development. We call on the university to address this as a matter of urgency.' Jerry Cronin, Co-op manager for Humanities declined to comment on the matter.

It appears that Humanities students get the short end of the stick when it comes to co-op, a fundamental part of the UL degree. A complete overhaul of the Co-op Office's role in seeking out relevant co-ops appears to be the only solution.

Single Parent Accommodation on Campus

THE high cost of student accommodation in cities such as Cork, Dublin and Galway has been highlighted strongly in recent times. Students in Limerick it seems have a far greater advantage when it comes to low cost accommodation for the academic year. However for single parent students there is perhaps not as much on offer in terms of low cost housing coupled with adequate security and the necessities needed for comfort and for looking after a child in a student friendly environment.

Whilst on-campus accommodation can be more expensive than private housing off campus, it nonetheless offers much to students who are single parents. With over 2,200 bedrooms available to UL students, Campus Life Services operate 5 residential villages and offer a range of services in both their house and apartment style accommodation. Dromroe, Thomond and Cappavilla Villages are home to some attractive two bedroom apartments designed to accommodate single parent families. These apartments are fully furnished and equipped with washing machine and dryer

as well as the regular kitchen essentials, fridge, freezer, oven and hob. Each family apartment has two en suite bedrooms and a sitting room and kitchen area.

The security of living on campus and a dedicated maintenance service provides added piece of mind for student parents. The residential Village Manager also provides additional support where required. The rental rate also incorporates all bills to include heating, light, refuse and television licence. Internet connection is also available in each apartment.

The close proximity of Silver Apples on campus crèche provides extra convenience to students. The crèche opens at 08h30 and provides care until 18h00 Monday to Friday allowing students to attend lectures and fit in some study time during the day.

Whilst the argument will prevail that the luxury of on-campus accommodation is not one that all students can afford, particularly single parents who not only have their coursework to maintain, but also the added pressures of taking care of a child, and perhaps even a part-time job to keep them-

selves afloat, there are many resources available to help with pursuing education. Benefits such as the One Parent Family Payment can be availed of through local Social Welfare Offices. Other supports are available through the Students' Union and the local health centre, where benefits including rent allowance can be applied for.

Students have found the accommodation service on campus to be very supportive and helpful. One student holds the view that 'Help is always available, sometimes over and above what would be expected from them and I have enjoyed staying here. Once I applied to move in here, I was immediately assured a place would be available and the manager, Michelle in Dromroe, even went as far as putting me in contact with another student, so I could discuss any issues I might have had with moving on campus. Student Parent Nights were also arranged where I have gotten to know the other student parents living on campus, which is great as you make new friends and discuss issues we have in common. Staying on campus has allowed me great independ-

ence in a secure environment and also is very convenient as all the facilities I require are nearby. I would recommend it highly.'

Whilst single parents may be in a minority in UL, it is

nonetheless hugely important that their needs and that of their children are met adequately by the college so that the experience of college life is one that is equal across the board.

Further information about single parent accommodation on campus, is available from Rose Merrigan in the accommodation office, 061 202433.

Coming Soon to UL



& ULSU are Joining Forces



Chill Zone





Dinner is served...





Tasty Carvery





Dish 'n' Dash...

www.SPAR.ie

STUDENTS' UNION



University of Limerick

www.ulsu.ul.ie

- Operated, Owned and Managed by you.
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- Providing Healthy Meal Options for you.

Fake tan or cooking fat?

Alan Owens asks what a 'necessity' really is...

LAST week brought the announcement of something that many have been aware of for a long time; inflation is on the increase in Ireland. Following on from rising interest rates, and rising house prices, it seems that old dreaded adage of 'Inflation' is set to rise and continue rising for the foreseeable future.

A 5% inflation increase might not seem like much to many people. These then would be the same people that criticise the Government when the price of a pint increases, or cigarettes, or petrol. In brash, modern day Ireland, little thought is spared for those people and families on the poverty line, to whom a 5% increase spells disaster.



Indeed spare a thought for those at whom the new changes in the CPI are aimed. The Consumer Price Index is the list of items that reflect what the average person spends their money on. It is used to calculate the percentage change in prices over time and it is from this inflation rates are calculated. Certain everyday items are included in this and are referred to as 'the shopping basket'.

What are these new changes? Well, out go things like cooking fat, and in comes the purchasing of DVDs and fake tan. Yes, you read that correctly. The measure of our inflation rate now partly derives from the amount of money spent on a lotion to make you appear tanned and beautiful. Does anything else sum up modern Ireland better than this?

For a nation of people famed for our disastrous weather, pale complexions, red hair and freckles (stereotypes abound) why do we feel a compulsion to present ourselves as tanned and beautiful? Is it the overpowering influence of 'Americana' & Hollywood?



The answers to these questions are unimportant. What is important is the erosion of our national identity and culture in favour of presenting ourselves as vacuous, brash, rich and successful in our everyday lives. This is of course likely to be denied by everyone, but one glimpse at an edition of the Sunday Independent confirmed it for me.

The Life section was dominated by a treatise of Rosanna Davison and her posse, tanned, long legged, beautiful and rich. It discussed how they are the new social set in Ireland, spilling and sharing their hijinks with teenagers everywhere through the new internet medium, BeBo. This 'SoCoDu' (South County Dublin) social set was presented as what young people should aspire to. Davison was compared to the nefarious Paris Hilton. Is this the future of Ireland?

Whatever the answer is, spare a thought for those poor souls for whom fake tan constitutes such a large percentage of their spending. Thankfully for them this may not be a necessity for long the way climate change is progressing.

Irish Outreach San Diego

NIAMH CLOWRY

Every summer hundreds of college students cross the Atlantic to spend their summer basking in the American sun, living the high life, experiencing American culture and working low paid jobs that are generally not the most fun in the world. Yet despite the meaningless work, the J1 programme is without doubt one of the most enjoyable experiences that a student will have in their late teens

and early twenties.

However as the influx of Irish students into American continues to be on the increase every-year, there is more demand than ever for jobs and accommodation in the perspective destinations of choice. From San Francisco, to New York, Boston, Chicago, Hawaii and San Diego, the sheer volume of students is beginning to outweigh the supply of jobs

and of accommodation available. Part of the fun is trying desperately to find a job and a secure place to live that doesn't cost the earth. In most cities, long searches and countless interviews will eventually lead to fruition; however one destination for J1 students has proven to be more difficult than the rest.

In recent years Irish students travelling to San Diego have been tarnished

Can you Credit It?



BY NIAMH CLOWRY
FEATURES EDITOR

THE cost of living in Ireland has been on the increase in the last decade. As students it can often be difficult to survive a college year without taking on a part-time job, relying on a county-council grant, or better still hoping that Mammy and Daddy will take pity on us and fund our passage through third level education. Of course there are others ways that students make sure that they have enough money to enjoying the college experience to the full, one being the demon credit card. Although it is a necessity for some students, it can also be an expensive luxury for others, especially for those of us who cannot differentiate between a want

and a need.

Recent studies have revealed that in Ireland over 40% of those aged between twenty and twenty-nine years have credit cards with interest rates ranging from 9.9 per cent to 19.9 per cent. Although all credit cards give an interest free period, meaning that if you pay your bill in full by the due date you do not have to pay any interest, this is perhaps easier said than done given that the majority of students with a credit card can and will live well beyond their means. If you only pay off part of your bill due to lack of finances in a particular month, you will pay interest on both the part you pay off and the part remaining for the number of days the amounts are outstanding. On top of these costs everyone who has a credit card is subject to an annual government stamp duty of €40 per account.

In an environment where many young people are struggling to survive financially, they are relying on Credit Cards to tide them over and are using them as a

long-term credit facility. In a very uncompetitive market more needs to be done to protect young people from spiralling into increasing amounts of debt. There is a greater need than ever to shop around when looking at taking on a credit card and comparing interest rates across the wide spectrum of institutions so that an informed decision is reached.

Credit cards are a costly way of borrowing; however they are certainly a necessity for many who are awaiting grant payments or those who are paid on a monthly basis. The real issue however should be identifying whether something is needed or whether it is merely something we know we can't afford and shouldn't be buying but really want. Getting trapped in debt and mounting interest rates at a young age can be the start of a downward spiral, however finding the money to pay off a debt once you do find yourself in that situation is easier said than done.



with an image of being drunken troublemakers owing to the actions of a minority of students in the city a number of years ago. As a result of this, a non-profit organisation, the Irish Outreach Programme has been launched with the aim of providing assistance to Irish immigrants and in particular Irish J1 students travelling to San Diego. The Programme provides assistance in relation to

landlord disputes, lost passports, arrests and lack of employment opportunities in and around the city. Information can be found on www.irishoutreached.org.

Whilst most Irish students who travelled to San Diego last summer had very enjoyable experiences it is nonetheless important to be aware of the pitfalls when travelling to any new city and to be well prepared when it comes to looking for

accommodation and jobs. The most important thing is to enjoy the three months abroad but only with some forward planning can students ensure that the hassles encountered by other Irish students in the past are not part of their J1 experience this summer.

Trócaire's Lenten Campaign: A Conspiracy of Silence?

KATE NOLAN

Marking International Women's Day on March 8, Trócaire Director Justin Kilcullen urged that the conspiracy of silence that existed around the inequalities facing women in the developing world must be broken. However, it now appears that this same 'conspiracy of silence' has descended over the discussion of equal gender rights here in Ireland after the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) upheld its initial decision in relation to Trócaire's Lenten advertisement on gender

equality, deeming that the campaign is toward a political end.

On March 6, The BCI instructed all commercial broadcasters, including Today FM and TV3, to cease broadcasting the Trócaire advert, which highlights the difficulties female babies will face in life. The television and radio campaign also includes a section encouraging members of the public to log onto the NGO's website to donate online or order a Trócaire box.

The BCI ruled that the Lenten campaign contravenes Section 10(3) of the Radio and Television Act (1988), which prohibits advertising 'directed toward a political end'. This alleged political end, is simply a section on Trócaire's website which asks individuals to support the campaign for gender equality by signing a petition lobbying the Irish and British governments to draw up viable national action plans that will prevent violence against women and protect them in conflict. This petition will then

be sent to the Irish and UK governments calling on them to honour their commitments to UN Resolution 1325, which has yet to be enforced.

The BCI's interpretation of this broadcasting legislation is deeply flawed, pulling the campaign from the media on the shallowest of pretences, on a mere technicality. The BCI has recently proposed an amendment to the script of the advertisement as some half-hearted, last-ditch attempt at compromise. The original script stated: 'Support Trócaire's Lenten Campaign to help end gender inequality' and it has been suggested to change it to: 'Support Trócaire to help end gender inequality'. It should be noted that the BCI and RTE have differed in their interpretation of the Radio and Television Act. The state broadcaster is not subject to the BCI's rulings, and in all credit to them, RTE has continued to carry Trócaire's Lenten advertisements as originally submitted.

However, the controversy generated by the BCI's decision over the past week raises serious questions about this legislation and how it is interpreted. There is now a danger that Trócaire and

other organisations that advocate and campaign on issues of social justice will find their ability to do this work further constrained by the legislation in the future. It is supremely ironic that this entire incident has played out in the week surrounding International Women's Day, which first originated from the trade union movement in America in the early 20th century, particularly in the activism of the women who worked in the clothing industry 'sweatshops' of the time. Gender equality is still an extremely pertinent social issue today - both in the West and in the developing world.

Even in Ireland, supposedly one of the most 'developed' countries in the world, the notion of female equality is far from being realised. Men dominate the vast majority of public institutions, and cultural, social, economic and legal infrastructures, leaving women relatively absent from formal politics and local government decision-making structures, marginalising the concerns and interests of women as citizens. The impact of unequal gender relations in the state system, and the subsequent female

exclusion from the political decision-making process can clearly be seen: only 13% of those elected to the Dáil are women, and this has risen by only 1% over the past 10 years. The National Womens' Council of Ireland (NWC) estimates that at this rate, it will take 370 years for the proportion of women in the Dáil to reach 50%.

When the issue of gender equality is placed in an international context, the situation becomes even more dismal. Worldwide, women earn 69% of male wages. There is no country where women earn the same as men. Women are far more likely than men to suffer from poverty, illiteracy and disease: 70% of people living in poverty and 66% of those who can't read or write are women. Despite the fact that women produce nearly 80% of the food on the planet, they receive less than 10% of agricultural assistance. Women also bear the burden of inadequate healthcare: in 2006, more than twice as many young women were

living with HIV as young men. Finally, women are more vulnerable than men in conflict and are more often victims of violence and the other ravages of war. Most tellingly, a total of 70% of the world's refugees and displaced people are female.

Once we become aware of the severity of female inequality at home and abroad, the BCI's attempt to silence a campaign striving to raise public awareness and discussion of this issue is even more despicable. This decision infringes upon one of the most fundamental rights of all, the right to freedom of speech. A review of this legislation is urgently required; there needs to be a full debate on the background and intentions of this legislation. Surely, any law that seeks to curb a campaign for equal rights, opportunities and access for both genders is not in the public interest?

Kate Nolan is the Students' Union Equality Officer and can be contacted through Students' Union reception.



The Right to Privacy

NIAMH CLOWRY

IN the modern world technology is a persistently dominant factor in all our lives, from the internet, to the use of mobile phones; access to the world is at the tip of our fingers. Yet for all its usefulness in communications and access to information, technology is also starting to have an increasingly negative affect on all our lives. In the past number of weeks the country has been aghast to hear of a paedophile circle emerging in Dublin, with the intention of grooming a fourteen year old boy. It subsequently transpired that the boy had been

soliciting, and that many of the men he met had not wished to pursue the relationship when they realised his age.

The issue has sparked a widespread debate on whether parents should be allowed access to their children's mobile phone messages and even their emails. Certainly as college students in our late teens and early twenties the very idea of our parents being privy to every text message we send and receive is somewhat difficult to fathom, yet out of all the controversy the line between what remains private and what is subject to

public access becomes very much blurred.

The majority of students in UL have Bebo pages, and a high proportion of these pages are in the public domain, for the world to see and have access to. Whilst Bebo can be a useful communication mechanism for staying in contact with friends and relatives, particularly those who are far away, there are also many negative aspects to it. Photographs on public Bebo pages can be copied by anyone who is a member of Bebo and information detailing where a person lives, what age they are, down to

their favourite foods, music or films can be viewed. Certainly this might seem like harmless enough information to have on a public forum, yet any kind of personal information can easily fall into the hands of the wrong person, who doesn't have the opinion that it is harmless or useless to them.

The right to privacy is one that many people take for granted. Whether we like it or not we lose some of our rights by leaving public messages on the internet for anyone to read. People using information about you, which you have put up in a public forum is not so easy to defend. Privacy is a

sacred thing and not something that should be taken for granted. The cold hard fact is that we live in a world of evils at every turn, and whilst we may like to think that we are mature enough to look after ourselves, it only takes one picture or comment to get into the wrong hands before we realise that our privacy has been lost. It is of extreme importance to everyone to know the implications of websites such as Bebo and to understand that once private information about you is in the public domain there is no way to get it back. Whether

the information is correct becomes far less relevant the more it is passed on. Stories have a way of getting lost in translation and the factual details become far less relevant. Likewise with photographs that are left on public websites. Lest we all forget the wondrous technology that is Photoshop.

Awareness of an issue is half the battle; protection of your right to privacy however is matter for a person's own consciousness, only you have the capability to protect that which is sacred to you.

ELECTION CENTRAL

With a general election approaching, *An Focal* invited the on-campus youth political parties to tell you why you should vote for their candidates. Any other youth parties interested in contributing, please email deirdre.oshaughnessy@ul.ie with a 500 word piece. *An Focal* will be doing a general election special in Week 10, so keep an eye out!

Fianna Fáil - Bringing Power to the People



DEREK DALY

WITH a general election no more than 8 weeks away now, you as citizens of this great nation must decide what path you want your country to take over the term of the next Dáil. If you want continued prosperity; a new focus on the cost of living; a realistic chance at not being forced into emigration when you complete your degree; then you must not vote for the unmitigated mess of a proposition that is Fine Gael, Labour & Green. The sheer incapability of these parties to form cohesive policies is astonishing. If Pat says cut taxes; Enda won't be drawn on it. And despite Pat Rabbitte's insistence that Enda is the only man for him; one can't help but wonder if Enda will end up with a knife in his back and come June we'll have a Fianna Fáil Taoiseach and

Labour Tánaiste in the form of Brendan Howlin. Enda Kenny has told us that MRSA is the scourge of this country and Fianna Fáil would agree; only our leader doesn't exacerbate the problem by playing Mother Teresa in hospitals all over the country at 2 in the morning to score points. If he was really concerned about this he'd stay away to avoid the risk of causing further infection.

You must decide if you want to go down the road of a stronger, more equitable Ireland, lead by one of Europe's most highly regarded diplomats or plain old Enda. Enda Kenny will be the longest serving TD should he retain his seat; yet he has only served 3 years as a cabinet minister. You must therefore question the quality of this man. You cannot but feel doubts as to the capability of a

man who hasn't even a full term of office as a cabinet minister to his name. Could he lead the great nation that is Ireland? That, my friends, is up to you!

The opposition has tried to put down the record of Fianna Fáil's last 10 years in government. I have one question that is relevant to you as students. Would you be at university if not for the policies of the Fianna Fáil lead government that has brought this country from a standstill to the envy of Europe. Only the very wealthy amongst you could positively guarantee that you would be here. As for me, I most certainly would not be here at UL were it not for the pro-education policies adopted by Fianna Fáil since the 1960s when Lemass' government introduced free secondary education. Fianna Fáil has

always been at the forefront of innovation and Fianna Fáil has and will always run this country with the interests of its people at heart.

A Fine Gael-lead government would certainly see 'an Enda' the success this country has been over the past 10 years. Do you want to back a winning team of Bertie, Cowen, Hanafin and Co, or see yourself disappointed in June when Enda Kenny is the former leader of Fine Gael?

Following the last ten years off success; Fianna Fáil looks forward to working with you over the next ten years to continue this success.

And remember that no matter who you vote for; it is important that you use your vote and that your voice is heard!

Fine Gael - A Party for The People

JOHN KEARNEY

IN less than three months, the people of Ireland will return to the polls to choose their 30th Dail. Much has changed in our modern and progressive state since the last election, which took place in May 2002, before the Roy Keane / Saipan incident, before SSIA's, the smoking ban, and most importantly before Fine Gael's triumphant victories in the local and European elections of 2004. This would signal a change in the people's thinking, and a desire for an honest and diligent government that places emphasis on the provision of a top class health service, a legal system that punishes the villain and not the victim, and an end to the erratic and wanton spending that is an undeniable characteristic of the current administration.

From the Fine Gael viewpoint, the present government has outlived its

usefulness and efficiency. Yes, our economy has been revamped beyond all recognition, but can the praise for that be rightfully handed to Bertie Ahern's cabinet? A more accurate assessment would be that the success originates from the decision of Ahern's predecessors in power, the Fine Gael / Labour / Democratic Left coalition of 1994 to 1997, to reduce corporation tax to 12 ½ percent, thus encouraging increased foreign multinational investment that, put simply, created jobs and opportunities. We are the second richest country in the world per capita, but our Fianna Fáil led government, aided by the inept hypocritical excuse of a party that is the Progressive Democrats, uses and abuses our money in the arrogant belief that we have so much of it that we do not care. This behaviour is an insult to the Irish people and

humiliations such as the shame of having Europe's second-worst health system do not sit well with the electorate.

What is certain is that as a nation, we lean strongly towards the ideology of Fianna Fail without fully understanding their policies. As a party, they have served this country well, particularly in the days of Lemass and Lynch, strong leaders with an eye for progress. But let us not forget that it was Fine Gael who built this state, that men like Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, W.T Cosgrave and Kevin O'Higgins owed their allegiance to Cumann na Gaedhael, our forefathers and the party who liberated this nation from the British Empire. The Catholic Church recognised the merits of the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) and supported the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War, reversing their allegiance to the IRA in

the War of Independence. John A. Costello did what de Valera never could and declared Ireland a republic in 1949. Garret FitzGerald signed the historic Anglo-Irish Agreement with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1985, the keystone of the Northern Ireland peace process.

Fine Gael have consistently proven their dedication and sincerity when asked to do so by you, the people and especially the young people. They remain the party of honest endeavour and determined effort, committed to establishing a government that places the interests of the people as its ultimate priority. Choose now, choose well, and remember that if you do not vote you cannot fully claim to have an interest in how your taxes are utilised. The time to decide is fast approaching.



RAG week kicks off with a bang

ALANNAH TURNER

Sumo wrestling in the Stables courtyard. Photo by Huw Thomas



Mud wrestling during RAG week. Photo by Hugh O' Brien



The first in the RAG week queues getting free t shirts

THE 2007 ULSU RAG week kicked off with a bang last week when 12 teams of students took off around the country as part of the Great Race. The event was organised on the weekend of week four as a lead up to RAG week. The teams met in the Students' Union on Friday morning where they were briefed on the final list of tasks. Their mileage was then taken and they were set off to complete as many tasks in the time given as they possibly could.

Some of the tasks given included getting their photo taken with international and national stars, flying in a helicopter, paddle in both the Irish sea and the Atlantic sea and swim with a dolphin. Points were allocated for each task with extra points being given for creative thinking. This led to some entertaining photos, particularly in the attempt to swim with a dolphin. One team brought a stuffed dolphin into a swimming pool, another team attached a fin and a sign to one of their members who acted as a dolphin while another team was lucky enough to have one of their members with the surname dolphin!

The winners of the race were Team 3 (Diarmuid Reid, John Kearns, James English and Charlie Nolan) who not only covered the length and breadth of the country but also ventured as far as Wales. The event managed to raise over €6000 for charity with one the teams raising €1200 on their travels over the weekend. The judges of the race were so impressed with the photos that they have decided to exhibit them in a celebratory RAG week exhibition planned for week 7. It is thought that the cheques for the RAG week charities will also be presented at this exhibition.

Judge Deirdre O'Shaughnessy had this to say about the event 'We were delighted with the amount of students who took this on - the effort some of them went to was really staggering! Big mention has to be made of the girls who collected €1200 extra money for the charities'.

The list of RAG week events were endless and included mud wrestling, raft racing, human horse show, jelly wrestling and body waxing, not to mind the great line of acts set up such as Director and the Blizzards.



Waxing in the Stables during RAG week. Photo by Huw Thomas

The losing team in the raft race, who capsized twice



The SU President incurs the wrath of Ents Crew by crowd-surf

The winning team in the raft race - Photo by Huw Thomas



Gone Racin'

Aoife Breen describes her race around Ireland for the RAG week charities



A member of Team 1 shaving on the go!



A member of Team 9 kissing the Blarney Stone



Team 2, having a bit of a setback



Team 4 completing the helicopter task

It was a hasty decision that we chose to enter the Great Race and one that I am still left wondering the value of. We got to visit parts of the country that we had never been to before. Places like lovely Leitrim. We also discovered that the Irish Sea at the beginning of March is not a suitable place for bare toes, and that county signs are often inappropriately placed at the edge of motorways and dual carriageways demanding brake slamming and sharp swerving into hard shoulders to the sound of horns from chasing cars.

The teams gathered in the SU common room on the Friday morning preceding RAG week to participate in the one and only Great Race around Ireland. After a quick pep talk from the organisers in the SU and a reminder that we were still subject to the rules of the road and to the University's Code of Conduct, and we were all set loose on the thoroughfares of the country.

Filled with passion for adventure, and armed with a hijacked giant hand belonging to the Students' Union as well as our mascot for the weekend, the beloved Nemo of Finding Nemo fame, and the most precious possession, a detailed road map of Ireland, we set off, flying up through the gears and impatient to complete the list of tasks given to us for the weekend.

We were highly enthusiastic to jump out of the car for a

photo of Thomond Park and the Gaelic Grounds. Similarly, we couldn't wait to pose in front of the tallest hotel in the Republic, the Clarion Hotel on the banks of the longest river in Ireland. We drove on and found ourselves in Kerry, more specifically, at Kerry Airport - although not on the list itself we stopped as none of us ever saw ourselves returning to the spot in the near future; we ventured into the foyer and casually asked if there were any pilots around.

Without falling into the trap of stereotyping, and I'm sure there are plenty of Kerry people who will possibly take offence from the following; but the response we got was what one could only describe as being a Kerry answer. We were told, in no uncertain terms that, "A pilot? Sure there aren't any planes here". Welcome to Kerry Airport...where they don't have planes; or pilots; so we got the fire crew to pose with us instead before speeding off to Ireland's peak, Carrauntoohill.

As the national road became a regional route, which in turn became a track, we began to get the feeling that we were being followed. Probably because we were. Another Great Race team relaxed as we turned bends and corners in efforts to find the highest mountain.

We chose to stay and picnic at its base and chatted with other

teams who came and went and informed us that Alannah had sent out a search-text trying to locate the whereabouts of the giant hand. Reluctantly, we owned up to having the waving monster, which entertained traffic in Macroom, Cork city, Cahir, Cashel and cars on Dame Street in Dublin around midnight on Friday night. Ah, that hand provided some entertainment. Hi-five anyone?

Venturing north we were anticipating huge "Welcome to Northern Ireland" signs on the border; we were entering another country after all. But the only telltale signs were money exchanges and notices proclaiming the sale of fireworks.

At 15 points a county, the North was the most valuable in terms of contributing to the tally. Hence we took a deliberate ten-minute detour en route to Sligo, to Belleek specifically to find a Fermanagh sign. We made it eventually to Athenry on Sunday night for our last stopover, having driven from Belfast that morning. An early rise was necessary the following morning to make sure we returned to UL by the 11am deadline.

Racing along (but no speed limits were broken, of course) we made it into the campus with a full five minutes to spare. It was tight, but not as tight as some of the u-turns we made over the weekend.

Team 5 with JP McManus in his plane



Team 6 having a swim, Atlantic Ocean, Fanore Beach, Co. Clare



Team 12 with 'Pat Kenny'



Team 10 in the Atlantic

The winning Team 3 with Seán Óg Ó hAilpín



Team 11 'flying in a plane'



Team 8 with Delta Goodrem

Campus Sport

DESPITE this four point Fitzgibbon Cup defeat UL can still take pride from the performance they put in and the year as a whole.

LIT were raging hot favourites coming into the competition with county stars on every line of the team. They defeated NUIG comfortably in the final 2-15 to 0-13 with Joe Canning again grabbing 1-8. UL definitely gave them a sterner examination. They never lacked for commitment, effort or determination. Every player gave 100 per cent and can have no regrets. At stages during the second half the game looked dead and buried but UL hung in there. They showed great resilience to battle back twice and they were still in it with minutes remaining. In fairness they gave it an almighty rattle.

What really impressed me was some of the individual displays. A lot of this team have bright futures ahead of them. Tadhg Flynn in goal was kept busy but dealt very well with anything that came

his way. He made a super save when one on one with Canning and also has a monstrous puck-out. Kieran Joyce kept a good handle of Canning limiting him to just one point from play. Thomas Stapleton at wing back made some great clearances and stopped the supply of ball going in to the LIT inside forward line. Pa Donnelan and Noel O'Murchu worked tirelessly at midfield and kept Clare county star Jonathon Clancy quiet for most of the hour. In the forwards Matthew Whelan, Matthew Ruth, Alan Egan and Paul Flynn all had their moments. The player who really stood out over everyone else though was captain Brendan Bulger. What an inspiration he was from centre half back. He is able to read the game so well and made some mighty catches and clearances. Some of these players will definitely make senior county teams in the future.

Looking back on the year overall it has to be counted as a success. UL remained unbeaten throughout the



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

league winning it outright in the end. On the way they defeated WIT, LIT, CIT and UCC. In the final they beat NUIG 0-12 to 0-8 at Puckane. Then came that last gasp win in the Fitzgibbon quarter final against CIT 0-13 to 1-9. There were also some fine displays in the Waterford Crystal League to boot. Not a bad year by any means.

Well done to everyone involved with the hurlers for the entertainment and success you have brought this year. You can look back with your heads held high. It was well worth the long, long trip to Carlow to see ye in action. Here's hoping UL will keep up this kind of form for next year.

UL Hurlers Can Still Be Proud



Canning Crushes Brave UL Challenge

Tomás McCarthy reports from Carlow on the Fitzgibbon Cup semi-final.

**LIT 1-16
UL 2-9**

AN exhibition of free taking from Joe Canning powered LIT to a hard earned win over UL in the Fitzgibbon Cup semi-final played at Carlow IT on Friday 9th March.

On a splendid spring afternoon a big crowd gathered at Carlow IT for this second semi-final. The pitch was in good condition but there was a strong breeze blowing across the field. UL lined out with one change after midfielder Sean Ryan failed a fitness test. His place was taken by John Greene who lined out at full forward with Pa Donnellan moving out to the middle of the field.

LIT had the better of the opening exchanges. Joe Canning opened the scoring from a free and Austin Murphy added a further score minutes later. UL responded though through an Alan Egan free and an inspirational point from captain Brendan Bulger from his own 65. The UL forwards at this stage were struggling to make a significant impact. The LIT half-back line led by Conor O'Mahony and aided by Shane McGrath and Maurice O'Brien were in complete control. Kilkenny's Jackie Tyrell was also solid at full-back. Canning added two more frees to give LIT a 0-4 to 0-2 lead after 11 minutes. Brendan Bulger however was leading by example, marshalling the defence superbly and cutting off the supply to the LIT forwards. Wing back Thomas Stapleton and midfielder Noel O'Murchu were also grafting hard and UL edged back into the game. Alan Egan from a free and a long range Pa Donnellan score brought the sides level again. Joe Canning underlined his class again fielding a long range free and striking over the bar to

put LIT back in front. Cork's Kieran Murphy who switched from midfield to corner forward added a further point from a tight angle after being set-up by Canning. UL wing-back Shane O'Brien fired a long range score from the 65m line after an intelligent short free from Brendan Bulger to leave the score 0-6 to 0-5 coming towards half-time.

But entering the first minute of injury time the first turning point of the game arrived. Canning caught another long range free, was chopped on the fingers but powered through the UL defence and fired to the net. Referee Barry Kelly, however, called it back for a penalty. So Canning dusted himself down and buried the penalty low and hard to the back of the net. Goalkeeper Tadhg Flynn got a touch but had no chance of stopping Canning's bullet. This gave LIT a 1-6 to 0-5. It was a scrappy free-ridden first half and UL could feel hard done by to be 4 points down.

The second half was a huge improvement, the intensity and pace increasing making for an exciting tussle. Some of the scores were also a sight to behold. Canning pointed a monster of a free from his own 65 but wing forward Paul Flynn immediately responded. Egan grabbed his third free to make it 1-7 to 0-7. LIT then began to take control again and began to overpower UL. Conor O'Mahony made clearance after clearance at centre-back. The switch of Galway's Iarlaith Tannian to centre forward also made a difference. Clare midfielder Jonathon Clancy went on a mazy run and landed a glorious score from the left-wing. For the next few minutes it was the Joe Canning show. In the space of a minute he nailed two stunning frees, one from his own 45 and the other from his own 65. Magic. With 20 minutes to go the score was now 1-10 to 0-7 and the game appeared to be all over.

But far from giving up UL dug deep and imposed themselves on the game again. The changes made at half-time proved crucial in the comeback. Good work from

substitute Matthew Whelan set up another sub Matthew Ruth who rattled a cracking goal into the bottom corner of the net. A minute later Whelan was again provider this time for Pa Donnellan who landed one of the scores of the game from 65 metres to leave the scores 1-10 to 1-8. UL were now having their purple patch. This was where the game was won and lost. The game was in the melting pot at this stage but UL failed to score for the next 15 minutes. LIT got two quick points from Tannian and Aonghus Callanan to extend the lead to 4. LIT now began to pull away. Kieran Murphy (2) and Canning both added scores to give them a 1-15 to 1-8 lead. UL shot themselves in the foot with two short puck-outs resulting in two LIT points. It could have been worse with goalie Flynn saving one on one against Canning. Amazingly UL came back again with only minutes

left. Substitute David McCormack capitalised on a goalmouth scramble and pulled to the net 1-15 to 2-8. Bulger added a super score from play to leave just a goal in it. Despite their best efforts UL couldn't force extra-time and Iarlaith Tannian sealed a deserved win with the insurance score.

Best for LIT were Jackie Tyrell, Shane McGrath, Conor O'Mahony (my man of the match), Kieran Murphy and obviously Joe Canning. UL's top performers were Kieran Joyce who held Canning to one point from play, Brendan Bulger, Thomas Stapleton, Pa Donnellan and Matthew Whelan. It was a most enjoyable game with LIT well worth their win over the hour. UL can be proud of their efforts LIT just had that extra class in attack that made the difference.

'A Typical Fitzgibbon Battle'



**BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR**

AFTER the match I got some reaction from both camps. From UL I spoke to chairman of the hurling club Peter Tiernan and from LIT I got the views of Davy Fitzgerald and Cyril Farrell.

Despite the defeat Peter Tiernan was upbeat and proud of the display. He described LIT as 'a huge opposition' and said 'we knew we were up against it'. 'Of course the lads are very disappointed but we're happy. The floodgates could have opened more on us'. Tiernan was relatively pleased with the opening half. 'Togo in at half time only four points down we were comfortable with that'. In the second half Tiernan pointed out that the short puck-outs cost them dearly describing them as 'killer blows'. Also he thought 'our first touch let us down'. Overall though he felt UL had a real chance 'we definitely could have taken it.'

Reflecting on some of the fantastic individual displays he singled out captain Brendan Bulger for special praise. He described Bulger as a 'brilliant guy' and a 'great captain this year'. 'To see that fella coming out there after the first ten minutes scoring a point, a great point twas really inspiring stuff. There can be no arguing with that statement.

When asked to sum up

the year as a whole Tiernan said 'it was a very, very successful year for the hurlers'. He pointed that with few inter county hurlers UL had done very well. He complimented the management team on a job well done. 'Great credit has to be given to Eamonn Kelly, John Devane and the whole backroom team. They've done a fantastic job with this bunch of lads.'

From the LIT camp firstly I got a word with team manager and legendary Clare goalkeeper Davy Fitzgerald. He accepted that it was 'a very hard game'. 'UL fair put it up to us and we just got the breaks'. Davy was impressed with the UL display especially the half back line. 'Your own half back line did very well'. I put it to him that their class really told in the second half. He agreed saying 'we got the few scores that made the difference'. 'Your half back line was on top of our half forward line for most of it.' In a brief interview he also commented on the performance of Joe Canning. 'If he gets a free he'll put it over'.

I also spoke to LIT selector and Sunday Game panellist Cyril Farrell. Overall he thought it was a 'typical college game'. He also praised the efforts of UL. 'They have some very good hurlers and they played very well.' 'You'll never see anyone lacking for spirit or fitness in Fitzgibbon and that was a typical Fitzgibbon battle'. Farrell discussed aswell the influence of Joe Canning. 'We play Joe up front; we play him very near goal'. 'He's dangerous in around the goal, he's a big strong man 6'3 or 6'4 very good hurler, excellent from frees aswell'.

Big Match Statistics

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

UL
Tadhg Flynn
Kieran Joyce
Aidan Murphy
Peter Dowling
Shane O'Brien 0-1
Brendan Bulger (c) 0-2
Thomas Stapleton
Pa Donnellan 0-2
Noel O'Murchu
Alan Kennedy
Ainle O'Cairrealain
Paul Flynn 0-1
Richard Ruth
John Greene
Alan Egan 0-3(frees)

Subs

Matthew Whelan (h-t) for Ruth
David McCormack (35 mins) for O'Cairealain 1-0
Matthew Ruth (40 mins) for Greene 1-0
Pat Holland (52 mins) for Kennedy

Yellow Cards
Alan Kennedy
Ainle O'Cairrealain
John Greene

Wides
8

LIT
James Skehill
Micheal Walsh
Jackie Tyrell
Alan Byrne
Shane McGrath
Conor O'Mahony
Maurice O'Brien
Jonathon Clancy 0-1

Kieran Murphy (c) 0-3
Eoin Caddigan
Austin Murphy 0-1
Iarlaith Tannian 0-2
Aonghus Callanan 0-1
Joe Canning 1-8 (1-0 pen
0-7 frees)
James McInerney

Subs

Bernard Gaffney (27mins) for Caddigan
Donal O'Reilly (56mins) for Murphy

Yellow Cards
Eoin Caddigan

Wides
9

Referee
Barry Kelly (Westmeath)

McCarthy in action at European Indoors

CIARÁN FITZPATRICK

UL athlete David McCarthy went to European Indoor Championships in Birmingham as a relatively unknown quantity at 800m. Having only recently moved up from 400m running McCarthy was still a novice at the event. However after his performance in Birmingham he will not be regarded as one anymore. Comfortably qualifying from the first round, he ran a personal best in the semi-final and was unlucky not to make the final. Running in the first semi-final McCarthy ran a new best of 1:49.37 to place 4th. With three automatic qualifiers and no fastest loser spots McCarthy missed out on place in the final despite running faster than the winning time in

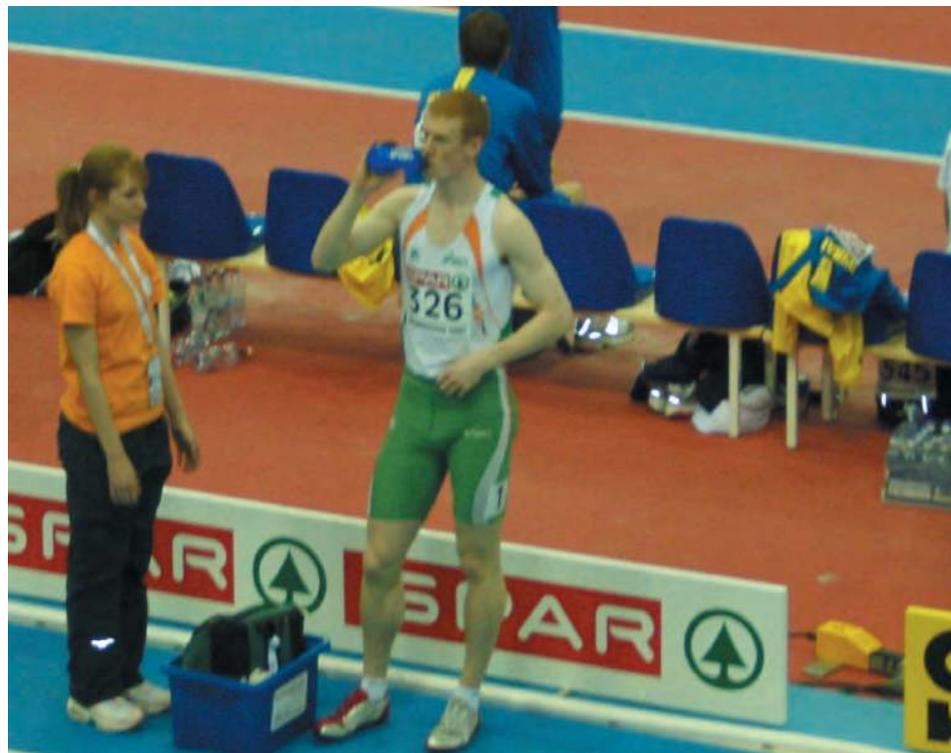
the second semi-final.

Undoubtedly, McCarthy will wonder about what might have been but he is still on a learning curve. Just four months after his first 800m race since he was sixteen McCarthy has progressed to coming 4th in a European Championship semi-final. The main aim with his move from 400m to 800m is to qualify for the Olympics in Beijing and so far he is on course. Speaking after the first round where he coasted through in 3rd position McCarthy said: "It's a year and a half plan to get to Beijing. If I can run (1:48 tomorrow (in the semi-final) I'm bang on where I need to be." While he was just off the 1:48 he was hoping to achieve McCarthy was still upbeat - "That was really the objective coming over to get through the first round and get

a P.B. I've done that now. I'm disappointed not to make the final but overall I'm happy."

An intermediate goal is the World Championships to be held in Osaka later this year where he feels he can get the 'B' standard. "I'll step the training up a little bit. I'm still only learning the event I think I can get a 'B' (standard)."

Meanwhile in other athletics news it has been announced that UL athletic club will play host to Harvard and Yale on June 16th as they prepare for their annual match against Oxford and Cambridge later in month. This is a big opportunity for UL to show off its wonderful facilities and also its athletic ability as it faces up to two of the most prestigious universities in the world.



UL triumphs at Windsurfing Inter-Varsities

DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

THE Annual Irish Windsurfing Intervarsities took place on Achill Island on the 3rd and 4th of March. Competing were teams from GMT, NUIG, UL, UCD, and TCD among others. The IV was hosted by UCD.

The UL team was hugely successful, winning 1st, 2nd

and 3rd places in the Gold Race. Sisters Ursula and Karen Concannon came 1st and 2nd in the race, with UL's Oliver Smith winning the bronze. The Concannon sisters also came 2nd and 3rd overall. This is UL's second win in three years with Captain Fergal Hourigan accepting the Windsurfing

Perpetual Trophy on behalf of a proud UL team.

UL's Daithí Colburn also received a 3rd in the Silver category, with Birkan Can achieving 2nd in Bronze and Mark Ryan accepting a 3rd in the Bronze category.



UL's Windsurfing Team - (back to front) Dave Keenan, Gráinne Flannery, Ursula Concannon, Birkan Can, Mark Ryan, Oliver Smith, Triona Hourigan, Daithí Colburn, Karen Concannon, Fergal Hourigan.

UL Athletic Club

Training Times:

Monday 6pm

Tuesday 6pm

Wednesday 6pm

Thursday 6pm

Friday 6pm

Sprint Training (Track)

Middle Distance (Track)

Weights (Arena - Elite Weights Room)

Circuits (Arena - 60m sprint track)

Middle Distance (Track)

Weights (Arena - Elite Weights Room)

Fixtures:

13/14 April

16 June

Irish Universities T&F Championships

UL v Harvard v Yale T&F

New members welcome.

For further information contact 0459852@student.ul.ie

So Much For A Four Year Plan Stan!



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

FORGET about master-plans Steve Staunton's tenure as Irish manager now comes down to 180 minutes of football at Croke Park. Two wins would resurrect our qualifying hopes and Stan's reputation but anything less and a P45 could be heading to the Louthman.

It seems inevitable that Stan's show isn't going to be running much longer. Going into these crunch ties his position hangs by a thread. One more defeat would surely seal the deal. The media pressure is now at boiling point making Stan's job almost impossible to do at this stage. It is a running joke at this stage. Irish

football cannot afford to suffer further embarrassment on the international stage. The depression must be lifted. But after San Marino and Cyprus it remains to be seen if Stan is the man to do it.

So what will Wales and the Slovaks bring to the table? I think we should be able to beat the Welsh. So far they have one win from three games that coming against Cyprus. Although they will have the likes of Ryan Giggs and Craig Bellamy the rest of the team is only average. Slovakia meanwhile, will provide a different test. They have 6 points from four games. They hammered Wales 5-1 in Cardiff but went down heavily at home to Germany and The Czechs 4-1 and 3-0 respectively. They will be dangerous and can score goals. The players to look out for will be Marek Mintal who has scored four goals already this campaign, Filib Sebo, Stan Varga of Celtic fame and Szilard Nemeth who had a spell with Middlesborough.

I am expecting the Irish

to have some passion and pride in both of these games. It is the least we can expect. If the stadium, atmosphere and occasion at Croke Park can't inspire them nothing will. Football can be a simple game if you have total effort and commitment. The Czech performance was an example of this. I am hoping for some crunching tackles in the opening minutes. Remember Jack Charlton's motto 'put them under pressure'.

Prediction time. There is a funny feeling I have that we will garner 4 points from these games. I can see a victory against the Welsh and a draw against Slovakia. My crystal ball tells me that Stan will still have a job come April. Whatever happens I hop everyone gets behind the team. Come on you boys in green!

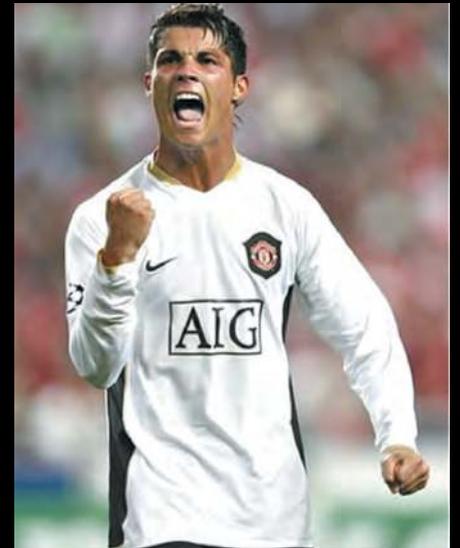
My Starting 11 (Injury permitting): Given, Finnan, McShane, Dunne, Harte, Duff, Kilbane, Carsley, Hunt, Doyle, Keane

Comments welcome to mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com

An Apology To Sports fans

Tomás McCarthy, Sports Editor

Yes I know, I know it was the wrong Ronaldo. In the last edition of the paper a picture was published of the Brazilian striker Ronaldo when the article beside it actually related to the Man United winger Cristiano Ronaldo. Yes I do know the difference in case you were wondering. I would like to apologise for any confusion caused by the picture. The picture was put in at the last minute without my knowledge so there was nothing I could do about it. I accept that this is not good enough and I hope such a mistake will never happen again. For good measure there is a picture of Cristiano Ronaldo in this week's edition.



Magic Numbers

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

- 180** Minutes for Stan to prove that he can still manage an international football team. Will he be still Stan-ding or have to Stan down!
- 6** Points for Irish League side Loughnall after 23 games. They have earned six draws. Shocking.
- 31** Points separated Westmeath and Kilkenny after their Leinster u-21 football match Final score was 5-18 to 0-2. I think the Cats should stick to what their good at.
- 9** The number of Triple Crowns Ireland have won. 1894, 1899, 1948, 1949, 1982, 2004, 2006 and 2007. But are we happy? No.
- 11** Games unbeaten for Roy Keane's Sunderland as they have jumped into promotion contention. 9 wins and 2 draws.
- 700** Games played for United by Ryan Giggs when he lined out against Liverpool. Rumour has it he has played in 700 different jerseys too!
- 270** Goals scored in the Champions League so far this season. Who's your money on to win it?
- 10** Seconds it took Bayern Munich's Roy Makaay to score against Real Madrid in the Champions League. Unsurprisingly it's a new record.
- 5** Euro for a match programme for the Fitzgibbon Cup. Where's Eddie Hobbs when you need him.

I Wish I Was A Good Gaffer (Steve Staunton's song to the tune of I Wish I Was A Punk Rocker)

LIAM TOGHER

CHORUS

Oh I wish I was a good gaffer with some half-decent players
Kevin Kilbane and Stephen Ireland don't have any flair
I stayed on too late to the point where I don't care
Oh I wish I was a good gaffer with some half-decent players

I remember when we could beat Brazil
And Niall Quinn wasn't over the hill
But now we go to Cyprus and then we get thrashed 5-2
What to do to turn things round
And get our campaign off the ground
I'm sorry, I'll admit I haven't got a Scooby-doo

CHORUS

Remember we used to have Roy Keane
Kenny Cunningham and Gary Breen
Look at who I'm stuck with now, I keep playing John O'Shea
I'd love it if we scored a goal
Even if it came off Shane Long's hole
Drawing 1-1 with the Czechs is considered A-OK

CHORUS

How did things become so bad?
Is this the worst team we've ever had?
It definitely is, according to Eamon Dunphy's rants
San Marino gave us a good game
Isn't that so freakin' lame?
I'll hold my hands up and concede as a manager I'm pants

CHORUS

Championship now a Keane interest

LIAM TOGHER

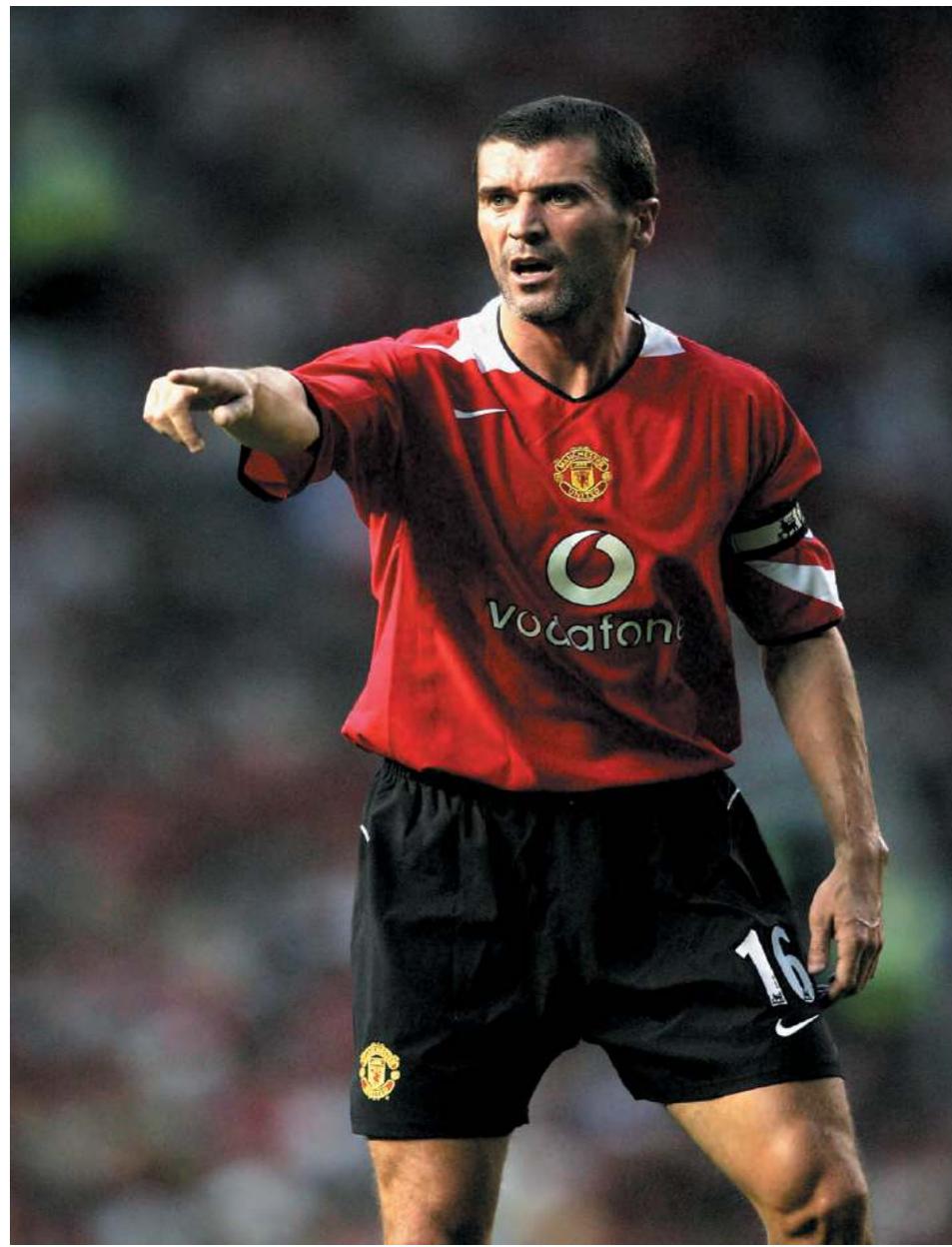
IT wasn't even Christmas by the time we knew that the Premiership was destined for either Manchester United or Chelsea. This was meant to be the season when Liverpool and Arsenal would mount a serious challenge, but inconsistency has plagued those two sides. Thrill-seeking football fans need only gaze one division lower at the Coca-Cola Championship. It is the middle of March, with two months left in the season, and no fewer than eight teams all harbour hopes of automatic promotion. Even if they miss out on the top two, any one of the next four clubs could gain entry to the top flight via the play-offs. Yet this is not the only reason for its unprecedented publicity in the Irish media.

Last June, while the eyes

of practically every football fan were on the World Cup in Germany, Niall Quinn took over Sunderland. He even named himself as manager, only for the Wearsiders to lose their first four league games. In came Roy Keane and now the Black Cats are favourites for promotion, with only Birmingham and Derby ahead of them. The 35-year-old Corkman has engaged in some clever activity on the transfer market, bringing in Liam Miller, Dwight Yorke, Carlos Edwards, Anthony Stokes and Tobias Hysen, all of whom have prospered under Keane's brilliant leadership. This debut managerial stint has been considerably more successful than that of another Irish football icon, a certain Steve Staunton.

Amazingly, one of the

clubs vying for promotion are Wolves, coached by Mick McCarthy, the very man that ruined Keane's international career in 2002. Neither can West Brom, Southampton, Preston or Cardiff be ruled out for a Premiership place next season. I find it slightly regrettable, though, that it has taken the managerial stints of Keane and McCarthy to raise the profile of this fascinating league to the Irish public. Even with such an intriguing final few weeks in prospect, it is hard to see the Championship garnering as much media attention in Ireland if Sunderland and Wolves had different managers. All the same, it is good to see people realising that there is some very good football in England outside of the Premiership.



They think it's all over? What nonsense!

LIAM TOGHER

International week is again upon us. The significance of Ireland's next two Euro 2008 qualifiers has not been lost on the public, with the temple that is Croke Park about to host soccer matches for the first time in its illustrious history. The other talking point is bound to be the future of under-fire boss Steve Staunton, the recipient of much vitriol ever since we lost 4-0 to the Dutch in a friendly last August. There seems to be a vibe that the soccer team will not do justice to the whole Croker 'occasion' like our rugby players did, but the balance sheet is not entirely negative for Staunton and Ireland.

So far, we have won two, drawn one and lost two. The results are not always the best indicator of performance. For example, our best displays came in the 1-1 stalemate against the Czechs and the 1-0 loss in Germany. By contrast, the 2-1 win over San Marino went down like a lead balloon, and

rightly so, given that the winner came in the 94th minute against an amateur side. However, the Group D table shows that we are third, just three points behind Germany and Czech Republic. Let's look at the upcoming games for Ireland. Wales and Slovakia come to Dublin, both teams that we are well capable of beating. If the top two draw on Saturday night, we will be just one point adrift. Remember, there are no play-offs this time. The teams that finish first and second in the groups go straight into the finals in Austria and Switzerland in June 2008. If our situation looks bleak, take one look at Spain. Fifth in their group, they have lost two of their first three qualifiers and have far higher expectations than us.

There is also an influx of precocious talent waiting to launch itself on the international stage. We all know what Kevin Doyle can do. His Reading team-mates, Stephen Hunt and

Shane Long, also look like players that could produce heroics for Ireland. Add to that Sunderland hotshot Anthony Stokes, still only 18, and there is plenty of hope for the future. Nor can we forget West Brom defender Paul McShane, whose debut display against the Czechs in October suggests that he could be just as talismanic a figure as Staunton was in his heyday. Such is the talent at the manager's disposal that not even Ipswich striker Alan Lee, one of the best players in the Coca-Cola Championship, can earn a call-up. Admittedly the players I just mentioned are still in the developing phase of their careers and cannot be expected to carry the team, but they should provide some consolation for those who think Irish football is in an irreversible slump right now.

Legends And Losers

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

Legends

Joe Canning

5-33 in 4 Fitzgibbon Cup games, almost single-handedly leading LIT to success. He will be a big loss to Galway seniors this year.

Henrik Larsson

Rounded off his United career in style with a smashing header against Lille. This guy is a class act

Shane Geraghty

The 20 year old English rugby player who made an outstanding debut against the French. What a passer of a ball he is. A superstar in the making. His parents are Irish you know.

Denis Hickie

Man of the match against Scotland. He made an amazing try saving tackle on Paterson. Not only did he tackle him he fought for the ball after that and won a penalty.

Paul Stalteri

The Tottenham player who hit the headlines for scoring the last gasp winner against West Ham to win 4-3 and probably condemn the Hammers to relegation.

Losers

Denis Maloney

The Limerick hurler who tore his cruciate ligament against Galway after 30 minutes. He will miss the rest of the season. It is terrible luck This was his comeback match after missing last season with you've guessed a cruciate ligament injury.

Tony Considine

With the Davy Fitz controversy still rumbling the Clare manager is starting to feel the heat. More results like the defeat against Wexford will surely see the knives being sharpened in the Banner county.

Shelbourne

After their financial crisis they deservedly find themselves in Division One after being crowned Premier champions last year. A shambles.

Wales

The wooden spoon looks to headed to injury ravaged Welsh rugby team who didn't want a draw against Italy.

Anthony Stokes

The Irish striker missed the Sunderland bus for their trip to Barnsley. Keano must have been fuming.

Ronaldo- Don't Believe The Hype



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

IT'S all over our tv screens and the press. The time has come to shout stop! These so called "experts" have got it wrong. Cristiano Ronaldo is being hailed as a hero, player of the year etc, etc. Let have a dose of reality here, Ronaldo is not a great player.

There is no doubt that Ronaldo has outstanding skill and ability but he doesn't put it to the best use. The Portuguese overdoes his stepovers, flicks and tricks. These are so unnecessary and are of no benefit to the team. Look at the away Champions League match

against Benfica. All of the highlights were of little flicks by Ronaldo. They may have looked impressive but I ask what did they achieve? Precious little I say. A lot of the time Ronaldo is playing to the crowd here. He needs to focus more on his teamwork. Ronaldo needs to start playing the simple ball rather than trying the impossible. He loses possession too often and this has left United on the back foot on occasions. The winger would be well advised to eliminate his game.

Ronaldo has also come up short against the top quality opposition. Great perform on the biggest stage but so far Ronaldo has gone missing. Where was he against Arsenal or Chelsea when it mattered most? You have to raise your game. Leaders are needed to take the game by the scruff of the neck when the pressure is on. Until Ronaldo has shown he can change a big game I remain sceptical.

The question must also

arise about whether it is too much to heap on a 21 year-old. It is unfair that Ronaldo has this burden. He is only developing as a footballer and is not at his peak. There are signs he is starting to believe the hype. Remember his reaction after he was substituted against Lille. He went off in a sulk and tossed his boots to the ground. We should not put someone so young on a pedestal.

I totally accept that Ronaldo is having an amazing season. He is after scoring 16 goals or so already this season. His goals have been one of the key factors in United's strong title push. He has provided some moments of brilliance. His solo effort against Fulham at Craven Cottage and his sublime pass for Rooney's goal against are two of my favourite highlights. Also it has to be said that his final ball into the box is after improving. I do not doubt his ability or talent I just think that it is too soon to be heaping praise on him.

And what about the diving? It is not unreasonable to state that Ronaldo goes down just a bit too easy under a challenge. This is certainly not the actions of a great player or a good pro. This is simply cheating. The game is currently is certainly scoured by this childish behaviour. Cristiano Ronaldo is one of the major culprits and doesn't do his reputation any favours by doing this. You only have to look at questionable penalties awarded against Middlesborough and Spurs to see this.

In today's football world things are blown out of proportion. Hopefully I have brought a bit of reality to this debate. Ronaldo still has a lot to learn. If you want to look for a hero look to a John Terry or a Paul Scholes but not Cristiano Ronaldo. He has a long way to go before he can be put in that category. Until Ronaldo becomes more of a team player, cuts out the diving, works harder and performs on the big day I remain unconvinced. The RTE panel are right Ronaldo doesn't deserve the tag of greatness.



Quotes Of The Edition

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

'I'd prefer if nobody knew about that. I dunno, I've got this reputation as a Leeds fan. I mean it's true ...but I wouldn't like people to know about it.' Comedian Ardal O'Hanlon in conversation with Review's Finn McDuffie on being a Leeds United fan. Don't worry Ardal, your secret is safe with us. Oops!

'He wouldn't blow the skin off a custard pudding.' RTE analyst George Hook on English forward Perry Freshwater. There's just never a dull moment with Hook.

'Mick O'Dwyer took one look at me and said I should be a jockey.' Kildare footballer Anthony Rainbow recalls the great Micko's first reaction to him at a trial match.

'It would be difficult for me to explain this result in Spanish, in English it is very, very difficult.' Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez after they had been mugged by Man United in the last minute.

'I got that feeling, I was catching him, catching him, catching. In the last 20 metres I knew I was going to get him' David Gillick on his 400 metre gold medal at the European Indoors in Birmingham just fending off Bastian Swillims of Germany.

'Let's just set the record straight- the Triple Crown is a sick joke. It is a hollow meaningless honour which has outlived its worth.' An Focal reporter Conor McGrath gets passionate about Ireland's fascination with the Triple Crown in the last edition.

'Put it this way if 'luck of the Irish' O'Shea is still here this time next year, then I will concede he is clearly growing four leaf clovers by the score alongside his horde of lucky charms.' Man United fan and journalist Richard Kurt clearly would like to see the back of the versatile Waterford man. He is not liked by the hardcore United fans and his nickname is John O'Pie!

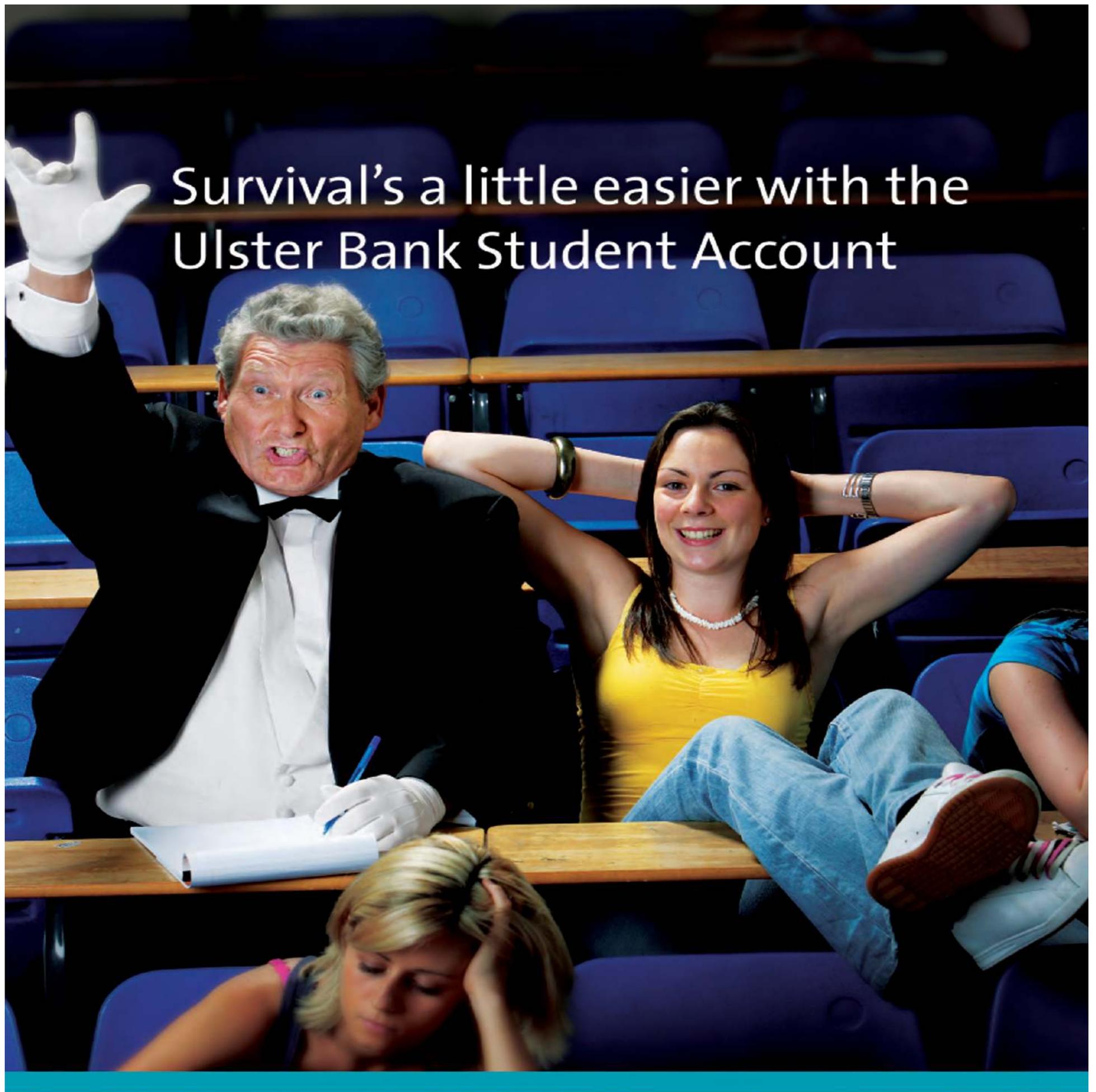
'O'Shea? Oh come on, you're joking. Wasn't it bad enough with Forlan and Silvestre? If it's Darren Fletcher next I quit here and now. Enough is enough.' Stephen Kelly, Liverpool fan and journalist is fed up by the number of unlikely United goalscorers against his beloved Pool.

'I'll stick the award in the garage.' Roy Keane on his manager of the month award for February. Typical modest Keane.

Referees Prayer

P. O'NUALLAIN

Before we take the field we pray,
Save us from abuse today,
Save us from disgruntled fans,
From bottles, toilet rolls and cans.
Give my legs the speed to keep the pace,
For the middle of the park is a lonely place.
When the game is over if disaster looms,
Guide us safely to the dressing rooms.
Protect my linesmen true and tall'
Let their eyes be sharp for 'off the ball'.
To the lads in the dug out seething and fumin',
Remember lads we're only human.
Protect my umpires with their coats so bright,
Let their greens be green and their whites be white.
Let their eye and their vision be straight and true,
Let their errors, if any, be small and few.
And when at last our time is o'er,
And we're waiting at St Peter's door,
He'll say 'come in lads' full of glee,
'For your hell was on earth, you're the Referee'.



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