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FIRE DESTROYS FISHERMEN'S HUT



Image: Stephen O'Connell

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald,**
News Editor

ONE of the several quaint fishermen's huts located on the University Campus has been destroyed by a fire.

The dwelling, which is located on the riverside walk to the rear of Dromroe Village, caught fire after 9pm on Monday, Week 7.

It is understood only one of the buildings located in the area known locally as Plassey Fishing Village is uninhabited full time. It is unclear if this is the dwelling that caught fire.

These buildings were flooded during the unprecedented rise of the Shannon in November 2009, which caused extensive damage.

Several units of Limerick City Fire Service along with an ambulance attended the scene. The fire was promptly extinguished. It is as yet uncertain how the fire started, despite suggestions of arson.

UL SCIENTISTS DISCOVER PERFECT PINT OF GUINNESS

Written by **Darragh Roche,**
Deputy Editor

UL SCIENTISTS have discovered how to pour a perfect pint of Ireland's favourite drink, Guinness.

The researchers in Applied Mathematics have solved the problem of pouring a pint with a perfect head from a can of the world-famous black stout. Professor Stephen O'Brien and the research team of Dr William Lee at the University's Mathematics Applications Consortium for Science and Industry group (MACSI), funded by Science Foundation Ireland, have uncovered a new technique for bubble creation in canned stout that could replace the widget.

A widget is a device in the bottom of a can of Guinness, which is designed to allow for better pouring of the stout. This widget releases a jet of gas when the can is opened in order to create

froth, which is necessary for the pint's characteristic head. The scientists investigate the method of bubble creation that takes place when a can of Guinness is poured and discovered looked at the physics involved in "the perfect pour". As a result of their research, Prof O'Brien and Dr Lee have discovered a method of giving a pint a head without the need for the gas-releasing widget, which is an expensive component of every can of the stout.

Their method involves coating the inside of each can with cellulose fibres, which will produce the same results as the widget but at a reduced cost. There are huge potential savings for the drinks industry if widgets can be replaced by the method Dr Lee and Prof O'Brien have discovered.

The work of the MACSI team at the University has been submitted for publication in the academic journal Physical Review E.

This discovery prompted great interest from the national media, which published several tongue-in-cheek articles in the run-up to St Patrick's Day, a day on which more Guinness is consumed than any other, with the possible exception of Guinness's marketing ploy, Arthur's Day.

CANDIDATES CONTEST SU ELECTIONS

Written by **Darragh Roche,**
Deputy Editor

THE Students' Union sabbatical elections take place on Thursday. Students will go to the polls to elect five sabbatical officers to run the Students' Union for a one year term. The positions are President, Deputy President/Welfare Officer, Education Officer, Campaigns and Services Officer (CSO) and Communications Officer (CO). The Education Officer, CSO and CO are also vice-presidents of the SU. Incumbent Welfare Officer, Derek Daly is running for President. This is the third time he has contested a sabbatical election since 2009. His opponents are Enda Gallery, Masters student of Music Technology and graduate of UCD and Keith Young, former Clubs' Officer.

The candidates for the position of Education Officer are incumbent Faculties Officer, Aoife Kenny and

former Deputy Chair of Class Reps Council, Barry Kennedy. The Welfare portfolio is a competition between 4th Years Thomas Cranley, Tara Feeney and Eamonn Boland. The contest for CSO is between incumbent Darts and Pool Club President, Alan O'Sullivan, and former Community Relations Officer, Paddy Rockett.

The candidates for the position of Communications Officer are An Focal's Features Editor, Kelly O'Brien and former Clubs' Officer, Keith O'Neill.

This year's election is entirely online but there will be one polling station in the SU's print room. Students can log on to www.ulsu.ie to see information on the candidates and their policies and cast their votes. The system is single, transferable vote and the results will be announced on Thursday evening.

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1. Contributors please note:
All submissions to An Focal are greatly valued. If you have submitted an article which has not been published in this issue, it is very likely that your piece has been retained for publication in future issues. If you are concerned that your article has not been published, please say so.
2. Editing:
If you are unhappy with how your article appeared in An Focal, please discuss this with the Editor. A number of strict guidelines are followed in the production of An Focal, which means some articles may be altered to allow them to fit on the page and to improve readability.
- E: sucommunications@ul.ie to contact the Editor.

EDITORIAL



Finn McDuffie, Editor

PITFALLS. When you go to vote in Thursday’s sabbatical elections, there will be plenty of pitfalls for you to avoid. Though sabbatical officers usually only spend one year in their office, the choice of candidate is extremely important and it can be very difficult.

This week, you will be jostled about in a sea of brightly coloured t-shirts, energetic and enthusiastic campaigners and as many free sweets as you can grab. But choosing who to vote for should not be based on how garish the campaign colours are or how zealous the candidates’ supporters seem to be. It’s far too easy to get washed away by posters and pastelles.

The key to making the right decision is making yourself informed. The candidates publish manifestos with lists of promises and aspirations. Are their promises realistic? Are their aspirations genuine? If you don’t believe what the candidate is promising you, you should consider casting your vote for someone else.

All these newborn politicians should make themselves available to you. They will give speeches and answer questions at hustings on Wednesday evening (KBG12, 6pm) but they will also be on campus, trying to convince you they are most suited to the job. Ask them difficult questions!

Question their policies and don’t be satisfied with the answers of a campaigner. Only the candidates themselves are truly able to explain their ideas. You are entitled to know why that person deserves your vote.

So, when you go to vote on Thursday, hopefully having found out everything you wanted to know about each office and each candidate for it, make the right choice. Don’t vote for flash and colour; vote for the person you trust and the plans you believe can happen.



Vice President of Skydive UL, Cormac Reidy, doing a jump over Castletroy for Charity Week. Image Courtesy of Skydive UL PRO.

THIRTY-ONE ARRESTED IN GALWAY “COLLEGE WEEK”

Written by Colm Fitzgerald,
News Editor

NUIG President seeks end to annual event on foot of exceedingly debased behaviour. SU insists “minority involved”

NUI Galway’s annual Charity Week festival, “College Week” was shrouded in dismay and disgust over continued antisocial and unacceptable behaviour this year. The event, which coincided with UL’s Charity Week in Week 6, was renamed “College Week” in an effort to move the trend away from binge drinking to other activities.

NUIG President, Dr Jim Browne says the week needs to be discontinued for good. He warned offending individuals will be expelled from the University.

In excess of 30 students were arrested for public order offences, which includes

drunken and disorderly behaviour. It is understood eight students have thus far been charged. Sources suggest particular consternation was caused when students lit a large bonfire and set wheelie bins on fire at Gort na Coirbe student accommodation, prompting an attendance of the fire service and Gardaí. A video has been posted on YouTube of a mass of students gathered at the same location attempting to throw cans and bottles into a wheelie bin in the centre of a large green area. Gardaí claim an estimated 1000 students were in attendance there.

Residents of housing estates complained of behaviour such as girls dancing on the roof of cars, students throwing bottles at cars, disturbing families and shouting abuse at the elderly. Responding to these claims, NUIGSU President, Peter Mannion said “There was a bad start on Monday week last at the student accommodation complex off the Headford Road, but after that there were only a small number of incidents that required Garda intervention”

NUIGSU insists that it was the “minority” which prompted upset.

“The university had a very successful community knowledge initiative programme, and there was considerable fundraising for charity on campus”, continued Mr Mannion.

Many have suggested that students visiting friends from other colleges are

the source of the problem. In attempt to curb this practice, charity week events were planned to coincide with other colleges. “We are trying to put in place measures that can influence and improve behavioural patterns, but we do feel that it is better to have a college week event that is organised, and largely confined to campus, rather than one without some kind of framework”, added Mr Mannion.

Students have criticised the approach taken by the college, claiming that if the university were to accommodate the week instead of deregulating the festivities, less anti-social behaviour would occur.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PADDY MCHUGH INAUGURAL AWARD
THE INAUGURAL Paddy McHugh award was presented at this year’s Clubs’ and Societies’ Ball. The award was presented to the best Fresher, Niall “Bobo” Bohan, the Music Society’s Music Room Officer. Amanda Keane of International Soc, and Christóir O’Faoláin of Cumann Gaelach were the other nominees for the award. Mr McHugh studied at UL, and served as Campaigns and Services an in 2007/8. He also was awarded Best Society Person for 2006/7. Mr McHugh’s mother and sister attended the event as special guests and C&S Development Officer, Paul Lee, delivered a touching address on Mr McHugh’s time in UL.

UL TEAM DEVELOPS MATERIAL TO KILL MRSA
UL HAS led a team of researchers to develop new textiles that will kill the MRSA superbug in hospitals. The Bio-Electric Surface Research Team has used nanomaterials on textiles used in hospital drapes, bed linens and upholstery. The MRSA bug is one of the major causes of hospital-acquired infections. Scientists and engineers from the University of Limerick, Wroclaw University of Technology, Poland, Wroclaw Medical University, Poland and Comenius University, Slovakia have been working on developing this technology since 2008. They have embedded both commercial and custom-made nanoparticles into textiles through a patent-pending process that is effective against MRSA and other superbugs.

UGM FAILS TO MAKE QUORUM
THE Student’s Union General Meeting failed to make quorum recently. The meeting took place on Wednesday, Week 7 in the Stables Courtyard. A quorum of 200 is required for any resolutions to be passed and changes to be made to rules. Sabbatical Officers delivered reports at the meeting.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE
INTERNATIONAL Women’s Day took place on Thursday, Week 7. The UL Women’s Forum hosted a conference which brought together academics in Women’s and Gender Studies from across Ireland and the UK. Items which were discussed included companies with women on the board perform better financially and have better corporate governance. Dr Ita Richardson, Chairperson of the UL Women’s Forum said that UL is committed to bringing gender inequality in leadership issues to the fore.

SWANSONG FOR DAGHDA?
LIMERICK’S Daghda Dance Centre is under threat of closure. The creative arts space is located in a de-sanctified protestant church near St John’s cathedral in the city. The venue has hosted many UL events, including performances from the Dance Society and the final of the Debating Union’s annual intervarsity competition. An appeal has been launched to save the venue, which is to lose all of its funding. The company needs to raise €200,000 immediately to survive. Anyone interested in helping to try and save Daghda should contact gemma@daghda.ie or phone 061-467872.

CLINTON HAILS ‘INSPIRATIONAL’ MCCOURT AT UL FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER

Written by **Colin Clarke**

“Clinton: “I love that UL will bring creative writing and storytelling back to Ireland in a fresh way through this chair.”

FORMER US President, Bill Clinton paid tribute to critically acclaimed author Frank McCourt at a fundraiser to assist creative writers. Many friends and family of the Limerick man, who died in July 2009, along with noted literary figures and UL President, Professor Don Barry attended the event in New York hosted by the UL Foundation.

The event was organised to publicise the campaign to raise \$1m (€720,000) for the Frank McCourt Chair in Creative

Writing Project. The project, which will be based at UL, plans to help emerging writers in their careers. It has thus far secured €500,000 from philanthropists including Loretta Brennan Glucksman who is chairwomen of the American Ireland. Mr Clinton praised the literary genius of Frank McCourt.

He said “I love that UL will bring creative writing and storytelling back to Ireland in a fresh way through this chair”. Frank McCourt was a true friend of the University, and it is highly



appropriate that we honour his legacy in this way,” UL President, Professor Don Barry said. He also recalled that, as a director of the UL Foundation, Mr McCourt was committed to the advancement of the University. The University plans to fill the position within a year.

WALSH PRESENTS FITZGERALD WITH DEBATING MEDAL

Written by **Darragh Roche, Deputy Editor**

PROFESSOR EMERITUS and UL’s founding president Dr Ed Walsh presented former Taoiseach Dr Garret Fitzgerald with the Debating Union Auditor’s Medal on Thursday, Week 7. Dr Walsh became the recipient of the inaugural award last year.

“We have the national treasure here: Garret Fitzgerald,” Dr Walsh said. “Dr Fitzgerald demonstrated that a new Ireland was emerging. He epitomised the new Ireland...Were Dr Fitzgerald associated with government over the last decade, Ireland would be as strong as it was in 1997,” he added. Dr Walsh pointed out that it was during Dr Fitzgerald’s tenure that plans to create the University of Limerick began.

“I didn’t enjoy being Taoiseach that much,” Dr Fitzgerald said. “The reason we’re in such difficulties is exceptional incompetence at government level. It was extraordinary that our whole political system refused to recognise the problem,” he added.

“We need to restore the social fabric. The period of no ideological conflict was a period of social progress. If a new generation does not come forward, we’ll get stale politics and stupid

politics. What we need is renewal,” Dr Fitzgerald said. “I’m suspicious of ideological viewpoints.” Dr Fitzgerald answered questions from the audience in the John Holland theatre and reminded them that as he was no longer a politician, he could speak candidly. “Northern Ireland can’t leave Britain. Sinn Féin would rather vote against independence than for a 20% drop in living standards,” he said. “We were pretending we wanted the six counties back. Unionists were afraid of us but there was no danger.” “I would never have said this as a politician, but I can say it now: our politicians are better than our electorate,” Dr Fitzgerald said. “The problem is our electorate. Because they had to survive under rapacious landlords, our people became devious. By and large, the popular thing is wrong. Politics, by its very nature, is compromise.”

Dr Walsh praised the Debating Union. “The future leaders of most countries emerge from organisations like this,” he said. “I did some debating in school,” Dr Fitzgerald added.

YOUNG FINE GAELE APPROVES PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Written by **Ciaran Allen, ULYFG Treasurer & Colin Clarke, ULYFG PRO**

FOLLOWING the intensive discussions between Fine Gael and Labour, UL Young Fine Gael held a debate to discuss the next Programme for Government in the Kemmy Business School. Health policy turned out to be the key issue of the night. Under the Programme for Government, the HSE will be abolished and we will move to universal health care for all.

Most agreed that the academic standards of Universities should be reviewed in order to improve these standards. A south-eastern university is included in the programme for government, but YFG members raised the problems with this proposal as extra funding would be needed, which would divert funds away from the other

seven Universities. In the programme, voting age has been decreased to 16. It is believed that there are very few 16-year-olds who are mature enough to make an informed decision about who is most capable of representing them in the national parliament. It was agreed that there are too many public sector workers working for the state in administrative positions and not enough employed in frontline services such as nurses and teachers. The majority agreed with reforming the political system and the proposed abolition of the Seanad because Ireland was too small for a second house.

The programme restores the minimum wage to €8.65, giving more income to many young people.

ESSAY WRITING WEBSITE CRITICISED

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald, News Editor**

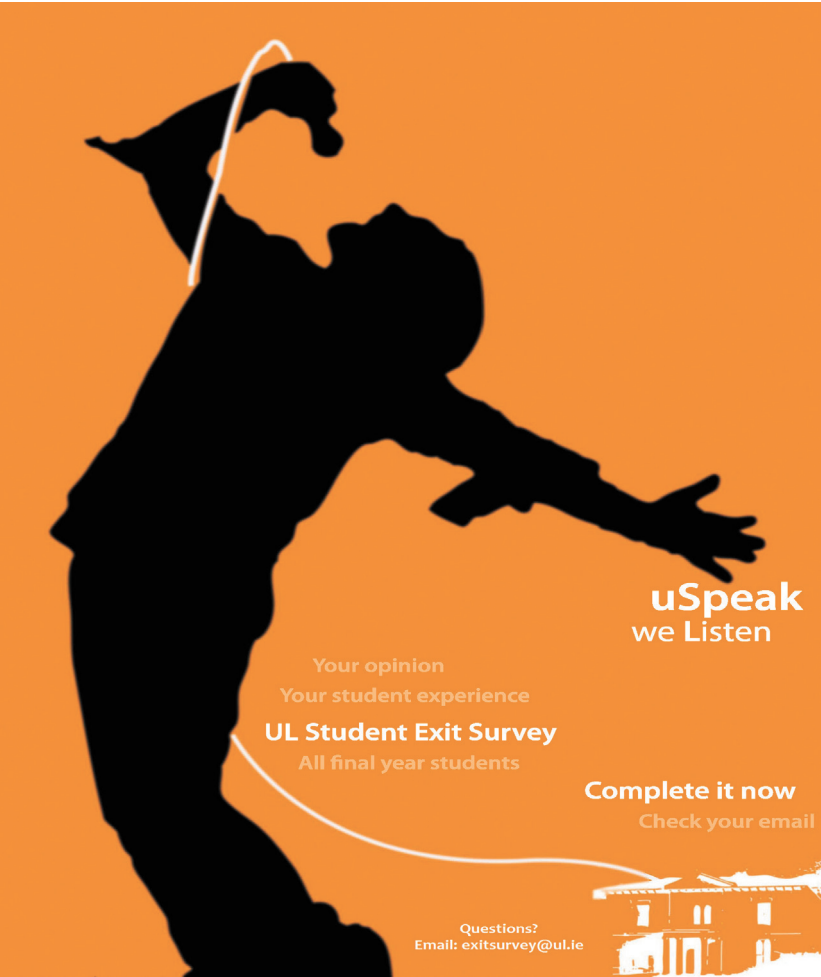
Service Will “Cheapen Degrees”- USI

A RECENTLY created essay writing website, ‘writemyassignments.com’, has been accused of both endangering the value of a degree and facilitating plagiarism. The website, which offers students the service of having their essays professionally completed, charges between €350 and €800 per essay commissioned. It is understood more than 10 students have already used the service. Directors of the Company, Matthew Keogh and Michael Noble have said several hundred individuals have been enlisted to provide the service, all of whom graduated with a 2.1 or higher. However the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) claim the website will “tempt students to [commit] plagiarism”. According to a USI Spokesperson, “Such services run the risk of cheapening educational qualifications and damaging the education system”.The company claims that students should use the essay provided to them “for reference only” and should not attempt to pass

it off as their own work. A description on their website suggests “We provide authentic academic papers written by high calibre postgraduates which [the papers] can be used as an assignment aide”.

ULSU Education Officer, Aoife Finnerty, said: “I would strongly advise against UL students using such a service for any course work. Often students are asked to sign declarations stating that work completed is their own work, obviously a student cannot sign this declaration if (s)he has relied upon and paid another to complete course work.” The website also provides a mentoring service, which is conducted over email. Third Level Institutions do not look favourably upon plagiarism, with most deeming such plagiarised work as null and void, as it is considered a serious academic offence. A recently survey by the University Times found that over half of the 681 students surveyed have committed plagiarism in some form during their academic career.

Galway-Mayo IT (GMIT) permitted several students to graduate in 2010 having plagiarised part of their final assessments.



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GERMAN CORRESPONDENT DEFENDS GERMAN RELATIONS

Written by **Darragh Roche,**
Deputy Editor

IRISH Times Berlin Correspondent, Derek Scally, gave a talk on Irish-German relations on Monday, Week 8. He was speaking as part of a joint event organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies and the School of Journalism. Mr Scally has been foreign correspondent in Berlin for 10 years and spoke about the need for Ireland to understand Germany.

“The only reason that Ireland is still paying the bills is that the German

tabloids haven’t cottoned on to the fact that Ireland is costing Germany a fortune.” Mr Scally said. “The love of Ireland in Germany is embarrassing. They have notions…it’s all wild, red hair and colleens. Our reputation should be mud in Germany, but it isn’t. I don’t know why, but it isn’t.” Speaking to students of journalism, German and both, Mr Scally emphasised the good aspects of Germany and criticised the Sun and other English-owned newspapers

for printing too many “Nazi stories.” “One particular episode, Uncle Adolf, seems to overwhelm everything. Most people have decided that Germany is too complex.” Mr Scally said. “People discovered during the 2006 World Cup that Germans are normal. When you have 10,000 Sun readers going to the World Cup, it’s a place they shouldn’t normally be going... Germany is a good place where you can have a good beer, a sausage and relax.”

Mr Scally responded to questions from the audience and explained his role as a foreign correspondent. “We’re confronted with a very interesting time in our history when the Germans are back in the room. I’m trying to represent the German point of view. My job has never been more important, I’m trying to represent the German side of the equation. If the Germans weren’t there, the whole country would be out busking.” He also criticised

the Government’s lack of knowledge about Germany. “If the Irish could have someone explain the corporate tax thing in their language, they wouldn’t be having these problems now, I’m convinced of it,” he said. Mr Scally attended a screening of the German silent film Metropolis at Mary Immaculate College on Monday evening.

HIGHER FEES, WIDER ACCESS, DEMANDS CLEGG

Written by **Conor Forrest**

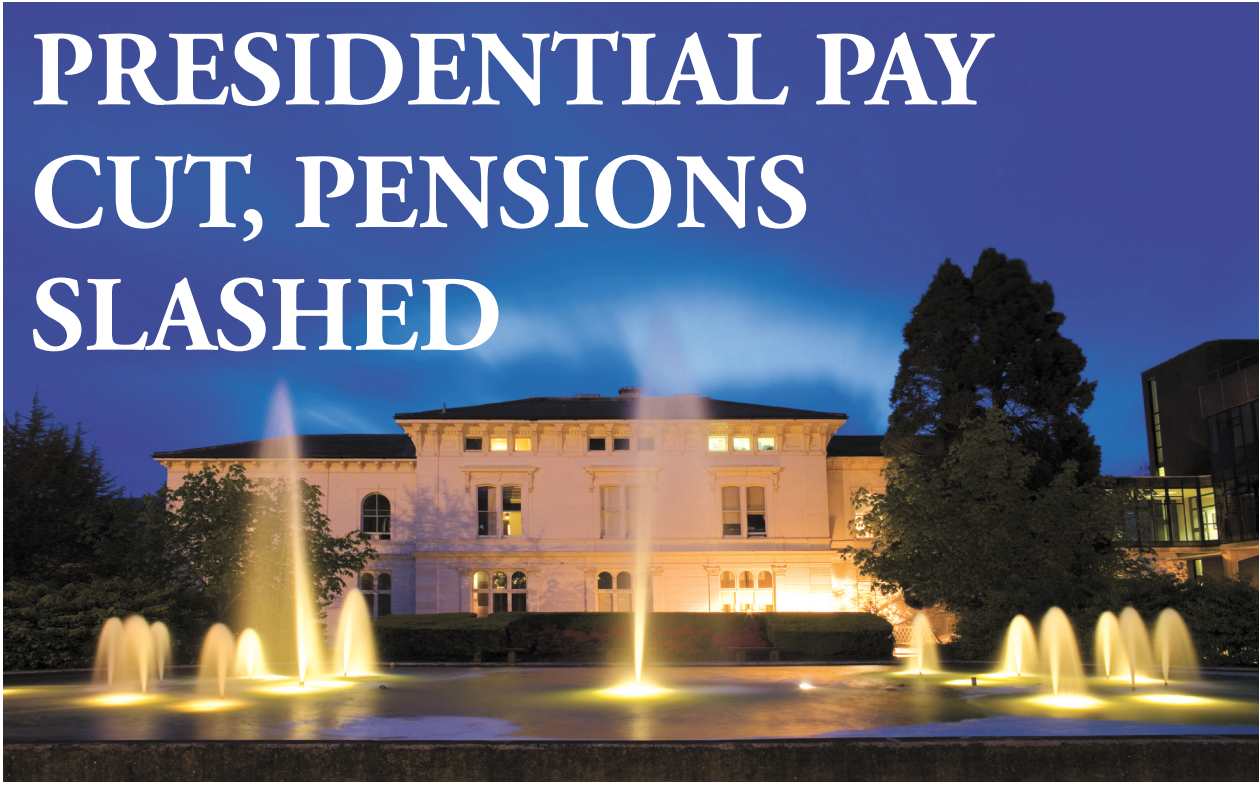


UK Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg.

BRITISH Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has warned that English universities have become “instruments of social segregation”.

As the parliament in Westminster seeks to widen access to those universities with tuition rates of more than £6,000 per year, institutions that wish to charge up to the £9,000 limit will be pushed to accept larger amounts of students from state schools. Fee paying schools have already attacked the government’s education initiatives, claiming they are an attempt to socially engineer university admissions at the expense of the brightest students. Clegg’s aides noted that around 7% of children in England attend private schools yet make up about 75% of judges and 70%

of finance directors. Simon Hughes, the government’s advisor on access to higher education has proposed a drastic limitation on the intake of privately educated students, more reflective of their proportion to those educated publicly. Universities will also be required to invest up to £900 in outreach policies for every £9,000 paid. The government watchdog, The Office for Fair Access (OFFA), will draw up agreements with the institutions concerned, and these will be reviewed annually. Any institution which does not make progress could be stripped of the right to charge higher tuition rates or could face fines up to a maximum of £500,000. In conjunction with these proposals, the government is also due to outline more details of its national scholarship programme. This is designed for bright students from poorer backgrounds and is intended to fund 48,000 students by 2014. Oxford, Cambridge and Exeter have each raised their fees to the government limit and are among those universities who will be affected by the proposals.



Written by **Rachel Dargan**

THE Department of Education is to cut the pay of all future university presidents, while existing pensions are to be slashed. This means that the next presidents of UL, NUI Maynooth and DCU will earn in the region of €165,000, in comparison with the current wage of €184,000, while the future presidents of TCD, UCC, UCD and NUI Galway will earn approximately €182,000, as opposed to €202,000. These cuts of 10% are in line with the cuts elsewhere in the public service. The Department warned Trinity College, Dublin,

which is preparing to appoint a new president in April, that should the new appointment be paid the old salary of €202,000 it will be deemed “null and void”. In a confidential email sent by the department, it warned that paying the old salary would prevent TCD offering any other salary without the permission of the Higher Education Authority (HEA). It is also planned to cut €100 million, or about 4% overall, from public service pensions in 2011.

The Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) came into effect on 1 January

2011 as laid out in December’s budget. The PSPR is an income-graduated reduction applied to each gross annual public service pension, including those of University staff of over €12,000.

The pensions of all retired public servants and their survivors or dependants are liable to the reduction, including pensions payable to former political officeholders and to former members of the judiciary.

In addition to this, all pension lump sums of over €200,000 are to be taxed.

UL CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO IUA DESPITE LACK OF FINANCE

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald,**
News Editor

Concern over €155,000 UL Contribution

THE Irish Universities Association (IUA) is still being financed by Irish Universities, despite a general lack of finance all round, it has been revealed.

The organisation claims its primary function is provide an association of University Presidents, however it is

better known for its key involvement in projects such as the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) and the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).

Irish Universities will donate €1.4 million collectively this year, with DCU donating the largest portion (€283,000).

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has expressed grave concern that such sizable contributions to IUA are being made when finances are extremely stretched for all Universities at present. UL has already had to cut tutorials and other services,

while it looks likely classes may be reduced further. It has been mooted that services such as the medical centre may no longer be free of charge in the future. While the IUA is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act because it is a private company with charitable status, it has been revealed that in excess of 60% of its funding is received through such contributions.

Mike Jennings, IFUT General Secretary condemned the contributions.

“Each of the Universities already has highly staffed human resources departments and retains highly paid barristers in industrial relations

disputes, so you would have to ask if this money is being used in the best possible way,” said Mr Jennings.

The IUA have defended the organisation, claiming that its involvement in working to compile policy for institutions was “core” and “crucial”.

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ELECTIONS

2011



The Plassey Lawn firework display. Image: Des Foley.

Written by **Finn McDuffie, Editor**

OVER 350 students attended a fireworks display on Plassey House lawn last week (Week 8). The event, which was organised by UL’s Irish Society, Cumann Gaelach, marked the end of Seachtain Na Gaeilge. The display cost €1,350 and was financed by the Clubs and Societies Special Apps fund and was put on by Nationwide Fireworks, a professional fireworks display company from Wicklow. It was organised with the permission of UL’s Buildings and Estates Department. The display lasted around 15 minutes and illuminated Plassey House and The Living Bridge, where many admired the fiery and loud display. Echoes could be heard across campus, it has been reported. Speaking to An Focal, President of Cumann Gaelach, Christóir O’Faoláin said he was very happy with how the event had gone. “People obviously enjoyed it,” he said. “It definitely raised awareness of Seachtain na Gaeilge.” “The week highlights the Irish language among other things and gets people speaking the cúpla focal. It also gets people ready for St. Patrick’s day.” The Cumann Gaelach has around 60 members and the events run by the society during Seachatin na Gaeilge drew over 500. The society’s events also included an official launch, a balloon release in the UL Plaza and a treasure hunt which encouraged people to speak in Irish in order to gain clues.

BOMB HOAX ALARMS STUDENTS

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald, News Editor**

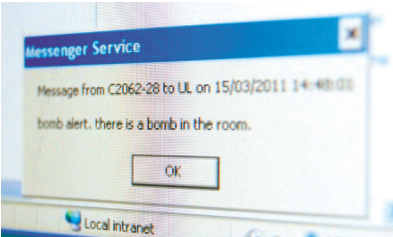
The message which appeared on potentially every student PC on campus. Image: Finn McDuffie

A HOAX bomb alert, which appeared as a message on campus computers, alarmed some students who logged into UL’s student PCs on Tuesday, Week 8, according to an ITD source. The Information Technology Division, which manages student computer clusters, has said the message was

sent by Maths students in a computer lab, who manipulated ITD installed software to send the alert. ITD has stated the feature is now disabled to prevent further abuse of the software. Speaking to An Focal, Declan Maguire of ITD said “A lot of student concern was expressed over the message. The

use the word ‘Bomb’ was particularly childish and infantile”. It is understood complaints were in “the double digits” at the ITD Helpdesk in the Library and to Supervisors of individual clusters. Many emails were also sent to the ITD “Help” email address. A subsequent message appeared saying “See you next

week, folks.” “[The hackers] upset a lot of their fellow students and wasted ITD time, which had to be spent verifying the message had been sent externally,” added Mr Maguire. It is not yet known who the perpetrators are.



EXAM SCANDALS PROVOKE POLICY REVIEW

Written by **Róisín Burke**

GMIT and UCD under scrutiny

SEVERAL students and staff involved in a plagiarism debacle at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) have put the institution’s examination and marking policies under scrutiny. Last year, three students graduated from GMIT last year despite being caught plagiarising their final year assessments. Another investigation led to the discovery of an act of plagiarism which had been facilitated by a member of staff. The alarm was raised by a lecturer marking the assessments, who discovered enormous similarities between the summative work submitted by the students and templates found in the instructors’ manual. The instructors’ manual includes model answers to questions and is accessed using a password given to lecturers. It was later revealed the password had been given to a Masters student. The case led to an internal inquiry in the school of business and the student was

found guilty of plagiarism. This student graduated last autumn with reduced grades. These controversies have created pressure for GMIT to change its policies. Both the registrar and HR Department have conducted internal audits. A spokesperson for GMIT said “All formal complaints will be forwarded to a register and the academic council has approved establishment of a working group to draft a code of practice on plagiarism”. A recent interview published by UCD’s University Observer reveals plagiarism is widespread. A student, who could not be named for confidentially purposes, revealed he was being paid to covertly sit other students’ exams. Despite his cover being blown, he claims he still operates “if the price and circumstances are right”. He claims to have attained A+ grades for candidates. James Williamson, UCD SU Education Officer said despite these latest allegations, there has been “a drop in cheating” in recent times. A UCD Spokesperson confirmed it is “A university wide issue.”



ASTROTURF ROLLS OUT ON NORTH SIDE

UL’s latest state of the art facilities rolled out last week, as the campus north side saw its first installation of AstroTurf. The development is just the most recent part of the Pavilion project, which includes the creation of floodlit, synthetic, all-weather pitches complete with a perimeter walkway, changing rooms and a restaurant and bar. Image: Courtesy of the UL Buildings and Estates Department.

Features

NO MORE CHEESE BEFORE BEDTIME FOR YOU, TUBS

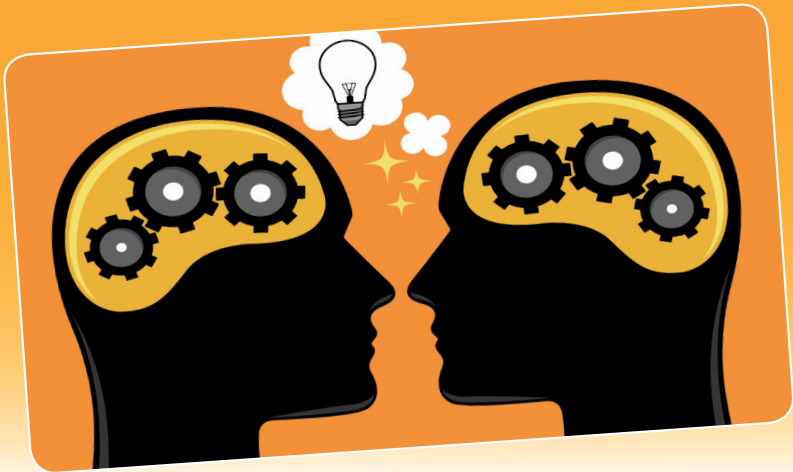
Written by **James Bradshaw**

AFTER the outpouring of grief following Gerry Ryan’s death, and the controversy when it was confirmed that a cocaine overdose led to his sad demise, most of us were probably sick of listening to people speak about the man. That’s not the case however, for a certain Ryan Tubridy.

In an interview with Gay Byrne, another indicator of the incestuous media relationships which exist between leading RTE broadcasters, Tubridy dropped a bombshell. Gerry, it appears, has been visiting Tubridy in his dreams. “He said ‘I’m grand don’t be worrying’,” Tubridy revealed. On another occasion, he claims he told his deceased friend “You know, I’m missing you an awful lot”, to which Gerry the friendly ghost replied “I understand, but I’m ok.” Now, I know that I can’t prove the late Ryan hasn’t been visiting

the living Ryan in his dreams. Tubridy’s story is a bit like homeopathy: patently ridiculous, yet irrefutable in its own bizarre little way. Nevertheless, let’s give him the benefit of the (large) doubt for a minute. Say your close friend has passed away, leaving you distraught, until one night he appears to you in a dream and assures you he’s at peace. What an incredible and moving experience it would be. But I can’t imagine you’d scream about it from the rooftops, given many people would think that the story was, to be frank, complete bullshit. You’d probably keep it to yourself, possibly only telling those who also shared a close relationship to the departed. And I definitely can’t see you broadcasting your friend’s message for the world to hear while doing yet another tell-all interview on the station you yourself work for. That would be rather tacky, to say the least. I use the term ‘tell-all’ reluctantly; Tubridy has very little to tell. He is the current presenter of a once great show, he hosts a radio show on 2FM and he used to do the Rose of Tralee (no sniggering

down the back). Oh, and he also had a book published last year, titled ‘JFK in Ireland’. It sold quite well, aided no doubt by the massive amount of free publicity given to Tubs by his RTE co-workers. This was not surprising. It is how RTE’s inner circle operates, overfed as they are on the licence fees of hard working citizens, and shielded from the harsh realities of life on the outside, whether it be rates of pay or the publicity given to newly published books. The recent cult of celebrity has led to Hollywood stars speaking publicly about their politics, religion, private lives, etc. Here too, the Irish ‘celebs’ are regularly given space on our newspapers and television screens to raise their profiles to an even more ridiculous level, and Tubridy is one of the greatest offenders in this regard. If Tubridy did make up this story, then he is truly sick. And if he didn’t make it up, then he is guilty of speaking about such a moving experience in a cheap and tacky way. Either way, he has exploited a dead man for some publicity, and it doesn’t get much lower than that.



HEAD TO HEAD SHOULD THE QUEEN VISIT IRELAND?

If you would like a topic discussed here, please email sucommunications@ul.ie

Written by **Aoife Coughlan**

YES!

THE Irish are famed for our “chip on the shoulder” attitude. We drag up our chequered past on a regular basis. Once again this mindset reared its ugly head at the recent announcement of a royal visit. Should we welcome Queen Elizabeth II to these shores? Or is this insulting to our past struggle for independence? I am almost angered at those who decree it to be the latter. I believe this to be an archaic stance and one that is an even greater slur on our nationhood that so many fought for. If we reject the visit we only serve to highlight pettiness in our country. We are shaped by our history, but it does not determine how we must act in this day and age. Context dictates that we are no longer

ruled by an empire, but are free. In the present we have no need to protest. In the past protest served a purpose, that being a challenge to our illegitimate rulers. However, it is now redundant in motive and would be construed as spite. A country of vindictive and malevolent citizens is not a fitting bequest to our patriots and martyrs. To anyone who feels the visit disparaging to those who fought and died for Ireland, I feel it necessary to issue this reminder. Ireland lost sons in our struggles, but so did England. Yet we do not see Britain voice objections to their Queen visiting Ireland. Indeed, the Queen’s own uncle, Lord Mountbatten, was a victim of murderous relations between England and Ireland in former years. If Britain can reconcile themselves with legacy then it is only fitting we do likewise. Also a point worth noting is one not laced in history. Instead, it relates to the future. In these days of strained

relations with Europe, it is attractive to maintain cordial relations with Britain. Economics sees us closely linked, emigration past and present influences our ties and some even argue that our currency should be entwined. To jeopardise associations would perhaps be detrimental to further connections, bonds between what are now two individual and equal nations. It is my belief that Ireland needs to adopt a grown-up attitude. We have a chance to show our adulthood as a nation by accepting the visit of our neighbour’s monarch. Surely our forefathers, O’Connell, Parnell and Pearce fought for an island of that could stand amongst all others in equality and respect. We must not dwell on our history as it is not for that they fought. They fought for our future. Today we are not governed by a queen but neither should we be governed by the past.

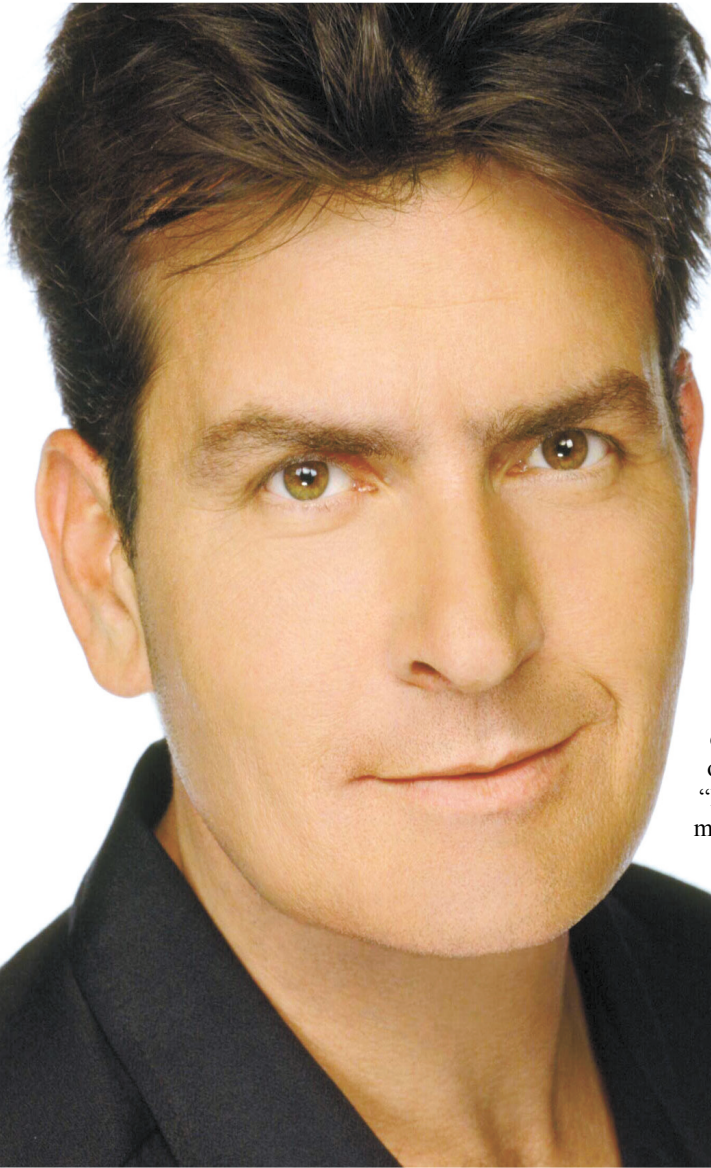
Written by **Colin Clarke**

NO!

ONE was not best pleased at the announcement that Queen Elizabeth II is to visit our emerald isle sometime in May. I am not an English-hating fanatic nor am I a die-hard republican but I do feel this is the wrong time for “Her Majesty” to visit Ireland. Not only are we going through an extraordinarily difficult time, we have also just elected a new government; surely we don’t have time for this publicity stunt to show “how far it is we have come as a country”. Yes, diplomatic relationships have improved between Ireland and England but does that mean that we have to celebrate it? Not in my opinion. This visit is sure to bring controversy and protest at a time when Ireland could do without it. Although it

pains me to say it, I must, to an extent, agree with Gerry Adams who has called the visit “premature”. It must be noted that Sinn Féin gained an historic 14 seats in the Dáil only two weeks ago showing the growing support for the so-called true republican party. The Queen’s visit will only serve to antagonise these so-called republicans around the country, some of whom will never forget those 800 years of oppression. We cannot forget the country’s uproar and anguish at the arrival of the EU and IMF only last December. Their arrival made us question Ireland’s sovereignty and independence. Many believe that due to the EU/IMF bailout Ireland has given away its sovereignty which it fought so hard for against the English. I think the Queen’s visit will only add insult to injury. Yes we may have gotten rid of the English, but now Ireland has a new ruler and it seems the Queen has come to gloat.

It has been 100 years since Elizabeth’s grandfather King George V visited Ireland and to be perfectly honest I wouldn’t mind if 100 more went by without Ireland being graced with the presence of a British king or queen. President Mary McAleese should realise that the new Fine Gael/Labour coalition government has placed great emphasis on the first 100 days in power. The Queen, however, is set to visit within these first 100 days which will only distract politicians from the task at hand which is getting our country back on track economically and getting the EU and IMF out. I accept that it would be unrealistic for 100 more years to go by without a visit from “Her Majesty” but can we at least wait for 100 days to pass without having distracting publicity stunts halting Government process?



A RUSH OF TIGER BLOOD TO THE HEAD

Written by **Kelly O’Brien,**
Features Editor

THERE’S a new drug on the market, apparently, and it’s called Charlie Sheen. If you haven’t already poured over Mr. Sheen’s ridiculous spate of tell-all interviews and rant-fuelled video diaries, I suggest you get right on it; they’re hilarity incarnate.

What I can’t seem to figure out, however, is whether to take Sheen seriously or not. We’ve all seen footage of his crazy, drug-fuelled, porn star infested nights out, but what exactly is going on in that “Bi-winning” mind of his? Is he actually mentally unstable or is he simply working the media like nobody has worked it before?

The world is watching and Charlie is lapping up the attention like a calcium starved kitten. Most reports claim Sheen is psychologically imbalanced or otherwise affected by the large amounts of drugs he has admitted

to taking in recent times. While he is clean at the moment (he has taken numerous drug tests that all came back toxin-free), doctors say he is still suffering from after-effects and has begun to see himself as invincible. Undoubtedly, drugs do a lot of harm to a person’s body and the effects of some drugs can be seen even years after consumption. I think it important to note, however, that none of these medical professionals has ever met Charlie Sheen; they are merely giving their expert opinions to the newspapers that want to report on the “downward spiral” of a world-famous actor.

The people who have met Charlie Sheen, that notorious Vatican assassin, are the reporters he invites into his home to interview him. These reporters are unanimous in their reactions to Sheen. They all say what a nice man he is, how much fun he has with his friends off camera, and how intelligent he is. While I have great respect for the medical profession and their diagnoses, I don’t believe in attributing symptoms to someone you’ve never even spoken with. The fact of

the matter is Sheen has managed to charm the pants off every single reporter who has entered his home. Could he really have done that if he was the spaced-out, drugged-up lunatic that he is being portrayed as?

The most detailed and thorough interview on the web at the moment has to be ABC’s 20/20 documentary. The video is 30 minutes long and I would recommend it for anyone looking to judge Charlie Sheen for themselves. In the documentary, ABC reporter Andrea Canning spends the whole day with Sheen and his “Goddesses”. What is strange about the interview is that Sheen begins to win you over through open speaking, intelligent banter and bizarre “Sheenisms”. He is both hilarious and oddly magnetic and I, for one, could happily listen to him for hours on end. Here’s hoping this warlock never loses the poetry at his fingertips.

CONTRACEPTIVE FREEDOM A LITTLE BIT CLOSER

Written by **Rhona Tarrant**

THE new over-the-counter availability of the morning after pill is undoubtedly a massive step forward for women’s contraceptive freedom in Irish society. Just five months ago, Choice Ireland launched a campaign after a Kerry woman was refused the emergency contraceptive due to the religious beliefs of the doctor on call. This situation was symptomatic of the culture that denied women the type of control available in countries such as the UK.

When faster and easier access to the pill was granted on 16 February, it was hoped the number of unplanned pregnancies would reduce, along with the anxiety, inconvenience and expense of relying on prescriptions. Just a month later, however, the grey areas surrounding the legislation have created doubt and ambiguity, leading to many difficulties on both sides of the pharmacy counter. Perhaps the main dilemma in the provision of the morning after pill is the issue of age

and consent. Norlevo, the emergency contraceptive drug, does not have an age limit. However, the age for consensual sex is seventeen, while a person has to be sixteen before they can consent to medical treatment. Many have argued that this awards the pharmacist an undue level of authority and responsibility, as it is at their discretion that the pill should be provided to someone under the age of seventeen.

The high level of control given to pharmacies is also visible in the varying prices for the mandatory consultation and provision of the pill. Although initially hoped that the pill could be obtained for less than €10, many chemists now charge between €25 and €45 for the service. While this is not an issue for medical cardholders, the legislation stipulates they must obtain a prescription before they can avail of the pill free. The expense of over-the-counter emergency contraceptives might be one reason why Castletroy

pharmacies have reported little change in the number of UL students seeking the pill. Rebecca Barry of Medicare Pharmacy in Castletroy explained. “Since the new legislation was introduced, we have had only two to three ‘walk-ins’ a week, while the rest have still been on prescription. This could possibly be because the doctor is free in UL, and is therefore easier for students.”

While it is undeniable that the availability of the morning after pill over-the-counter has granted women more contraceptive choices, the weight of control has now shifted from the doctor to the pharmacist. More clarification and guidelines would bring women one step closer to gaining total contraceptive freedom.

IS ANIMAL TESTING THE CURE?

Written by **Barbara Ross**



WHEN I think of animal testing, I think of gruesome torture and mass protests by over the top activists. I may just be watching too many movies, but I genuinely had no idea how animals were treated when they were being used for research, until I began research for this article.

Animals are being used to research incurable diseases, and progress has been made in understanding conditions like breast cancer, HIV and muscular dystrophy. This research is priceless but the moral conflict still exists.

The vast majority of species used in these studies are rodents. Inbred mice have been created by generations of forced brother-sister mating, to produce mice that are almost genetically identical. They are used to create ‘models’ of human disease as there is little genetic difference between them.

Mouse models of arthritis often have ligaments in their limb joints damaged. Breeding can also create models while mouse genetics can be manipulated artificially to create models of disease. Mouse models, however, only display the symptoms of the disease they mimic. The underlying cause of the disease in humans may be completely different to that in lab animals.

Such procedures may seem horrific and unnecessary but this sort of research on rodents is commonplace

in laboratories worldwide. Scientific research on animals is not automatically a gruesome process carried out by greedy pharmaceutical corporations.

Strict legislation governing animal testing is in place. Ireland’s current legislation was set down by the European Union in 1986 and it’s enforced through the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act. Anyone carrying out experiments on animals must receive a license from the Department of Health and Children. They must use the minimum number of animals possible, design their experiments to avoid any needless pain or suffering and they must use anaesthesia during all potentially painful procedures. Sadly, there is evidence that not all animal testing is useful. Many animals’ lives are lost simply following protocol and, considering how many drugs fail to make it to human trials, never mind to the shelves, some animals’ lives are lost for nothing.

Although there is legislation in place to ensure animals are not used unnecessarily or put through unnecessary pain or suffering, there is a lack of clarity as to how the animals should be kept. Drug companies and research facilities have responded to calls for less animal testing with the three ‘R’s: replace, refine and reduce. They aim to reduce the number of animals used, replace them with alternative non-animal tests where possible, and refine experiments, causing less distress to animals.

It would be naïve to say animals are unnecessary for drug development. Drugs must be tested in animals before human administration to gauge side effects or correct dosage.

Rodents are responsive and capable of feeling pain, fear, distress and boredom. Surely the least we can do for creatures that have saved so many lives is to acknowledge this, and treat them as such.



Lifestyle

EASTER EXAMS, HOW DO YOU SURVIVE YOURS?

Written by **Róisín Burke**

IT’S that time again. All the fun and frolics pause suddenly and the reason we are gathered together in this social haven is suddenly realised. Oh yeah. I’m in college. Best go read a book.

It’s either approach or avoidance, and most students fall into the latter. Either you are organised and prepared or glued to your Facebook pretending it’s not happening.

Procrastination, stress and insomnia are all common symptoms for student exams. Kitchens are suddenly cleaned, hair and makeup takes twice as long and pranks and jokes multiply.

Studies have shown that students spend more time grooming themselves in the run up to exams and libraries lose productivity thanks to socializing ‘study groups’ and internet access. Easter exams are here and the results are clear. Face book is an all-round winner. If only it was on the test paper.

Here are a few tips to get you through this rough patch. Organisation and time management: yes, it’s nerdy, but

“Here are a few tips to get you through this rough patch.”

that’s why it works. The smart people plan ahead. ‘Tus maith leath na hoibre’. Planning is half the battle. Make a schedule and stick to it. Stop putting it off! Be like Nike and just do it. Put on the kettle and settle down with a big boring book on something serious. Start with the bad stuff. You may not want to do it now, but you definitely won’t want to do it later!

Positive thinking: stop telling everyone how badly you are going to do. Be confident in your knowledge. Know what you are good at. Work on what you are not. Exercise is vital in a good study schedule. It reduces stress and frustration while also releasing feel good hormones that put you in a good mood. With 35 clubs and a state of the

arts sports arena, UL has something to give everyone a break from the books.

Question and answers: this works! After individual study, group work can highlight areas of inadequacy and often students remember a friend’s explanation much easier than a book.

Finally, one thing students should try to avoid is that last minute, all-night cram session. All-nighters are the result of poor organisation.

Besides killing your beauty sleep and bringing out anxiety spots, it clogs the brain. It’s a bit like trying to run a marathon after an all you can eat buffet, you need time to breakdown the intake before putting it to use.

And if you still get stressed, just remember, it won’t last forever. You’ll be back in the pub before you know it!

“Procrastination, stress and insomnia are all common symptoms for student exams. Kitchens are suddenly cleaned, hair and makeup takes twice as long and pranks and jokes multiply.”



THAT CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE

Written by **Karen O’ Connor Desmond**

SOMETIMES we can’t help wonder if dear old Cupid’s aim really sucks. At some stage or another we all fall victim to one of his love-inducing arrows and go somewhat wobbly around the knees. We get googly eyes and get butterflies and, for a while, we revel in the warm and fuzzy feeling that seems to engulf us. Then, when the love bug loosens its grip a tad, the reality of what we’ve let ourselves in for hits us right smack in the face. Romance seems to be a notion lost amongst the majority of young people these days. At the risk of offending some of the opposite sex, gone is the oh-so-lovely idea you once held as a child of your Prince Charming sweeping you off of your feet. Seriously girls, you can forget it, it’s probably never going to happen. So why are some of us women still so insistent on holding onto the concept of romance? Is it not fairly obvious at this stage that most men have embraced a somewhat less than desirable attitude towards the fairer sex? Men seem to be operating at a somewhat simplistic level when it comes to securing the lady of their affections. Forget the art of wooing, it’s wasted on them. Nor can one expect to be pursued to a somewhat obsessive yet endearing level. There is no “work” involved in chasing down

the apple of their eye. If you’re lucky, you may get a totally indirect move made vaguely in your direction which in all fairness just leaves you drowning in a pit of confusion. Then, of course, any reaction other than jumping their bones is considered rejection. Whatever happened to chasing after a girl and causing her to go weak in the knees for you? A little effort wouldn’t go astray.

Occasionally, guys argue that they don’t know how to be romantic. There’s one simple answer to this: it’s the small things that count. Remembering your sweetheart’s favourite flower or place is romantic. Complimenting their quirks and recounting situations that seemed insignificant at the time will bring a smile to their face. Extravagance means nothing in love and it never will.

I’m not implying that all men should be painted with the same brush but it has to be said that the romantic type is hard to come by. Sure, flowers and chocolates on Valentine’s Day show affection but something with meaning has so much more power. Romantic actions may be considered corny and cheesy but women don’t care. Finally, men, you should watch the “Notebook”. It’s romance in a nutshell.

THE BEAUTY COLUMN

Written by **Meghann Scully**

NOW Charity Week is over, it’s time for a transformation week. Seeing as we are all now either broke, dehydrated or suffering from a week long hangover, it is time to personify that fit, healthy feeling. Charity Week has certainly taken its toll on our skin, digestive systems and whole bodies. After a week of drinking and fast food the body is dehydrated and lacking in vitamin B. These vitamins are water soluble and help the cell metabolism. Great sources of vitamin B are meats, tuna, potatoes, bananas and seeds. Also, vitamin B tablets can be bought in health stores and pharmacies. As our bodies may have taken some bruising and tissue damage, herbs such as ginger and garlic mixed with stir fries help to banish those aches and pains at a rapid pace. Skin is also hugely affected by alcohol and a bad diet. Have you noticed spots or blemishes on your forehead lately? Well these are caused from bad dieting. A natural face mask will relieve the irritation and increase healing time.

Mix baking soda and water and gently apply to the skin and leave for a few minutes to set and rinse off. Another great face mask can be made from egg whites. Separate the egg white from the yoke, beat until frothy and apply to your skin, leave for 20 minutes and wash off with warm water. Simple is as simple goes.

Now you’re feeling cleansed and refreshed, and seeing as it’s lent already, it is time to make some resolutions. I don’t believe in giving up the things you love, instead I would suggest simply adding the things we need. For example, an extra piece of fruit each day would be a good resolution to make, or you could join one of the aerobics classes that take place in the UL Arena once a week. Whatever you need, why not give it a try. And don’t forget to drink lots of water every day, even if it’s just a glass, it’s the little things that make a difference.



GOOEY CHOCOLATE POTS

Written by **Elizabeth Neylon, Food Columnist**

Serves 2

Ingredients

75g Very Dark Chocolate

2 (medium) Eggs

20g Sugar

60g Butter (unsalted is best)

20g Flour

Fresh whipped cream/Ice-cream to serve

Method:

Break the chocolate into chunks and place in a bowl with the butter, heat over a pan of simmering water until it melts. Meanwhile, cream the eggs and sugar together in a bowl using an electric whisk, add the flour and mix. Into this mixture add the melted chocolate and fold together. Grease 2 ramekins using a small bit of butter and fill with the chocolate mixture, be careful not to

overfill the ramekins because they will rise a small bit. It’s best to put the Choc Pots in the fridge for at least an hour before you cook them. You don’t have to though. You could even prepare them a day in advance or freeze the mixture. Place them in a preheated oven at 180°C for around 15 minutes. You don’t want them over cooked or there’ll be no gooey centre! Serve with a massive amount of whipped cream or ice-cream! Yum!

JOHANNSSON AND PORTMAN SHINE AT OSCARS

Written by **Emily Maree**

IT’S time to roll up the red carpet and put away the scoreboards, because Academy Award season is over. The Hollywood fashionistas were out in force to collect their awards, or at least clap half-heartedly as they watched their rivals collect it instead. But whose outfits made us sigh with jealousy or indeed, gasp in horror? Who gets our vote of best and worst dressed at the Oscars 2011?

Best dressed has to go to Natalie Portman or Scarlett Johansson. A heavily pregnant Portman, who won Best Actress for her role in ‘Black Swan’ looked absolutely radiant in purple Rodarte, completely outshining her gorgeous co-star, Mila Kunis, who also went purple with a beautiful lilac Elie Saab gown.

Newly single Johansson proved that you don’t have to bare all to look sexy in a backless wine and magenta Dolce and Gabbana.

But it was the scarlet sirens that really led the pack, showing that no matter how cold it is outside, you can always be red hot. The fabulous Anne

“While there are so many hits when it comes to the Oscars, there are bound to be a few misses.”

Hathaway, her and James Franco being the youngest ever hosts of the Oscars in its 83rd year, graced the red carpet in a fabulous Valentino gown with no less but the designer himself on her arm. Last year’s Best Actress, Sandra Bullock swapped last year’s Marchesa for a little more spice with a lipstick red Vera Wang with a mermaid tail and origami bow. The real belle of the ball, however, was new mum Penelope Cruz who stepped out to support her husband Javier Bardem in a traffic stopping scarlet sequined L’Wren Scott.

We know while there are so many hits when it comes to the Oscars, there are bound to be a few misses. Jennifer Hudson and Cate Blanchett were among a small group who maybe just tried that bit too hard. But the title for ‘Worst Dressed’ can only have one contender. Yes, that’s right, you’ve guessed it. Madonna; the only woman in the world who could think it acceptable to wear a lace body, fishnets and heels to the Oscars, and attempt to get away with it. Unfortunately, no one has told the 52 year old that she needs to move on from the eighties and, as we speak, there’s an angry mob combing Hollywood for her stylist! Rumour has it that even her 14-year-old daughter, Lourdes, wouldn’t get into a photo with her, and I can’t say I’m all too surprised.

So that’s it for this year, only another twelve months until we’re able to scrutinise every detail of the A and B-list celebrities that strut down the red carpet, and I, for one, can’t wait! Let the countdown begin!



A heavily pregnant Portman looked absolutely radiant in purple Rodarte.



Written by **Cathr  na Slammon**

SWIMWEAR trends for the upcoming season revolve around colour, vibrancy, embellishments and bold prints. And while it’s always a good idea to stick to styles that flatter your body shape as well as light your fashion flame, thankfully this season designers have taken diversity (or normality to most of us) into account with styles to suit all shapes, sizes and tastes.

For those of you married to solid mono-colour suits, try availing of the huge amount of patterned and printed bikinis and one-pieces which reflect the current trend for striking prints on the catwalk. Ethnic, abstract, geometric, animal and tribal prints are everywhere which make for a truly unique look that stands far and above the standard black staple. Colour is king as blues, greens and oranges are among the designers’ popular choices. Neon hues of past seasons have been muted to more sophisticated and earthy tones which are much more flattering and visually appealing. On the other end of the colour spectrum, metallics

will make an appearance from solid blocks of golden shades to shiny threads of silver Lycra delicately intertwined to create a subtle shimmer. In terms of style, everything is catered to, from one-shoulder bikinis and glamorous cut-outs to 50s retro silhouettes and the classic one-piece. Embellishment and texture are key statements as ruffles, studs, pleating, sequins, buttons and zips jazz up the plainer pieces, creating highly individualised and interesting options. Other trends for the beach season include 70s appeal and for the more daring of us, lingerie-inspired swimwear will be hitting the shops

with delicate detailing and corsetry transformed into beach-worthy apparel. Alternatively, if you want to stick to the faithful suit you’ve had since you were 15 but still aim to look stylish, you can always incorporate these trends into your accessories. A well placed colourful sarong or ethnic-style beach bag will also give an instant update to your look. And remember, keeping up to date with swimwear doesn’t have to break the bank. H&M, Newlook, Dunnes and the ever-reliable Penneys are among the cheaper stores that will incorporate these trends and look just as good without the pricey labels.

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Letters

AN FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, UL Students’ Union, Castletroy, Limerick. T: 0860435304 E: sucommunications@ul.ie W: www.ulsu.ie
An Focal endeavours to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible. All parties have the right of reply to letters printed herein.

CLARIFICATION

Sir, - We would like to make it clear that any article appearing in An Focal (An Focal, Volume XIX, Issue 11, page 13) claiming the UL Soccer Club has been unfairly treated by ULSU C&S did not come from the UL Soccer Club committee and we do not support any such claims as a committee.

We are fully aware of C&S guidelines and the processes involved in the distribution of money within the University. Although we do struggle financially at times compared to other Universities, we do not feel unfairly treated by the C&S within UL and realize that it is up to us to improve our own situation when it comes to fundraising. Certain elements (namely the Ladies Seniors) have been superb in their fundraising efforts and have benefitted from this with proper treatment at their IV’s.

Other teams have failed to do their bit and as such did not receive the same treatment at IV’s. This was a club decision and not as a complete result of C&S funding.

We have done our best to improve our relationship with the C&S Executive as a whole and we would not like this hard work affected by what appears to be a factually incorrect article not endorsed by the UL Soccer Club committee.

Yours, etc,

UL SOCCER CLUB COMMITTEE

THE CHARITY WEEK SPIRIT

Sir, - I am an PhD scholar and a Tutor in the Department of Education and Professional Studies in UL for nearly two years now. Prior to this, I studied in UL as an undergraduate in Materials and Construction Technology Education. I am ashamed to admit that during my four years as an undergrad student here I never engaged in any nature of fundraising activities for what was then known as “Raising and Giving week”.

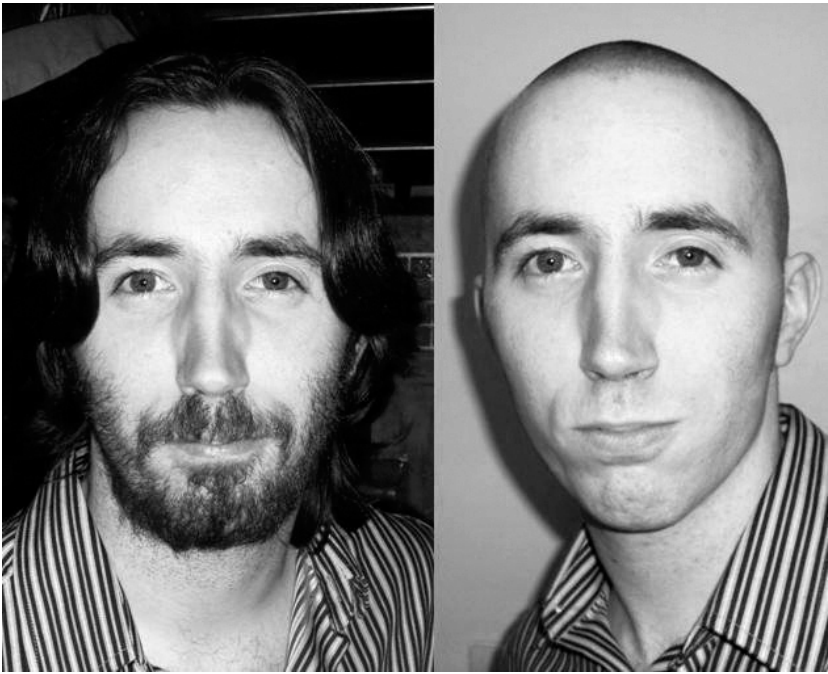
Although I certainly supported many of the events which were organised by attending them. Then last semester I saw that the ULSU was running a ‘tear a strip off’ waxathon in the Stables to raise money for the four selected charities for the now rebranded “Charity Week”.

One of these charities was “Console/1life” which not only offers a 24/7 suicide helpline with fully qualified counsellors at the end of the phone (1800 24 7 100) they also help families who have been bereaved through suicide to cope with their loss. I felt that this was a very worthwhile cause and having been personally affected by the suicide of a family member I knew that this service could offer invaluable help to people who really needed it.

So I joined in with this event and I collected sponsorship from friends, family, other research students, work colleagues and my students. I am delighted to say that I was able to raise €1,100 for the charity and all I had to do in return for the sponsorship was have my hair and beard shaved off.

This semester I have a whole new group of students over four different modules and I was eager to get sponsored by these students to raise some more money for Console and 1life during Charity week.

So in the spirit of the week itself being fun and light-hearted it was decided



Tony Sheridan: Before and After

that I would allow the students to pick what I would wear for the week. This resulted in me swapping my normal dress of a shirt, jumper, suit pants and black shoes for a peaked hat, white runners, white socks, a vest, hoodie and tracksuit bottoms.

This was certainly a big departure from what I am used to but I raised €400 in sponsorship during charity week from my students which was well worth the inconvenience.

I would like take this opportunity to offer my most sincere gratitude to everyone who supported and sponsored me in these efforts particularly my students, many of whom proved to be exceptionally generous.

And I would like to assure them that the collective amount of €1,500 which I have raised will be well spent by a very deserving and worthwhile charity in Console/1life.

Yours, etc,

TONY SHERIDAN

THE TRUTH ABOUT BACK PAIN AND HEAVY BAGS

Sir, - I was interested to read a recent article in An Focal on low back pain. (An Focal, Volume XIX, Issue 11, page eight).

The article correctly states that the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) has recently suggested that more men may be getting back pain because of using satchels or “man bags”.

This suggestion has definitely garnered significant media attention. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that back pain is related to the amount of weight in a bag, or the type of bag people use. If only managing low back pain were that simple!

My primary concern is that such suggestions reaffirm the belief among members of the public that low back pain is a simple mechanical problem where the “pressure” or “load” on the spine is too high. This has led to members of the public doing things like avoiding exercise and reducing the load on their spine, resulting in even greater pain and disability.

I regularly hear parents concerned about heavy schoolbags causing low back pain, when there is little or no relationship between these factors. While there are aspects that remain unclear about low back pain, international researchers are pretty certain about some aspects.

This includes the fact that low back pain is not caused simply by mechanical factors such as the duration spent sitting, the type of work people do, the type of bag they use and so on.

I would invite anyone interested in back pain to attend a free public talk here in UL in April on the topic of back pain myths. Details will be emailed to the campus community shortly.

This is as part of a nationwide campaign; “Challenging back pain myths”. The campaign will highlight some of the most common back pain myths, and demonstrate how one of the most important things in back pain is changing the understanding of what is and is not involved in back pain.

Yours, etc,

KIERAN O’SULLIVAN
Lecturer in Physiotherapy
University of Limerick

LETTER TO THE DEPUTY EDITOR

Darragh, - I am writing in response to your article “The real reason sexist banter goes deeper than humour” (An Focal, Volume XIX, Issue 11, page six) and I want to congratulate you on your bravery speaking out about this issue. The article was well-written and convincing and will hopefully change college students’ attitudes regarding women’s roles.

I’m a fourth year student taking many modules in gender studies. I think it is awful that the double standard continues to exist regarding the sex and work lives of women and it is very evident in the way many young male students continue to make sly and deeply offensive comments about women referring to them as whores while they use their sexual conquests to validate their masculinity.

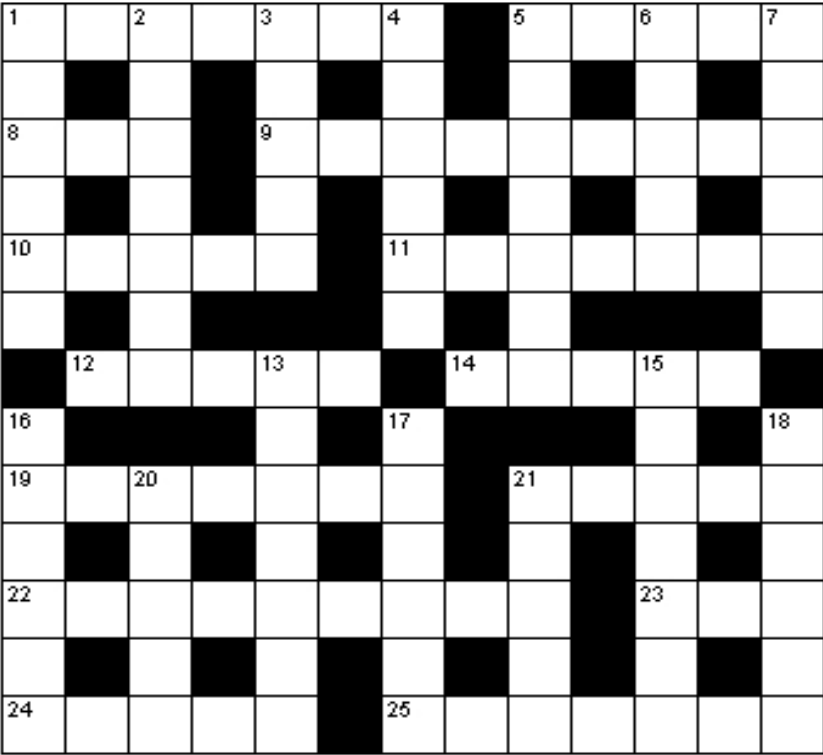
I hope that this will all change some day and that women can really achieve the equality that they deserve instead of being held back by a flawed post-feminist era and the dominance of patriarchy.

The fact that you were able to take a stand on this issue, especially as a man, shows that we are moving in the right direction.

Keep up the good work!

Yours, etc,

LUCY FITZGERALD



CLUES

ACROSS:

- 1. Meteorological conditions (7)
- 5. Accolade (5)
- 8. Conclusion (3)
- 9. U-boat (9)
- 10. Task (5)
- 11. First (7)
- 12. Guide in a cinema (5)
- 14. Number of days in a week (5)
- 19. Raised area of land (7)
- 21. Hoard (5)
- 22. Disregarded (9)
- 23. A princess couldn’t sleep on it (3)
- 24. Organised activity (5)
- 25. The Importance of Being (7)

DOWN:

- 1. American spanner (6)
- 2. Grueling (7)
- 3. Overly eager speed (5)
- 4. A mammal with many offspring (6)
- 5. Extreme greed (7)
- 6. Exculpation (5)
- 7. Resides (6)
- 13. The fifth is legendary (7)
- 15. Runaway prisoner (7)
- 16. Moocher (6)
- 17. Long-lived reptile (6)
- 18. Leave (6)
- 20. Related to a Saxon (5)
- 21. Tree on the flag of Lebanon (5)

ANSWERS (Issue 11)	12. PLAIN 13. SYSTEM 15. APPEAR 18. EBBED 19. ACROBAT 21. SHUTTER 22. NUDGE 23. SIDE 24. SALIENT	Down: 1. CANDLES 2. NAIVE 3. ICE 4. EMBODY 5. WALLPAPER 6. FOOTAGE 7. RAYON 11. ANECDOTES	14. SUBDUED 16. RETREAT 17. WALRUS 18. EASES 20. BADGE 22. NIL
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THE PRESIDENT’S COLUMN



Written by **Ruán Dillon-McLoughlin, ULSU President**

WHO do I vote for? They are all the same and they are just bribing me with sweets! Fair point. Yes sweets are used as a big draw to catch people attention but they won’t win an election. So who is the right candidate?

A sabbatical officer should display a few key qualities, the most important of which is approachability.

You should feel comfortable in the presence of a sabbatical officer and you should be comfortable to go to them with any issue you might have. You should also be confident that the individual will deal with your issue in a professional manner.

What are the big issues for the coming year? What to ask?

- Fees are a major issue. They are on the table. You need to find out how knowledgeable each candidate is on the issue and what are the options and possible outcomes.
- Medical Centre Charges are on the cards again. Does your candidate think

that charges are a good compromise to prevent cutbacks or do they believe we shouldn’t have to pay?

- Vision for your Students’ Union. What areas do they see can be improved in the SU. Where does focus need to lie. What are the important services and what ones could be cut?
- Co-Op, teachers and nursing placements. How can they be improved? What solutions are the candidates coming up with? Do they know what your problems are?

Don’t be afraid to ask the tough questions. Make sure you are voting for the best candidate. Make sure you’re not just fobbed off with vague answers. Look for solution-based answers; candidates need to come up with solutions to the problems at hand.

Make sure you vote!
Vote online, check www.ulsu.ie for more information.

WELFARE WATCH



Written by **Derek Daly, Welfare Officer**

IT’S close to the end of the year and come Thursday I’ll know if I’ll be here again next year or not. It’s not time to reminisce just yet though.

Exams are coming, so anyone feeling the pressure with deadlines, check out pleasetalk.ie. This is a great resource when you’re feeling low. I will be attending the Please Talk national steering committee next week and if you have any ideas, please drop me a line.

Even though exams are on the way, there’s still time to iron out other issues. So if you have questions about grants or accommodation, get on to me in the next three weeks. Organising yourself now is a sure fire way to ensure you are not left stressing come September. Exam drop-in is the perfect time to get to grips with this.

My desk is a mess as I write, with financial aid competing with calls and emails to be answered. I can feel the pressure you’re under juggling assignments, exams, your finance and a social life. Just do you best and if you find it difficult, I’m here to guide you. Just email me at suwelfare@ul.ie!

ENLIVENING EDUCATION



Written by **Aoife Finnerty, Education Officer**

THIS week’s column is designed to scare you a little. Exams are looming! You know how I know that? Because the provisional exam timetable is up this week and you need to take a look at it. No really, you do!

If there are issues with timetabling, today is the day to raise it with your Class Rep. Your Class Rep needs to know as soon as possible if there are problems, as there are a number of steps that have to be taken in order to try and move an exam. REMEMBER: the provisional timetable is not the final timetable. Although sometimes there is no difference between the two, sometimes there is. Don’t go booking any flights or making plans until the full timetable comes out. Finally, I know I harp on about planning all the time but I really mean it. Prior planning prevents poor performance. If you organise your notes and materials now, you’ll save yourself that time during Weeks 13, 14 and 15 and trust me when I say, you need time during those weeks! As always, if you’ve any problems just give me a shout on aoife.finnerty@ul.ie or check my FAQs page on the ULSU website.

WORDS FROM THE PSA



Written by **Dan Comerford, PSA President**

HERE is your fortnightly postgrad news. I hope you all enjoyed St. Patrick’s Day. The Special Olympics alongside the Stables hosted a hugely successful fundraiser; I was delighted to see so many postgrads in attendance supporting this cause.

With the SU Elections upon us, here is the time to look into the PSA Presidential election. The PSA Exec has decided that the PSA nominations open 21 March and close 28 March. If you are interested in becoming the PSA President and taking the PSA to the next level, then contact me should you wish to hear anything further.

The Engineering and Informatics Research Day between UL and NUIG under the alliance takes place 7 April. I wish all those attending the very best.

I’m sure all researchers have seen the updated regulations regarding thesis supervision; this is a hugely positive move to ensure adequate supervision for all researchers.

If any of you wish to contact me at any point please do so on dan.comerford@ul.ie, the website on www.postgrads.ie or find us on Facebook (PSAUL)

QUEER BASH: A PADDY MCHUGH LEGACY

Written by **Greg Cooling**

WITH Queer Bash 8: Queers go Gothic taking place on 25 Marc in Dolans Warehouse, we remember the man who began it all.

Queer Bash started eight years ago when Paddy McHugh, RIP, then President of Out in UL, decided to take the words “queer” and “bash” and make it into something positive for the gay community and also the event was to bring together the whole student community, whether gay, straight, bisexual, Lesbian, transgender or questioning. The naming of the event caused quite a stir in both gay and straight communities at the time.

I feel it was a masterstroke by an exceptional man whom, unfortunately, I only had the pleasure of meeting once in passing and never got to know well. I will just have to rely on those close to him. Here are some words from some people who knew Paddy:

Mike Toomey and Lorraine Curham, Out in UL co-presidents 2008-9, said

that Paddy loved Irish music and dance and loved the “shock” factor. He was a really out and proud guy.

Breandán Ó hÉamhaigh, former Out in UL committee member, remembers Paddy as a unique person. “I’ll never forget being a 1st year, in the closet, and seeing his posters for Queer Bash. It was controversial to say the least, as was Out in UL at the time and the more conservative people were shocked by the posters, and Christian Union went mad! His work with Out in UL was special, because it was his work with Out in UL which made the Campus what it is today. His work paved the way for the work Out in UL do today, and Queer Bash is his legacy to us”.



Student Speak

Are you in a Club or Society?

The An Focal camera zoomed around the Radisson Blu last week to expose the shenanigans at the Clubs' and Societies' Ball.



So, what's your best C&S memory?

Diarmuid Harnett
"I will find a woman tonight!"



Eamon McNicholas, Joan McNulty and John Fitzgerald (Handball Club)
"America! We're the only club that goes out of Ireland but OPC rules the world!"



Christóir O'Faoláin *"Oireachtas na Gaeilge in Killarney, November 2010."*



Ms. Buzz and Kelly O'Brien
"Scoring Ms. Buzz."



Lucy Fitzgerald *"We went to the Ballykissangel set and the barmaid ran away with the priest."*



Kevin Daly
"Wearing bow ties all over Europe."



Amanda Keane
"International Week was unbelievable!"



Kieran Phipps
"Pick a year! There's a lot! (I dropped my phone in the toilet.)"



James Heslin *"The Carlton Castletroy C&S Ball with Kieran Phipps' topless performance of Riverdance."*



Fearghal Fitzgibbon & Tony Ryan *"The time we talked about a person the photographer knew and highly insulted him and then he farted."*

UL CRUSH CITY RIVALS IN ONE-SIDED COLOURS CONTEST

Written by **Mark Connolly,**
Sports Editor

UL MEN’S rugby side retained the O’Brien Memorial Trophy at Thomond Park with a convincing victory over a limited Limerick Institute of Technology outfit. UL was always on top in this derby clash and eventually ran out winners on a comfortable 32-06 scoreline. LIT opened the scoring with a penalty from Mike O’Shea but the University soon began to monopolise possession and Murray Kinsella’s try after eight minutes was no more than they deserved. The touchdown was the product of a flowing move following phase after phase of sustained attack

which led to the eventual overlap, allowing the centre to cross comfortably. Unfortunately, it was to be as clinical as UL were going to get in an opening half that was marked by the Castletroy outfit’s profligacy as they botched a succession of patiently built try scoring opportunities. In the 35th minute, UL pressure was eventually converted into points when full-back Cian Ahern weaved his way over to put his side four points ahead at the break- a score line that still grossly misrepresented the level of dominance UL enjoyed. Things continued in a

similar fashion on the resumption with UL testing an LIT defence that scrambled very effectively all evening. Yet it was only in the 65th minute when the game was put beyond all doubt with replacement Paddy Dempsey crashing over. A professional UL side still gave no quarter to their opposition as out-half Torrie crossed in the 70th minute to finish off a fine counter-attacking move following a very poor clearance kick from LIT’s O’Shea. Another late try from number eight, Kindreghan, rounded off the evening as he took full advantage of a strong

scrummaging platform from five yards out to blast his way over and start the celebrations early. UL’s squad will have been pleased to have retained the trophy this year against their bitter rivals in such convincing fashion. Full credit is due to the management team and all the squad for having clearly prepared diligently for the occasion and overcoming opposition to keep the trophy in UL.

“UL’s squad will have been pleased to have retained the trophy this year against their bitter rivals in such convincing fashion.”



Thomond Park: the venue for UL’s O’Brien Cup Triumph.

SIGERSON CUP DEFEAT FOR UL

Written by **Patsy Morrissey**

UL’S GAELIC Football team participated in the centenary Sigerson Cup weekend in Week 7, hosted in UCD. On Thursday, UL took on NUI Maynooth in the quarter-final. After disposing of DIT, one of the competition favourites, two weeks before, UL travelled to Dublin in positive mood and with the aim of progressing, but it wasn’t to be. The full time score-board read UL 1-2, NUIM 0-9. The UL boys started promisingly, going in for the half-time team talk one point ahead, on a score-line of 1-1 to 0-3. The goal came from UL midfielder, Anthony Maher early in the first half and looked like it might have been a building block for the Shannon-siders after some impressive work from number 14, David Niblock. Maynooth were beginning to fight harder for possession however and this continued on the resumption of play for the closing 30 minutes. The second half turned out to be a heartbreaker for UL as they were only to register a single point, coming from Kevin O’ Sullivan. UL held good possession for parts of the game but two missed goal chances to dampen spirits as they tried desperately to pull away from the opposition. Accuracy on the

day proved to be the thorn in UL’s side as they kicked five wides in the closing half. However, it was by no means a runaway victory for NUIM as only a single point separated the sides with ten minutes remaining. Unfortunately, the Maynooth college used their possession more effectively, popping over another three points before the final whistle to win by four in the end. It was disappointing for all concerned but credit must go to the management and panel who put in huge effort over the past few months to reach the Sigerson weekend.

- Panel:
Brian Scanlon, Fionn Fitzgerald, Mark Dalton, Joanthon Lyne, Declan Rattigan, Niall Coyne, Seamus Hickey, Anthony Maher, David Moran (capt), Ambrose O’Donovan, Philip Austin, Brian Fox, Colin Dempsey, David Niblock, Mark Cahalane, Joe Lyster, Donagh O’Sullivan, Michael Geaney, Matt Culloty, Denis Keohane, Thomas Ladden, Kevin O’Sullivan, Paul Kennelly, Jack Sherwood, Donagh Kelly, Chris Murphy, Sean Armstrong.
- Manager:
Declan O’Keeffe
- Selectors:
Denis O’Keeffe, Paul Shield, Liam Reale
- Logistics:
Mike Tim O Sullivan, Dean Ryan
- Physio/Medics:
Jamie Bowman, Kathryn Fahy

ACTIVITY CENTRE TAKES NATIONAL TITLE “TRAINING CENTRE OF THE YEAR”

Written by **Seán Walker**

ON Saturday, 5 March, at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire, UL Activity Centre was awarded the Irish Sailing Association Training Centre of the Year for 2010. This is very prestigious award and UL Activity Centre fought off some tough competition from a number of other training centres all over Ireland. This short list was selected by the customers and clients of the 141 Irish Sailing Association Training Centres from all over Ireland who have been voting online since last summer. The five clubs who received the most votes and made it onto the short list were Bray Sailing Club, Glenans Sailing Academy, the Oysterhaven Centre, the National Yacht Club and the UL Activity Centre. UL Activity Centre has been in business since 1996 and in recent years has gone from strength to strength offering a variety of water sports training courses to both adults and young people of all abilities.

“ Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus. ”

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL 1847 – 1922

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Sport

MAJOR SIGNINGS ENSURE RED HOT ROVERS REMAIN TEAM TO BEAT

Written by **Billy Goulding**

WITH yet another pre-season seemingly dominated by off field troubles, it's time we take a look at who holds the trump cards as the new Airtricity League season finally kicks off. Despite the well documented cloud of financial uncertainty hanging over many clubs recently, there was still a considerable amount of activity in the much anticipated transfer window.

Former kingpins Bohemians will undoubtedly struggle this year as the grim ramifications of their financial implosion hits home. They were the busiest club during the window, but for all the wrong reasons as their dwindling income resulted in a mass exodus of star players. Influential leader Paul Keegan and pacey full back Conner Powell skipped across the pond to Doncaster Rovers and Colchester United respectively. Meanwhile crowd favourite Mark Quigley and prolific striker Jason Byrne bucked the emigration trend and instead opted for the short trip north to Dundalk, as they too depart the sinking ship.

The champions and red hot favourites to retain their crown, Shamrock Rovers have quietly but effectively strengthened their squad with some shrewd acquisitions. Michael O' Neil raided Galway United for the creative pair of playmaker Stephen O'Donnell and 19-year-old Karl Sheppard, who looks to be a gem of a player after he

burst on to the scene last term with his fair share of both spectacular and crucial goals. Ciaran Kilduff, who single-handedly kept UCD up with his goals last season, has returned to the club where he began his career while tricky winger and F.A.I. cup medallist Gary McCabe has been acquired from main title challengers Sligo Rovers.

The 'Bit O' Red' have themselves remained very quiet with no major signings of note. They have however managed to tie down key player Ritchie Ryan to a new deal and look certain to retain the services of experienced duo Romauld Boco and Joseph Ndo who will be central to their cause if they are to mount a serious challenge.

Elsewhere, St. Pats are mourning the loss of industrious midfielder Ryan Guy who has returned to his native America and also David McAllister who joined Sheffield United. Proven campaigners such as Stephen Bradley and Evan McMillian have been brought in alongside Daryl Kavanagh and Paul Crowley to plug the gaps.

I see Shamrock Rovers retaining their title, closely followed by Sligo Rovers with Galway United, Bray Wanderers and UCD set to battle it out for survival.



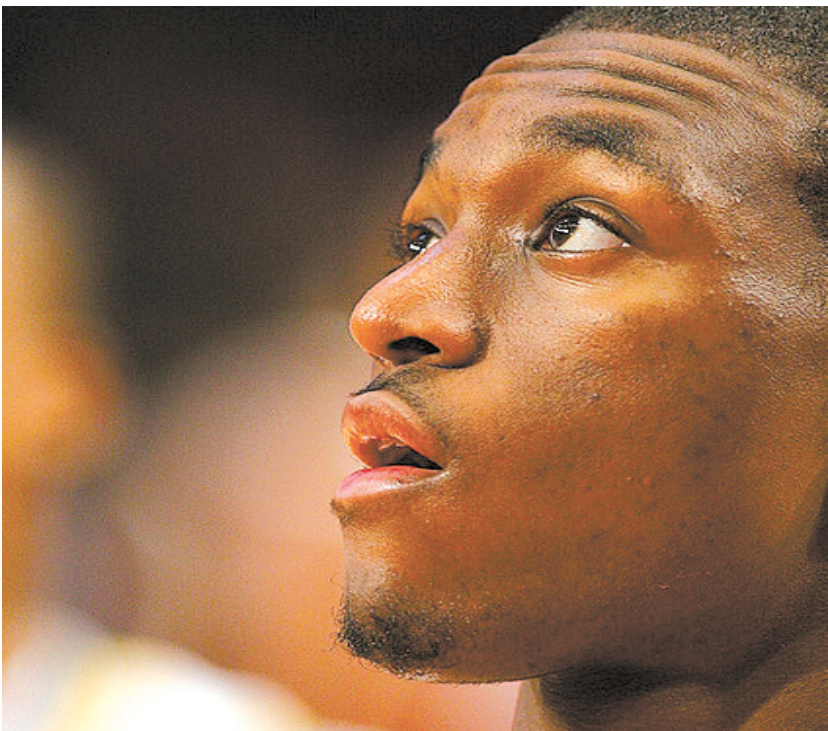
Shamrock Rovers hot favourites to retain their Airtricity League title.

JUST IN: MADNESS SPREADING STATESIDE

Written by **Eoin King**

IF YOUR scant student finances took a hit after Cheltenham or you are still frustrated after a deflating Six Nations from Ireland, perhaps you should just take sport for what it is worth this week. March Madness may be your remedy. It is that time of the year when college basketball in America is at its exciting best. The madness stems from the unpredictability of what will happen next as 64 college basketball teams look forward to the 'final-four' weekend on the 2 April. The third round was played on Sunday. The spotlight now moves to this coming Thursday where the round of 'sweet sixteen' will take place. With the yanks being sellers of glitz and glamour, those who progress to this weekend will become part of the aptly-named 'elite-eight', or the quarter-finals to me and you.

The beauty of the NCAA men's basketball championship is that any number of teams can claim the title. Teams are seeded from one to 16 and let loose as small schools try pen their own Cinderella story and upset the status quo. At the time of writing not every team had punched their ticket into the tournament and no games had been played. So, predictions would look silly now as there has surely been an upset already. Watch it and enjoy it. These players don't get paid and aren't motivated by contractual obligations with sponsors. For the majority of them their studies take priority and the idea of a NBA career is too far-fetched to believe in with only a select few making names for themselves as professional



Kemba Walker: College basketball takes centre stage in USA this month.

superstars. The biggest names are the schools themselves. Michael Jordan's alma mater, North Carolina, is always a contender, along with their fiercest rivals, Duke, the defending champions. Ohio State, Kansas, Pittsburgh and Duke will be the highest ranked teams along with the Fighting Irish, Notre Dame, who have showed form coming into the tournament. If still in contention, get a good internet streaming site or ESPN America, and have a look at UCONN and their star man, Kemba Walker,

a promising talent for the future. Basically, forget about odds and revel in the underdog. Enjoy the spirit and passion for the basketball. Emphasis is placed on teamwork and unity. There are no Kobe Bryants or LeBron James who dominate proceedings. College basketball is about the team and, more often than not, winners are absent of ego. It's sport for sports sake. The added bonus is that it's also sport for entertainment's sake.

TIME TO END THE EURO PLAGUE

Written by **Jonathan Dolan**

Poland and Ukraine are the destinations for next year's European Championship. The tournament seems to have some choking effect on Irish players during qualification, which has resulted in the national team missing out on the last five European tournaments. Is Euro 2012 finally the one to put an end to the barren spell or another to add to the growing list?

NOT since the summer of 1988 has the Republic of Ireland been involved in Europe's summertime showpiece. Since then, in between three World Cups, Ireland has surprisingly failed to qualify for the European Championships on a miserable five occasions. Most recently, Steve Staunton's wacky stint in charge saw the country humiliated in San Marino and Cyprus.

This time around Ireland has been dealt a reasonably manageable group with top spot being realistically challenged for by Russia, Slovakia and the Republic. As it stands, Russia top Group B on nine points with Ireland, Slovakia and gutsy Armenia level on nine points. Russia, under Dick Advocaat, narrowly missed out on last summer's World Cup and Arshavin and co will ensure the same won't be repeated this time out. They remain favourites for number one spot. But Ireland will be looking for maximum points against the weaker sides and a good result against Slovakia in the home fixture and the same away to Russia, could leave us in a promising position this October. There has been a lot of talk about Giovanni Trapattoni's selection of players in his

time as Ireland boss and if things don't go according to plan, it may prove his downfall. Players such as Paul Green and Glen Whelan are not good enough in these crucial games and there are questions raised as to why Trap won't pick players like James McCarthy and possibly Kevin Nolan who is eligible to play but needs persuasion. But, in saying that, Trapattoni has worked very well within these boundaries, making great use of an ageing Robbie Keane, stalwart Kevin Kilbane and frustrated Man City keeper Shay Given. Along with promising players like Seamus Coleman and Shane Long, the team is given that much needed spirit but with the tactical firmness that helped them go unbeaten in the 2010 World Cup Qualifier group. If Trap's men can use the same mettle and dogged attitude from the World Cup qualifying campaign, Russia will have to watch their backs for that top spot because with six games left there are bound to be some surprises and with a bit of luck there could be a green army infesting Poland and Ukraine this time.

FORGOTTEN FOOTBALLER, MATEJA KEZMAN

Written by Paul Brennan

MATEJA Kezman once professed; “I have been a champion with every team I have played with”. A closer examination of his career would suggest otherwise. Kezman made his name with Partizan Belgrade in his native Serbia.

It was his performances for the Steamrollers that attracted the attention of PSV Eindhoven with whom he scored goals for fun in the Eredivisie, netting 129 times in 176 appearances over four seasons. The Abramovich revolution was taking shape at Chelsea and the striker cost them a mere £5.3 million, relative peanuts by today’s standards. Unfortunately for him, the goal scoring prowess he showed at PSV would elude him during his time at Stamford Bridge. It was December before Kezman netted in the league, an audacious chip from the penalty spot against Newcastle in a 4-0 win for the Blues. During his celebration, he lifted his shirt to reveal an image of Jesus Christ whom he subsequently credited with the goal. Although Kezman did go on to score the winning goal in the Carling Cup final against Liverpool in February 2005, not even the Messiah could save him from being shown the exit door at the Bridge.

He then went to Atletico Madrid who paid a slightly higher fee than Chelsea for his services. His scored eight goals in thirty appearances and with Atletico no longer prepared to put up with his ineptitude: he was shipped off to try his hand in the Super Lig with Fenerbache in 2006. Although Kezman enjoyed



Mateja Kezman in happier times.

his richest run of form since his PSV days, he remained in a perpetual state of controversy. An uneasy relationship existed between the Serb and Zico with the striker claiming that the Brazilian coach would only address his players through Turkish.

Although he averaged almost a goal a game, the tension between the two resulted in Kezman being relieved off his duties once more and transferred to Paris Saint-Germain.

Although he only managed to hit the net three times in the Ligue, the French club decided he was a worthy acquisition, giving him a permanent deal in the summer of 2009. And yes,

you’ve guessed it: he was loaned out once more. His next destination was Zenit St. Petersburg but after another season of ignominy in front of goal, the Russians decided they would not retain his services and the self-proclaimed “goal machine” is now operating in the mighty Hong Kong First Division with South China AA.

Kezman once claimed that “Only God can judge me”, I think many of us would beg to differ.

SPORTS QUIZ

Written by Jonathan Dolan

1. Clarence Seedorf is the only player to have won 3 Champions League titles with different teams. What teams did he win them with?
2. Who is the youngest Formula One champion in history to date?
3. In Golf, what is the name given to the grassed area between the tee and the green?
4. Who has won the most English League Cups (Carling Cups) and how many have they won?
5. In GAA, which county does Markievicz Park belong to?
6. What male tennis player has won the most Grand Slam singles titles?
7. Who partnered Alan Shearer up front in Blackburn’s title winning side in the 1994/95 season?
8. In rugby, which two nations contest the Calcutta Cup?
9. What year did Wayne Rooney make his debut for England?
10. In 1999, who did Lennox Lewis defeat to become the Undisputed World Heavyweight Champion?

Answers	1. Ajax, Real Madrid,	5. Sligo	9. 2003	10. Evander Holyfield
	4. Liverpool; 7	6. Roger Federer	7. Chris Sutton	8. England and
	AC Milan			3. Fairway
	2. Sebastian Vettel			

AN FOCAL SPORT FAIL TO HAVE THE FINAL WORD

Written by Conor McGrath

HERE at An Focal Sport, we pride ourselves on words and vindication, and on occasion, highlighting facts which the reader may find useful to debate with. The annual Charity Week five-a-side tournament is another one of those opportunities for An Focal Sport to win over popular opinion with success.

The event took place on the Wednesday morning of Charity Week where dry heaving became a common and often commendable sight around the Astroturf pitch as well as the increased use of designer water bottles to cure the previous night’s frolics. In the midst of these often hilarious distractions, An Focal Sport clearly switched on the laptops early with a commanding 2-0 lead in the first game after sublime goals from Eoin King and Robert McNamara. Unfortunately, failing to work to the deadline cost us as we were pegged back for a 2-2 draw. A 0-0 Italia ’90-esque bore followed which briefly steadied the ship in the midst of heavy spittle and petulant Italian moaning.

Captain Connolly then rang the changes for ‘Le Crunch’ which not only underlined the critical importance of An Focal’s quest for glory but also meant the very brief appearance of Chris Callaghan who unfortunately became a fresh victim to injury, rather than fresh legs. The case against the

team was further heightened by the referee’s failure to stop the clock for the injury and systematically delete An Focal Sport with a 1-0 defeat. The inquest began on the sidelines with Darren Mulyran suggesting that the ref had been seen laying into creamy pints of stout and chanting ‘Stand By Me’ with the opposition in the Stables the night before. After all of this, the final game became an exercise in pride and the team faced Toon Army captained by Peter O’Reilly.

Robert McNamara made the early headlines with his Rooney style celebration but the team quietly surrendered 3-1 and thus ended the annual An Focal Sport drive of merging deluded physical and written sporting success. Incidentally, Toon Army claimed the overall spoils, amid the general failure associated with the team’s name, and was deserving of success. Mark Connolly also took the time to quash any lingering rumours of substance abuse as “sensationalist garbage”. And, after having his name put into the referee’s book in the final game, Eoin King animatedly reminded the ref that An Focal Sport was of superior written documentation. Just for that nanosecond, the moral victory seemed justified.



Left to Right: Conor McGrath, Mark Connolly and Eoin King discuss tactics before five-a-side kick off. Image: Kelly O’Brien.

Sport

‘TIGER HAS TO DEAL WITH COMPARISONS MADE WITH THE DECLINE OF MIKE TYSON’

Written by **Mark Connolly, Sports Editor**

THE US Masters has long been Golf’s marquee event and the general favourite of players, punters and press. However, this year’s event, set to come upon us in just over two weeks, will likely assume a significance that will mark it out as a watershed moment in the sport’s history. I believe that will be the passing of the guard from the older American stalwarts who have traditionally dominated the event, to a newly emerging European ruling class who are set to shake up the old golfing world order. Augusta in April 2011 will surely enter the realms of history as the time and place when Kaymer,

McDowell, Donald, Westwood et al marked their superiority over the declining Woods and Mickelson. The two Americans are indeed seriously faltering in their respective battles to escape unprecedented and possibly terminal slumps. Mickelson, the defending Master’s champion (his last tournament victory), was simply awful at the recent WGC Cadillac Championship, finishing in a pathetic 55th place. And at the WGC Match Play event in Arizona, ‘big Phil’ saw no improvement in form, crashing out six and five to 22 year old Rickie Fowler, making his year long slide

down the World rankings all the more comprehensible. But he may be cheered up by comparing his current bad run with the very serious situation that his long time professional and personal foe, Tiger Woods, finds himself in. The temperamental Californian has only managed to tee off in four tournaments so far this year, with performances at each, except for one good round at the Dubai Desert Classic, showing why he’s reluctant to expose his game to any further public scrutiny. Indeed, in a typically abrasive media press conference, Woods had to deal with comparisons, made by US golf

commentator Johnny Miller, between his private life troubles and accompanying poor form and the decline of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson. Woods laughed them off but keen Tiger watchers may be slower to dismiss Miller’s claims. Woods and Mickelson have won seven Masters between them in a reign of dominance during which Jose Maria Olazabal (1999) was the only European to put on the famous Green Jacket. But with the Europeans now dominating at the top of the rankings for the first time in a generation, that old order will be formally reversed and expect



the brilliant Martin Kaymer to feature prominently. The German, after a stunning rise to the top, is now recognised as the world’s best golfer with Lee Westwood, recently crowned World Match Play Champion Luke Donald and Ireland’s Graeme McDowell, his closest challengers. The era of European domination has surely arrived. Let Augusta 2011 mark the christening.

CAN WE CRICKET, YES WE CAN!

Written by **Robert McNamara**

THE look on the face of the England bowler, John Anderson, as he watched John Mooney’s ball heading towards the boundary was one to behold. That display of shock and disgust in equal measure shall be recorded in the realms of Irish sporting history as a truly magnificent moment. Beating England at their own game is always fun.

In years to come that moment will be played on clip shows alongside Ray Houghton’s goals at Euro 88 and USA 94, Irish rugby’s 2009 grand slam triumph and Eamonn Coghlan at the World Athletics Championships in 1983. Ireland will not win the World Cup, but that game has provided us with a huge sense of national pride and a moment to look back on with great fondness. Many Irish sports fans wouldn’t have known Ireland was even competing at the Cricket World Cup. Many are oblivious to the long, rich history the game has in our country. Organised cricket in Ireland was in existence nearly 50 years before the formation of the GAA. Just as cricket began to grow in popularity, the GAA formalised Irish sports. A ban on anyone playing

the gentlemen’s game and any other foreign sports was implemented by the Irish sporting association and cricket became a sport for the minorities. The ban was not lifted until the 1970s yet the game still thrived in small pockets. A national appetite for the only sport that has tea and crumpet breaks was rediscovered in the wake of Ireland’s triumphs over Bangladesh and Pakistan at the 2007 World Cup. All sorts of closet celebrity cricket fans started to pop up. Neil Hannon of Irish band Divine Comedy and his cohort Thomas Walsh of Pugwash released a concept album about test match cricket that was nominated for an Ivor Novello and the Choice Music Award. The latest Irish victory at the prestigious 50-over World Cup has turned curiosity

into valid interest. The International Cricket Board may not allow Ireland to take part in the next World Cup. The 50 over tournament is to be reserved for the cricket elite and only the top 10 countries will be permitted to compete under newly proposed rules. This would see Ireland drop into the Twenty20 format, a shorter version of cricket which is being used to promote the game as a mainstream sport. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The Twenty20 version is more accessible to the armchair viewer as the game only lasts three hours and is regarded as more exciting. The platform has already been laid for the sport to grow in Ireland and let’s face it: we’ll take any glory we can get.

COSMIC DREAM MAY BE REALITY FOR PELÉ AND THE KING

Written by **Darren Mulryan**

FRANK Sinatra summed up everything we need to know about New York City’s great aura. “If I can make it there, I can make it anywhere”. Indeed, many have tried and failed to conquer the Big Apple. So who better to raise the game of soccer and bring back the glory days of the 1970s than Brazilian legend Pele and “The King”, Eric Cantona. The New York Cosmos were the soccer version of the Harlem Globetrotters. Known for their Jet-set lifestyle, audacious skills and meteoric fame, the Cosmos brought Hollywood to the East coast. The Cosmos coach driver even described away games as going on a road trip with the Rolling Stones. Rumour was widespread in the summer. “Did you hear? The Cosmo’s are coming back!” You could hear voices on the subway, delicatessens and even the bistros that line Mulberry Street in Little Italy. The public were right, the legendary Cosmo’s were about to be reborn. In the 70s the cosmos were like the Barcelona of our generation. Free

playing, free spending giants focused on one goal, to play beautiful football. First Pelé arrived, then Carlos Alberto, Franz Beckenbauer, and the great Johann Cruyff for a short stint. For almost a decade it was bliss, with the trophy cabinet filling up with division titles and it seemed nothing could go wrong. However the Cosmo’s mega spending eventually resulted in animbalance of power with other clubs, and the North American Soccer League (NASL) lost its television deal with broadcast giant ABC. By the mid-eighties attendances across the league fell dramatically and the retirement of Pelé only worsened matters. In 1984 the league folded, and with that the Cosmo’s franchise. Soccer was not to be forgotten. The States hosted the 1994 World Cup and soon after, Major League Soccer (MLS) was introduced. The New York Red Bulls are now the primary team representing the Big Apple. Exciting times are ahead as, in August 2010 Pelé was announced as the club’s honorary president, along with ex

Chelsea masseur Terry Byrne as Chief Executive. Eric Cantona and Cobi Jones also stepped up as club ambassadors. The master plan is now in place to reinstate the team for the 2013 MLS season. Terry Byrne summed up the Cosmo ethos perfectly in a mission statement to the press earlier in the year when he said, “The new philosophy will be about building an entertaining style of play. Johann Cruyff and Barcelona are the dream model and we want to replicate that with Pelé, Cantona and Jones”. The future is bright for soccer in the United States and the Cosmo’s presence in the MLS will only strengthen its worldwide appeal.



Pelé returns to New York to help Cosmos relive past glories.

IT'S BRITNEY, BITCH



Written by **Damien Ryan**

THE brightest popstar of the late 90s, Britney Spears became subject to the full force of the media’s vicious bite. Despite a very public breakdown and a string of lacklustre appearances, Blackout, the album released at her lowest point, was a pop masterclass. Today it stands as somewhat of a hidden gem in Britney’s back catalogue. The follow-up, Circus, was a messy, inconsistent attempt to gloss over her troubles and return Britney to her heyday. With the release of her seventh studio album this month, Britney acknowledges the misstep that was Circus and returns to the dark, edginess of Blackout with a new collection of sharp, ambitious dance tracks. Femme Fatale is a perfect example of how pop should sound in 2011.

Opening with the anthemic new single, Till the World Ends, we immediately get a good indication of Britney’s new sound. The track is co-penned by Ke\$ha as well as hit-makers Dr. Luke and Max Martin and is infused with the stuttered delivery that has helped Ke\$ha and Katy Perry top the charts. Perfectly designed for the clubs, the

track forgoes a traditional chorus for an infectious ‘oh-oh’ chant. The track’s obvious chorus doesn’t come in until two-thirds of the way through; a surprisingly daring, yet rewarding end, it means the track is suited to the dance floor and the radio. Martin’s influence is all over much of the album, he’s listed as a co-writer on six tracks. The album’s mix of classic collaborators (Martin wrote ...Baby One More Time) and cutting edge producers proves to be a perfect mix for Spears.

How I Roll, is a modern re-imagining of Britney’s early bubblegum pop with it’s bouncy laid-back delivery while Trip to Your Heart brings a breezy euro-pop sensibility. The dubstep flirtation on lead single, Hold It Against Me, isn’t forgotten however. Femme Fatale’s dubstep influence flows through the album’s core, bubbling to the surface on several of the tracks. Inside Out is a slow-burning mid-tempo about one last night with the ex, with a grinding dubstep bassline. The track’s self-referencing lyric, ‘hit me one more time, it’s so amazing’, will put a smile of the face of any Britney fan. Seal it with a

Kiss is littered with dubstep’s signature whomps and a moody breakdown; knowing winks towards the new genre du-jour.

The closing track, Criminal is the closest thing to a ballad on the album. Starting off with a flute and guitar, the track bursts into full on electro melancholy. ‘Mama I’m in love with criminal/And this type of love isn’t rational, it’s physical’, Britney sings on the Mirwais-esque track. The track’s middle 8 harks back to the pure pop sensibility of her early career that made Britney a star.

Britney has said good things about the album. “I think it’s the best album I’ve ever made... I’ll let the music speak for me.” It’s a good choice; Femme Fatale is the exact album Britney should be making at this point of her career. It’s smart, edgy and perfectly of-the-moment. Despite her personal troubles, Britney’s still got ‘it’.

“With the release of her seventh studio album this month, Britney acknowledges the misstep that was Circus and returns to the dark, edginess of Blackout with a new collection of sharp, ambitious dance tracks. Femme Fatale is a perfect example of how pop should sound in 2011.”

#DOLANS March / April

Wed 23rd	LIMERICK JAZZ SOCIETY PRESENTS ALEX MATHIAS QUARTET PLAYS JOHN COLTRANE	8pm €12
Thurs 24th	dolans dotcomedy presents DAVID MCSAVAGE 7.30pm	€16/€12
Fri 25th	DON MESCALL	8pm €12
Sat 26th	RUBBERBANDITS	10pm €14
Sat 26th	SOMETHING DEEPER WITH DJ HARRI, ROB KELLY & PA MULQUEEN	10pm €12
Tues 29th	CAT LAUGHS CRAIC ATTACK ALL IRELAND COMEDY TALENT SEARCH	8pm €7/5
Fri 1st	IVAN ST JOHN with special guests	8pm €6
Sat 2nd	THE O'MALLEYS!	9pm free
Sat 2nd	CRY BEFORE DAWN	8pm €18

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TALKING THE TALK

Written by **Anthony O’ Brien**

THE King’s Speech is a piece of completely perfunctory Oscar bait by The Weinstein Brothers, which recently won an Academy Award for Best Picture. The performances are subtle but affecting, the production and direction perfectly appeasing. The detail of early 20th century Britain is convincing but doesn’t show off with most of the film taking place indoors with limited variety in costuming. Geoffrey Rush’s performance is endearing. It could have easily become too wise or condescending, but the character is given enough humility to make him bounce off Firth rivetingly. Helena Bonham Carter doesn’t get too much to do, it would be nice to see a little more of how she came to fall in love with the King in the first place. She loves him enough to stay with after rejecting marrying him twice, but seems a little hollow.

Colin Firth does very well, not overemphasising his performance yet drawing the audience in. The direction is basically what you’d expect if you’ve seen any Weinstein Brothers-produced Oscar-seeking film: there is a montage, clapping and overcoming obstacles. There are no major historical liberties, but those that are there serve only to make everyone in the film a bit more perfect than their real-life counterparts which leaves the only real source of conflict to somewhat contrived fallouts between George VI and Logue. The film does have a sense of humour though, and it doesn’t overplay events as a tragedy. I don’t mean to sound too cynical; I came out having enjoyed it, although I was thinking it should have been shorter. As long as you don’t scrutinize the film too closely, it’s a fine experience, but not the best in recent memory.



“It’s complete Oscar bait.”

LIMERICK BAND IMPRESS AT HOME

Written by **Róisín Delaney**

HAILING from County Limerick, indie/rock group Birdthistle certainly know how to grab attention. With five easy on the eye members aged 18 to 34, Birdthistle have something for all musical tastes. From their distinct vocals to brilliant bass expertise, these Limerick lads have a growing following. Not only do they have originality on their side, the band includes three best friends and two brothers, Eoin Ó Siochrú, 34, on guitar and lead vocals with his younger brother Colum, 18, on the drums. They couldn’t be more authentic. Or could they? Just recently on February 25th, Dolans Warehouse was the welcoming venue for this

alternative group’s unique display of talent. Eight instruments in total were performed in five songs by the band. Lead vocalist Eoin incorporated an accordion and acoustic guitar into the same song, portraying his passion for his art in every note. The packed venue upstairs in Dolans offered the perfect mellow atmosphere for Birdthistle’s laid-back lyrics. The nerves were hidden as the five received a warm welcome from the crowd as they performed their opening song, Rainstorm. Halfway through the performance a glockenspiel was introduced in ‘Choir of Diamonds’, its ring reflecting the sound of diamonds. Finally, Birdthistle performed their

debut single, ‘Let it all go Home’, a song about losing everything you ever cherished and moving on to better opportunities. They finished on a high note by playing one of my favourites, ‘The Winding Clock’, and received a well-deserved reception. They are sure to be the ones to watch in 2011 on the Limerick music scene. The single is due for release this summer with their debut album to follow. Birdthistle are due to return to Dolans Upstairs on 7 April to support The Brad Pitt Light Orchestra. Have a listen at <http://breakingtunes.com/birdthistle>.



Written by **Cathriona Slammon**

NEVER Let Me Go is a British dystopian drama based on the acclaimed novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. It tells the story of three friends, Kathy (Carey Mulligan), Ruth (Keira Knightley) and Tommy (Andrew Garfield). The three become embroiled in a love-triangle, amidst a disturbingly familiar yet entirely alternate reality, where basic morals have dissolved in favour of medical progression. Though the premise, in theory, is not unlike the most outlandish of science-fiction, the outlook, pace and cinematography of the film is more akin to a traditional British drama set around the mid-20th century instead of the 1990s. Muted, haunting, reserved and bleak (both visually and tonally), the film avoids any exploration of the obviously unjust fate of the three. Instead, it focuses on the love story between Kathy and Tommy, who have been kept apart by Ruth as she poaches Tommy’s affections while at Hailsham - the boarding school where

they grow up together as they prepare to face their shared destiny. With a slow and meandering pace, the film is restrained and achingly so. Though the story is intriguing and the acting admirably composed, the compliancy of the characters in accepting their fate is exasperating. Kathy is a tower of strength and unwavering acceptance, even when her hopes for an ‘extension’ are quashed. The time spent developing the love story between Kathy and Tommy is not enough to garner an emotional investment in their relationship, thereby falling short on how affected we are by their unfortunate fate. While the book explores this to a much more successful degree, it does not translate well to screen. A character-driven drama with a sci-fi premise doesn’t come along every day. It warrants merit. However, Never Let Me Go tries its best to pack an emotional punch but succeeds only in grazing us with a mediocre adaptation of a well-loved book.

ALL’S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

Written by **Niall O’Sullivan**

“Harvey has been on a hiatus for almost four years since White Chalk. That was an entirely different animal to Let England Shake; a dark, gothic album built on a foundation of haunting piano-based ballads.”

POLLY Jean Harvey is renowned as a songwriter who makes challenging, emotive music with lyrics that demand the listener’s attention. Her latest offering, Let England Shake is no exception. It seems about time, as Harvey has been on a hiatus for almost four years since 2007’s White Chalk. The aforementioned album was an entirely different animal to Let England Shake, a dark, gothic album built on a foundation of haunting piano-based ballads. ‘Let England Shake’ is purely and simply, a war-themed album. Not to be confused with the oft - used term ‘protest album’, this album is instead an intense document of warfare and the tragedy it provokes. With this album she takes an almost childlike curiosity

in vividly portraying the violence and senselessness of war. Long-term Harvey fans and newcomers alike will be very pleasantly surprised with ‘Let England Shake’, especially considering the grave theme of the album. This is without a doubt PJ Harvey’s most listenable album, with the raven-haired songstress trading in experimental blues infused rock, for light, beautifully-crafted melodies. There are some real gems here. The title-track is a wonderful jangly opening tune, with PJ Harvey singing in a lilting high register and Mick Harvey’s tasteful drumming carrying the song. A xylophone adds a surreal playfulness as the horn section drops in and out like a whisper. Other highlights of the album include The Last Living Rose, a

great rousing guitar ballad, again made tuneful by the addition of an air section in the background. The Words That Maketh Murder has an infectious clap-along melody and strong guitar, while Harvey croons “I’ve seen soldiers fall like lumps of meat”. Hanging In The Wire is almost an anomaly for Harvey, a beautifully gentle piano-driven song which is a monument to Harvey’s versatility as a musician. Let England Shake is a must, not only for current PJ Harvey fans, but also for those who are unacquainted with her work. It’s the most tuneful and easily listenable album of Harvey’s and also shows off her unequalled talents as a songwriter. Highly recommended.



THE FUTURE IS ODD

Written by **Josh Lee**

RECORD producer Steve Albini; full time polemicist, and the architect behind Nirvana’s grunge relic ‘In Utero’ once likened signing with a major record label to “getting involved in a racket”. Hyperbole perhaps, but Chicago hip-hop artist Lupe Fiasco’s recent trip through the musical mire to secure the release of his third album ‘Lasers’ shows that the recording industry can be very much a fickle, disloyal realm. Submitted as far back as 2009, Lasers was shelved for two years over contractual disagreements, only to emerge recently after a long fan-led struggle as a creatively suffocated LP that the rapper himself has a lukewarm relationship with. Creative shackles are the last thing on the mind of the 11 strong hip-hop collective Odd Future Wolf Gang Kill Them All, however. The Los Angeles-based group (ages ranging from 17 to 21) introduced themselves in 2008 with the free digital self-release of ‘The Odd Future Tape’. But it was only in 2010, after the release of then 16 year

old member Earl Sweatshirt’s debut ‘Earl’ that the group began to draw the attention of the hive-like blogosphere. The gang are explicitly atheist; mildly nihilistic, and provocateurs extraordinaire all. Rape, sex and murder are all regular topics for the ensemble who seem to revel in the wanton violence and controversy bait; that wouldn’t be misplaced on the pages of Burgess’ ‘A Clockwork Orange’. Although the grandiose bravado is self-mocking in its apparent insincerity. Despite being a self-proclaimed straight-edger, de facto leader Tyler the Creator, often adapts the persona of a drug-toting rapist. It’s not exactly radio-friendly stuff. Yet there’s much more to the group than mindless shock-value. Their production is viscerally lo-fi, yet guttural and ominous. Their lyrics: an imposing equilibrium of unnerving bluntness and juvenile vulnerability. There’s also a hinting undercurrent of precocious intelligence and skewed awareness that occasionally peeks between the witty wordplay and

unabashed vulgarity. Indeed, Tyler’s self-lacerating, pity-wallowing 2009 debut ‘Bastard’ confronted the void left by his absentee father. While the 19-year-old has now signed a one album deal with XL for his upcoming April release ‘Goblin’ he has since declared he maintains full creative control. The video for lead single “Yonkers” has amassed over three million YouTube views since its release in early February. Conceived, directed and produced by Tyler himself, the transfixing video has caught the glances of hip-hop mainstays Mos Def and Kanye West and preceded an energetic appearance by Tyler and fellow band member Hodgy Beats on American talk-show Late Night with Jimmy Fallon. With such momentous strides being made by the young group, Tyler and his Wolf Gang look set to make a refreshing splash in the world of hip-hop. The future is, most certainly, odd.

BAROQUE AT ITS BEST

Written by **Barry Murphy**

The Irish Chamber Orchestra’s Baroque Gala takes place on the 24 March at the University Concert Hall, Limerick. The orchestra will be performing with leading baroque conductor Matthew Halls. Halls is an acclaimed conductor, formerly the Artistic Director of The King’s Consort, and has performed with prestigious orchestras all across Europe. Halls was said to be “looking forward to his debut with the Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) in Limerick.” Joining the ICO will be Catalan soprano Nuria Rial, whose extensive discography has received much acclaim. Baroque

is a style of music originating in 17th century Europe, with emphasis on vocal and instrumental colour. It was conceived in the same period as opera and orchestra. The ICO will be performing a baroque programme featuring vocals and orchestra from Bach, Handel and Telemann. Tickets for the event are €20, with student tickets costing €10. Pre-concert supper tickets are also available for €48. See www.irishchamberorchestra.info for more details on the event.

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Written by **Tricia Purcell**

HOME to Oprah, Obama and Al Capone, the city of Chicago is steeped in history and excitement. Every city has so much to see and do but not to the extent of the Windy City. Whether you are a sports fan, shopping enthusiast or sight-seer extraordinaire, nowhere beats Chi-town. The main strip of the third biggest city in the United States is the Magnificent Mile, otherwise known as Michigan Avenue. This is an entire mile of shops, amazing architecture

and beautiful scenery. Starting with the famous Water Tower, the main mile includes attractions like the John Hancock Observatory, the Art Institute, Millennium Park and Field Museum. In the summer months, Millennium Park is home to some great (and free) outdoor concerts and festivals. Just off Michigan Ave, you will find Navy Pier, which has spectacular views of the lake and is a short walk to the man-made beaches. Also during the

summer, the Pier hosts some great firework displays and is home to a Ferris wheel where you can get pretty pictures of the city skyline. The Loop train system is so easy to use, getting around couldn't be simpler. I would recommend hopping on the downtown area for a half hour to get some an alternative look to Chicagoland. The city is also residence to the Chicago Cubs, Bears and Bulls. Even if you are not a major sporting

fan, tail-gating at one of the football or baseball games is an experience in itself, before any balls even get moving! And when you are all out of cash, don't worry: you can visit the Lincoln Park Zoo, which is free. Essential to a city visit is the famous deep dish pizza. Believe me, it'll be like nothing you've ever tasted before. If you want to get a slight sneak-preview of the city, you should check out Ferris Bueller's Day Off. The

movie captures some of the impressive surroundings and notable buildings, all of which hasn't changed much in the past 24 years. Aer Lingus does great seasonal offers on airfare from Dublin and Shannon to O'Hare.

STUDY ABROAD IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Written by **Jason Kennedy**

HOW did people on Erasmus get along without Facebook? My friends will know that I was a Facebook fanatic who could easily waste hours chatting, poking friends and posting the most irrelevant tripe. Now, I'm worse than ever. One of the disadvantages of the Newfoundland weather is the very common flu that has already swept through the campus. I was hit particularly hard and have been bedbound longer than I would have liked. This has lead to my laptop getting more use in a day than it would normally get in a week. This is a bit of a mixed blessing. I get to keep in contact with my friends, which makes me feel that I'm right back in UL and it keeps me up to date with the news. Unfortunately, it also leads people to believe that I had absolutely no life here whatsoever. Fortunately, when I do get to venture out of my self-imposed quarantine zone, I have a lot to do. I've already handed up one genealogy paper and a research paper on the Thirty Tyrants

of Ancient Greece. Next up is a paper on the popularity and decline of doo wop and a recorded interview of an international student. Yes, I'm talking about the most fitting exchange student classes going. I'm also involved in the Students' Union elections here, helping the incumbent CSO get re-elected. It's amazing the difference between their elections and ours. For one, they don't allow penny sweets. I'd say that if penny sweets weren't allowed in UL, the voting numbers would be halved. There are no t-shirt wearing campaigners. The SU gives around \$200 to candidates to spend on their campaigns and

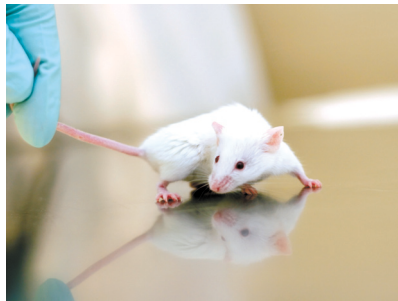
students are not allowed to go above it. The candidates don't seem to mind, but it seems to diminish the buzz and atmosphere that normally comes with an election week. Let's hope there's more excitement in store for the ULSU candidates.



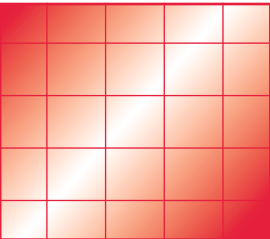
CO-OP IN CLARE

Written by **Keira Maher**

AS two months have already passed since I've started co-op, it's nice to feel settled into the workplace and accepted by my fellow colleagues. I must admit, it was difficult to settle in at first. A new job, a new town, new people: it wasn't easy. At present, I am putting together a communication book for a non verbal gentleman. As this man cannot use his voice, it was important that he had a device that would allow him to communicate with the people around him. For this specific project, I had to gather photographs that were associated with the man's life such as pictures of his support worker/volunteers and family among other things such as food and drink options. It was necessary for the pictures to be detailed so it would be easy to communicate with others as the man can point to a specific picture. The main aim of the association is to provide a housing service to those who have an intellectual disability. At the moment, the association is in the process of looking properties to lease out to service users. Things are pretty hectic here as many property developers are getting in touch with us at the moment. As Ennis is immersed in traditional music, I have been to a couple of sessions. Ennis is full of beautiful bars and restaurants and next week I'm going



for lunch in the Temple Gate hotel for one of the service user birthday. There are also talks of a day-trip to Galway which I am quite excited about. I still miss Limerick and my friends there. I was lucky enough to manage a few days off during Charity Week which I think was a great success. I went back to work on Thursday and it felt like I was dying a slow death. I was never so tired in all my life as I was Thursday evening and by the time I got home from work I went straight to bed. I think that's all my news for this edition. I hope all the mid-terms went well. I might be down to Limerick again soon. You can't beat those college nights out!



The Grid

Exclusive communication for Clubs and Societies.

Attention C&S PROs! Send content for The Grid to cseditor@live.ie only before Friday, 25 March 2011 to benefit from your space in the next issue of An Focal.

Clubs and Societies	Ladies Rugby See C&S Features Outdoor Pursuits (OPC) See C&S Features Parkour See C&S Features
Badminton The club is organising a quiz night on Thursday, 24 March from 8pm in the Sports Bar. All welcome.	Sub Aqua Looking forward to a busy spring! Trainees, get all of your pool assessments done and then we're off to open water! Thursdays, PESS Pit 6pm.
Boxing UL We're starting a new boxing club for UL and would like to know if people are interested. If you are please contact Peter at 10130799@studentmail.ul.ie for further info.	Tennis Indoor training is now finished. Training continues outdoors in the Courts on Monday at 4pm and Wednesday at 12pm, need to practice guys, Cup is nearly here.
Chess Meetings: 6pm to 8pm Mondays EG-010, Thursday 6pm to 8pm SU Room 3. Pop in if you are interested in chess. All skill levels welcome. Coaching provided for beginners or intermediate players.	Trampoline Next competition: Irish Student Trampoline Open, Dublin, end of March. Training is as ever Tuesdays 7:30pm to 10pm and Thursdays 7:30 to 8:30pm. All welcome to our fun keep fit forum.
Dance UL Dance classes running in Dromroe Village Hall on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays as usual this week. For more details, check out our Facebook page or www.danceul.com	Ultimate Frisbee Training and development weekend in Galway, 16 to 17 April. Friendly matches with NUIG plus great night out planned. Beginners and improvers welcome. See www.ulnijas.com for training times and info.
Fencing Intervarsities: Mens Épée, 6th place. Womens Épée, 3rd place. Student Individuals: Miriam Cashman, 1st place, Womens Épée. Training Tuesday 7pm to 9pm and Thursdays 6pm to 8pm, all welcome.	Anime and Manga Anime Screenings: Tuesdays 6:30pm in KBG012. Drawing Workshops: Wednesdays 7pm in SU Room 3. Japanese Workshops: Thursdays 7:30pm in SU Room 3
Handball UL one wall tournament will be held in the PESS building on Saturday 2 April . Entry forms can be found on www.gaahandball.ie or contact the club directly at ulhandball@gmail.com .	Computer Weekly Computer society tutorials in B2-041 at 6pm on Tuesdays. Google Talk on Thursday of Week 9 at 6:15pm, presented by Steven Young: Storage, Reacting to Bottlenecks & User-Facing Services (Google Analytics).
Nature Society National spring clean starts Sunday, 27 March at 11am. For more information, or if you have any questions or queries at all, please email us on ulspringclean@gmail.com	Cumann Gaeilge Editorial: Comhghairdeas! The fireworks were a stunning end to Seachtain na Gaeilge!
Photographic Check out the UL PhotoSoc website for updates of coming workshops: http://photo.ul.ie/ It is not too late to join!	Energy Be Part of The Future - Search for "UL Energy Soc" on Facebook for info and up-and-coming events.
Poker Tournaments Mondays in the sports bar. Check the UL Poker Soc Facebook page for more details.	Games Board Game Night: Every Monday, from 6pm to 11pm. GSoc members only. Console Day, Wednesdays from 11am to 6pm. Open to all students. €4 to join.
Pool & Darts Pool sessions every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:45pm to 10:45pm.	Literary Meeting to be arranged in next few weeks. Email Aoife Murphy: 09004730@studentmail.ul.ie or Sinéad Fahey: 10094032@studentmail.ul.ie for more details.
Skydive Parachute Packing Monday 6pm to 9pm EG010, new members welcome! Jump for just €100 by signing up to do a course. E-mail skydiveu@gmail.com for more info!	Ógra Fianna Fáil Meetings Monday 6pm, SU Room 2. Add us on Facebook. All welcome.



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Charity number: CHY14229
Company Registration Number: 336502



MARKETING STUDENTS RAISE MONEY FOR CRÈCHES

Written by **James Crowe**

‘PEDAL for Change’ is a UL student run charity event which will take place in the Crescent Shopping Centre, Dooradoyle, Limerick on the 26 March from 9.30am to 6.00pm. The goal is to raise money for two crèches in the Southill area to change the prospects of the children attending them. These crèches have the bare minimum of supplies and any money raised can make a major change to the

development and the future of these children. This event is running in tandem with the ‘GetBACK Challenge’ and the Masters in Marketing, Consumption and Society. The ethos of BDO Get Back Challenge is to prevent childhood obesity through encouraging physical activity at any age and donations are badly needed to purchase outdoor play equipment for this crèche.

The aim for this event is to get as many people pedalling for change as possible, and of course to raise as much money as we can. There will be two stationary bikes, two teams, red versus blue, and the team that raises the most wins. For further information and to pick a team check out www.facebook.com/pedalforchange



The Blue Team: Right to left: Paul McHugh, Georgina Ringrose& Emma Day battle it out with the Red Team: Right to left: Thomas Whelan, Katie Casey & Amy O'Regan while James Enright acts as referee. Photo Credit: Padraig Mooney

LONDON, PARIS, LIMERICK... FASHION SOC LAUNCHES IN STYLE

Written by **Emily Maree,**
UL Fashion Soc Treasurer

THE Kate Mosses and Anna Wintours of Limerick city were out in force on Thursday, 24 February at the biggest fashion event UL has ever seen. The Kilmurry Lodge Hotel was the venue of the UL Fashion Society Launch Event and fashionable it certainly was.

The evening, organised by the Fashion Society committee, was in aid of the Symptomatic Breast Cancer Unit at the Regional Hospital in Limerick. People from all over Limerick arrived in their glad-rags to raise money and have a great night at what was described by audience members as ‘the best fashion show they’d ever seen associated with UL’. The evening kicked off with an outstanding performance from local

band, Animal Beats, who had captured the hearts of the women in the audience by the end of their three-song set.

All 12 female models were UL students but it was hard to distinguish them from professionals as they strutted down the catwalk. Four male models, including SU President Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, modelled Diesel and other lines for the adoring audience.

During the interval, the crowd were treated to a spectacular performance by Dance UL, choreographed by Dance UL Hip-Hop teacher and UL student, Kate Hamilton. The troupe performed amazing stunts to rapturous applause. The Fashion Society had one more surprise for the audience.

The last model down the rose-petal strewn catwalk was Limerick’s very own drag queen, Celine. Singing Tina Turner’s ‘Proud Mary’ with the help of the enthusiastic audience, Celine picked the raffle winners. Prizes were generously sponsored by Ivory Closet, Brown Thomas and other Limerick outlets. Animal Beats played us out as the audience left, some to head home after their fashion fix, others to go into town to Molly’s Nightclub for the Launch Event after-party. Everyone involved had a great night and raised a lot of money for a great cause.

“During the interval, the crowd was treated to a spectacular performance, choreographed by Dance UL Hip-Hop teacher and UL student, Kate Hamilton.”

GOOGLE ENGINEER TO VISIT UL

Written by **Paul Gleeson,**
Computer Soc PRO

The Computer Society is hosting a talk with a Google engineer, Steven Young, on Thursday 24 March at 6.15pm in D1-050 (John Holland). The talk will cover both Google’s File System and Google Analytics. Steven gave a talk in the University in 2008 on Google’s File System. This time he intends to expand on the presentation he gave previously by talking about recent developments in Google’s data storage. Steven now works within the user facing services team and will also be talking about Google Analytics, a service the company offers to generate statistics about visitors to a website. The Computer Society runs talks and tutorials for the benefit of its members and the wider campus community, as well as providing services including web hosting, databases and email to members. We run weekly tutorials on Tuesdays in B2-041 So far this semester we have been covering topics mainly related to web development. Everyone is welcome to attend.

AWARDS ACROSS THE BOARDS FOR HANDBALLERS IN STATES

Written by **John FitzGerald,**
UL Handball PRO

ON Tuesday, 1 March, while most were enjoying the Charity Week festivities, five members of the UL handball club flew home from the USHA collegiate, held in Tempe, Arizona. All five claimed awards in their respective categories in the event, held from 23 to 27 February.

UL’s sole female representative in the competition, Laura-Anne Furlong, competed in the Ladies Division 2C, where she had victories over Alana Sales of West Washington University and Elizabeth Winberg of Minnesota State. In the semi-final, Laura-Anne was pitched against Shayla Satterwhite of Utah State. After losing the first game by seven points Laura-Anne came back in the second to force the issue but unfortunately lost out by three.

In the Men’s B doubles John FitzGerald and Colm Ó’Lúing reached the final for UL. John and Colm dispatched pairings from San Jose, Stoney Brook NY, Minnesota State and Illinois to

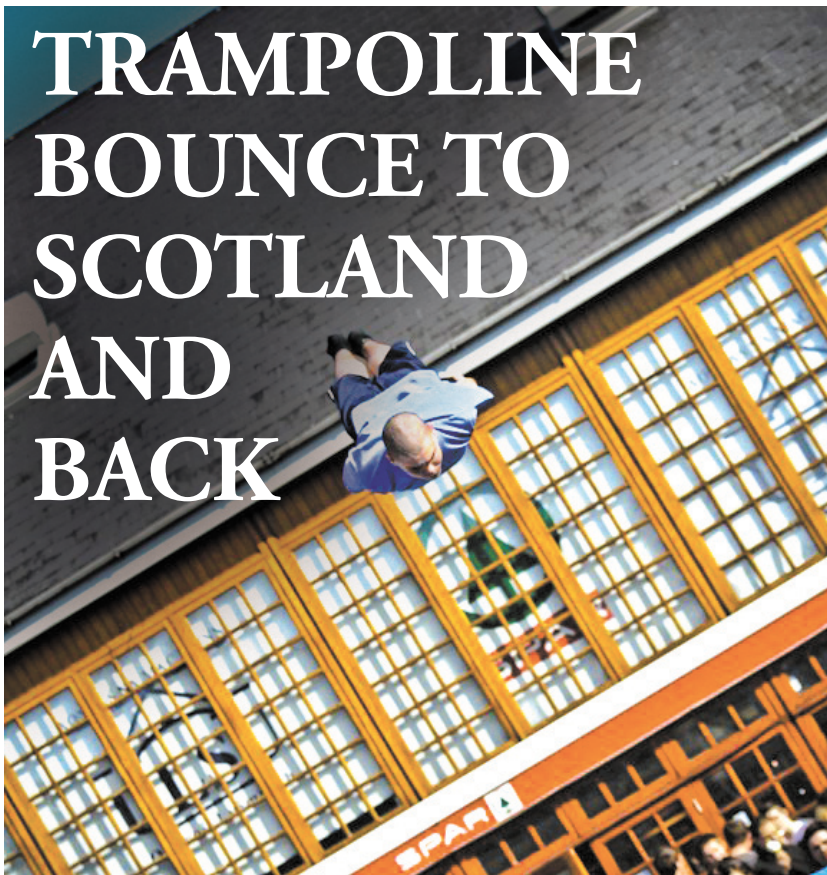
qualify for the final against Lake Forest College Illinois.

This was always going to be a tough contest against the dominant Lake Forest. The first game of the match was won by the Lake Foresters by the narrowest of margins. Lake Forest continued their advantage in the second game and Colm and John and had to be satisfied with the runners-up spot.

In Division 3A, Eamon McNicholas was UL’s second semi-finalist of the tournament. Despite injury, Eamon ground out wins against Frank Giles of West Washington and Ryan Kendal of Pacific University before losing out to Tyler Bettenhausen of Illinois 21-

20, 21-8. In the Men’s Division 2C UL finished top of the pile with Paul Holden claiming the Winners title. Paul despatched of Vanetsky Busser of Minnesota to set up an all Irish final against Danny Riordan of IT Tralee which Paul emerged from as champion with an 11-5 tie breaker win.

This was a very successful tournament for the club with all members qualifying for semi-finals at the least. Next on the agenda is our own one-wall tournament, starting at the PESS on 2 April.



Written by **Natalie McSharry,**
ULTC Co-Captain

IT’S been a busy few weeks for UL Trampolining and Gymnastics Club. On Tuesday, 22 February, we joined forces with Parkour UL for a switch day. Both clubs had high hopes for the event after ULTC’s very successful switch last year with the Dance Society. For this fundraiser, the training time was split into two and began with the entire group turning their hand to various gymnastics principals. These included floor, beam, trampoline, double-mini trampoline and vault. The trampoline and gymnastics coaches put everybody through a tough but enjoyable two hour session. After a short break it was time for the gymnasts to be put through their paces by the Parkour Club with proceedings overseen by the drill master Conor Hurley. Under their instruction, the gymnasts applied a whole new mode of attack to the traditional apparatus they are accustomed to. The whole evening was a great success with both parties learning new and valuable skills, as well as meeting new friends along the way. For Charity Week, the Club staged an

outdoor bounce on Thursday, 3 March. Thanks to the good weather, the bounce was a resounding success. This was another opportunity to showcase our skills as well as pack in a couple of extra hours training time before the Scottish Competition. ULTC travelled to Scotland for the weekend of the 4-6 March for the Scottish University Trampolining Open Competition, a highly prestigious event. Although ULTC brought no medals home this year, we were able to meet the high standard. many competitors were just shy of medals and ULTC achieved the highest scores of the Irish competitors throughout the levels.

The main competition was on Saturday, ending on an amazing performance by the elite competitors, showing the most difficult moves any of us had ever seen. The following day, the gymnasts took to the hall for the synchronised competition, with both serious and fun sections. Finally, the whole club would like to wish get well soon to Gráinne Horan who hurt herself in warm-ups on Friday night.



HEARTBREAK AT THE FARM FOR UL NINJAS

Written by **Patrick Moran,**
Ultimate Frisbee PRO

AFTER much anticipation, UL Ultimate Frisbee’s Development Squad attempted to retain their Intervarsity title in Cork on Saturday, 5 March. Expectations, as well as spirits, were high leading into the tournament. Five of the squad members were reminded of victory on that same stage last year. The rest of the team was made up of players who only took up the sport last September, which is remarkable considering the standard they have reached. In the group stage we faced UCC2, UCD and Trinity in that order. The team coasted through this stage of the tournament, which meant they had

the difficult task of stepping it up in the semi-finals, when it was all to play for, against NUIG. UL led for most of the game but Galway always stayed in touch and had pegged it back to 8-8 by the time limit. This meant it was game to nine, with the next point winning. The players on the field deserve credit for that last point, they held their nerve despite immense pressure from NUIG, and managed to get that vital score and progress. So the stage was set for a replay of last year’s epic final: UL versus UCC1. The intense rivalry between the teams was evident. The Ninjas

took an early 2-0 lead. Cork answered the call though and launched a tactical onslaught. Their quick continuation-pass game was irrepressible, and their unique defensive formations difficult to deal with. They stormed ahead with little by way of response. UL did battle valiantly though and ran themselves ragged, closing the gap to 13-7 by the end. The spirit in the huddle was great to witness, both teams having enjoyed a great final.



Image: David Bermingham



Poulnabrone Dolmen. Image: PhotoSoc

PHOTOSOC GOES HUNTING SHORT- TAILED VOLE

Written by **Florence Earle**

UL PHOTO SOC continues its series of workshops with professional photographers. This month, photographer Peter O’Donnell (<http://www.thewidereye.com>), winner of the Irish Professional Photographer Association’s Best Landscape Image 2011, ran a field trip with members of the society in the Burren National Park. On Saturday, 5 March, a handful of brave photo enthusiasts woke up before dawn to catch the sunrise and spend the day with landscape photographer Peter O’Donnell. The field trip began at Lough Gealain, Co. Clare, in the middle of the remote Burren National Park. The group was quite unlucky with the overcast weather, but this did not prevent the participants from venturing further into the barren terrain. After all, what is better than a few clouds and a chilling fog to create dramatic, eerie shots? The fittest members journeyed uphill and reached the summit of

Mullach Mor where they enjoyed beautiful vistas of lakes, ancient stone walls and limestone galore for which Burren is famous for. In the meantime, the other participants who preferred to spend more time on the flat encountered some wildlife, the elusive short-tailed vole, hard to capture on camera. The day also included a scenic drive along the unique Clare coast, and a stop at the Poulnabrone dolmen. Throughout the day, Peter O’Donnell showed the lucky participants how he works, revealed a few tricks, and satisfied the group’s avid curiosity. Check out the UL PhotoSoc website for updates of coming workshops: <http://photo.ul.ie/>. It is not too late to join. Membership will allow you to attend future workshops for free or at a discounted rate, to borrow photographic equipment, and also offers you the opportunity to cover UL events.

LITERARY SOCIETY WILL BRING LOVE OF BOOKS TO UL

IT’S strange to think that a university boasting groups ranging from Skydiving to Ultimate Frisbee doesn’t have a Literary Society. We, the newly-launched UL Literary Society, are hoping to correct that. We want the society to be a medium through which like-minded people can meet to discuss their favourite titles, discover new books, and even share original material. When the society is fully up and running, we hope to use our resources to hold workshops with writers, and take trips to places of literary significance, such as Hay-on-Wye, Wales’ ‘booktown’. Naturally, the most important part of a society is its members. With that in mind, we’re currently arranging a meeting to get acquainted and hear

what you want from the society. We’d love to hear all of your suggestions, and absolutely everyone is welcome. We’d like to get an idea of the number of people that might be interested, so if you’re interested in joining the society or just think you might have some useful input, please contact us at one of the email addresses below and we’ll get in touch. **Contact details:**
Aoife Murphy:
09004730@studentmail.ul.ie

Sinéad Fahey:
10094032@studentmail.ul.ie

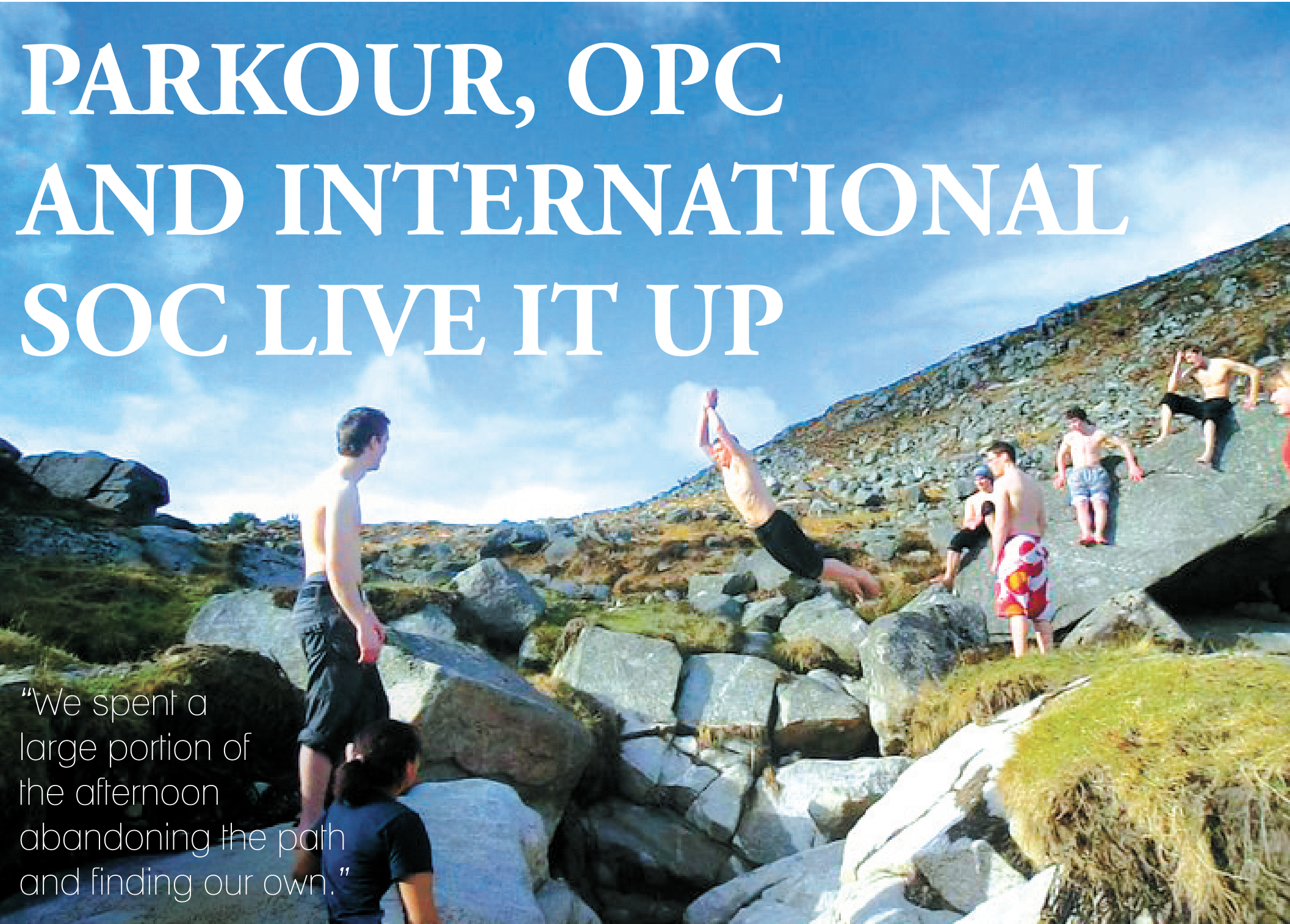
UL SPRING CLEAN: GIVE A BIT BACK!

Written by **James Moloney-Quinn,**
Nature Soc PRO

THE UL Nature Society, in association with An Taisce’s National Spring Clean, is organising a campus-wide clean-up of the riverbanks and pathways that run through the University. On Sunday, Week 9 (27 March) staff, students and all members of the wider community are welcomed to the UL Spring Clean’s inaugural launch. With refreshments and many fantastic prizes to be won, there’s every reason to come out and lend a hand. The Spring Clean is only part of a greater scheme: An Taisce’s Green Campus Programme. UCC, having recently received the Green Campus

Award or Green Flag, now reports a saving of €118,972.32 in costs of waste management from 2007 to 2008, with their year average recycling rate up from 21% to 53%. This is money UL cannot afford to waste, especially with the spectre of University fee-increases looming on the horizon. Sunday, 27 March will see UL Spring Clean’s inaugural launch, kicking off at 11am at Dromroe Hall, followed by a cleaning expedition along the river with the Kayaking Club, Limerick Scouts and any other interested Club or Soc. Monday’s a day for a walk-and-talk by the river at 6pm with tree expert Ted Cook as our learned and lyrical

guide. Tuesday’s time for a movie, with the Energy Society powering a bicycle cinema near the Stables in the evening. There will be tea, coffee, cake, prizes, beautiful weather and craic. For more information, or if you have any questions or queries at all, please email us on ulspringclean@gmail.com



Written by **Emma Porter,**
Training Officer PKUL

AFTER venturing into what seemed remarkably similar to the middle of nowhere, PKUL made a valiant effort to ensure all its members had beds. Up bright and early the next morning and out the door quick to tag along with the boulderers. It wasn’t long before we were three quarters of the way up the

steep hills in the boulder field jumping from boulder to boulder. The promise of bigger and better was the only thing to drag us away.

We spent a large portion of the afternoon abandoning the path and finding our own, very scenic, route up the waterfall which stretches miles up

into the hills. With only one small hitch to the climb, we climbed up the last part through the waterfall. Moving on eventually, to our surprise we found an abandoned container perfect for Cats and Climbs. Realising the time of the day we began the return journey to the hostel. Being the good citizens we are

however, we stopped to feed the ducks in the local park before practicing some more Parkour. After being out for so long, the guys put some of the more hardcore hikers to shame by out running them back to the hostel. The fun continued long into the night with the OPC’s valentine’s ball, Karaoke,

push-ups and a warm reception in the local town. A great night was had by all and PKUL would like to thank the OPC and International Society for a great weekend.

LUCK NOT ON

ATHLETES’ SIDE BUT

SURPRISES AHEAD

Written by **Liam Feely, Acting PRO**

THE Irish University Cross Country Championships held in the National Aquatics Centre in Dublin proved a so near yet so far experience for UL’s distance squad. Both the male and female teams came forth in the overall standings. However, there were some fine individual performances no more so than by Liam Reale who came home second in the men’s event behind Dan Mulhare who recently competed admirably in the European Indoor championships in Paris.

In finishing second Reale fended off the challenges posed by recent European Cross Country Under-23 team gold medallists Breandan O’Neill and John Coughlan. Overall, the men’s team finished fourth behind the well financed DCU outfit, WIT, and QUB

respectively. The team scorers were the aforementioned Liam Reale (2nd), Tomas Hayes (28th), Kevin Moore (38th), Colin Maher (43rd), yours truly (46th), and Tyler Hynes (50th). Other athletes who competed on the day included club skipper James Ledingham (51st), Fergal Swithwick (61st), UL Alumni and all-round good guy Seamus Gilhooley (82nd), Cormac Delahunty (83rd), Finbar Horgan (93rd), and Diarmuid Crowley (120th). On the women’s side, Una Britton carried the UL flag admirably finishing in fifth position.

She was followed home by Catherine Kelly (22nd), Laura O Driscoll (29th), Aibhe Carroll (30th), Miriam Cashman (35th) and Fionnula Mulroy (49th). They too finished outside of

the podium in fourth position. Overall the event will give UL Athletes some food for thought as they prepare for the outdoor varsity championships to be held in Belfast at the end of April. On a final note, UL Athletics Club are in the process of finalizing details of a fundraising event that no other club or society in UL could do without the help of our athletes. More details will follow shortly. It will involve a world record attempt.

DANCE CLUB HIP-

HOPS TO VICTORY

Written by **Emily Maree,**
Dance UL PRO

IT’S been a hectic couple of weeks for Dance UL in the run up to the Annual Dance Intervarsities in UCC. On Thursday, 3 March, two squads, competing in the Jazz and Alternative categories, travelled down to the Mardyke Arena in UCC to battle against eight other universities around the country, including DCU, NUIG and our hosts UCC. Joining them was the hip-hop squad to entertain the masses with a half-time show. Soon, the jazz category started and our four gorgeous dancers, Christelle, Jenna, Ariel and Maria took to the stage to Bloc Party’s ‘Hunting for Witches’, choreographed by Rebecca Daly, the club’s jazz teacher and stunned the crowd with their eerie yet beautiful routine. All too soon, it was over and we sat back to watch the hip-hop squads do their thing. Half-time came and Dance UL’s hip-hop took the stage and wowed everyone with their amazing routine choreographed by Kate Hamilton, the clubs hip-hop teacher.

With moves worthy of Diversity, the squad impressed everyone, including the judges, proving that we can definitely bring home the title next year. Second half began and the alternative squad took to the stage. Christelle Oliver-Dussault’s choreography to ‘Addicted’ by Hawksley Workman was moving and earned a standing ovation from the crowd. After an agonising wait, it was time for the results and the two squads placed in their respective categories. The jazz squad came second after UCC’s rendition of ‘Sway’ and alternative placed third after DCU and NUI Maynooth. The club is all extremely proud of all its dancers who did an amazing job and will be back to take home the trophy next year.

All our videos and photos are on our Facebook page so check them out. Also, check the timetable and see if there are any classes that suit you and come along, it’s a lot of fun and who knows, you might be able to dance like our squads before the end of the semester.



Written by **Kelly Dwyer**

AFTER such a tight game in the league final last season, where UL won in extra time, it is once again, UL and UCC who have made it as far this year. This match promises to be an exciting and tough encounter for both teams; UL wishing defend their title and remain unbeaten this season, and UCC wishing to bring home the silverware after the bittersweet taste of coming so close last year. Both teams met earlier last semester, and UL came away victorious after dominating heavily in the first half. But it was UCC who shone in the second-half when they came back onto the pitch calm, focused and ready to attack UL’s defensive line. Had it not been for UL’s patience and cool reactions under pressure, the outcome

that day could have been very different. ULLR are well aware of the tough challenge ahead of them, UCC being the only team to get a score past them all season, making them UL’s biggest challenge to overcome in the attempt to win the league. The upcoming match is what UL has been training hard for all year. The high competition for places on the UL team makes it necessary for every player to give 100%, this gives UL an edge during matches that many teams do not possess. Hopefully this will give UL an advantage when it comes to game day!

“UCC are a very tough physical team who have been left licking their wounds after previous encounters. They will be well drilled and defiantly

up for the game, where they will intend to try everything to take the coveted league trophy from us. We put in a strong performance against them before Christmas but they will be a different team full of hunger to win this final. They have contested it against us for the last three years so each team is well aware of each other’s strengths and weaknesses” Captain Fiona Reidy said. This Final will be a cracker with UL seeking to win their ninth title in 10 years. Trinity College is the venue on 25 March with a 2pm kick off. Come and cheer on UL.



SKYDIVE UL JUMPS BACK INTO ACTION

Written by **Seán Hahessey**

SKYDIVE UL is back in the skies. As those of you who were not curled up in the foetal position for the glorious last days of Week 6 may have noticed, some of the club’s experienced members jumped into the UL pitches on Thursday, Week 6. If you missed it, fear not, there are plenty of cool pics and videos posted on the Skydive UL Facebook page, and if that’s not enough to whet your appetite how about 10 days in the southern French Alps viewed from 14,000 feet?

With a brand spanking new home in Birr, just an hour from UL, the club will soon come into full swing in the next couple of weeks, running first jump courses for everyone beginning the sport, along with re-training for those already trained or jumped last semester. The club will be heading out on our annual trip to Gap, in the



beautiful Southern Alps of France as soon as exams are over in May. That’s the 17th if you don’t happen to have the semester schedule posted up on your bedroom wall. Not experienced? No problem. You only need to have one jump done with the club before leaving, and with the almost guaranteed weather there, you will be a lot more experienced by the time you land back on Irish soil.

At €100 for the first jump course, insurance and the jump itself, it’s never been cheaper. After that, it’s just €40 per jump. Whether you’re in your

second semester in UL, just popped over for Study Abroad or Erasmus, or about to enter the big bad world with degree in hand, just remember: the sky is not the limit, it’s the beginning.

For more information, to sign-up for any course and the end of semester trip, or just to get over your fear of flying check out our website skydiveul.org, and e-mail skydiveu@gmail.com or drop into EGO10 on a Monday from 6-9pm for packing classes.

STUDY ABROAD WITH THE OPC

Written by **Kailey Ruel**

BEFORE I even came to Ireland, I was reading things about the Outdoor Pursuits Club at UL. I was looking at my options, trying to decide where in Ireland I was going to go. One of my main criteria when choosing was somewhere that would allow me to continue climbing while on my semester abroad. I looked at Dublin and Cork, and finally found Limerick. I noticed something about a climbing wall and I was interested. Then I read further and noticed that this club operated the wall and other outings. I thought, ‘well that’s ok, it looks like I can just go and climb, I don’t need to be in the club’. I had no idea what I was getting into.

When I went to the climbing wall on the first night, I realized that this was going to be something completely different from what I was expecting. I walked into an intense tickle fight, a continuous stream of swearing and incessant teasing. I was instantly drawn to this group of people who

didn’t care what their first impression looked like. That’s why I came back, again and again. And that’s why I went on the weekend trips including Dingle, the Burren, Torc Mountain, Glendalough and the Galtees.

The OPC is responsible for me seeing some of the most gorgeous sights in Ireland during my short stay. They are also the ones who brought me out to the Burren for my first ever outdoor climb. They’ve challenged me to go on hikes that practically kill me, but are worth it in the end.

They introduced me to the people I was to become closest to. Had I not stumbled upon a website about the club before I came here, no doubt I would have been spending many Sundays at home watching movies instead of being out exploring the beautiful landscape Ireland has to offer.

Union Elections 2011

ELECTIONS for Sabbatical Officers will take place on Thursday, 24 March. The candidates and their supporters will be canvassing the whole campus looking for your votes. Choosing who to vote for is difficult, so An Focal has asked all the candidates some important questions.

PRESIDENT



DEREK DALY

DEREK graduated with a BBS in 2009. He was elected Welfare Officer in 2009 and won re-election in 2010. Derek served as a society PRO and on the Clubs’ and Societies’ Executive while studying for his degree. As Deputy President, he is also Chair of Clubs’ and Societies’ Council.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would like to connect the Union to the students – let them know what’s up. I wish to lead the team and get out and talk to students. I also wish to address internal strategic issues. Why? – To make the Union more efficient in addressing student needs and instil a sense of ownership from students.

Why should students vote for you?

I believe that I can improve the student experience of the Union by bringing more focus and utilising the resources already available to the Union in a leaner manner. I will be their guy in their Union.



ENDA GALLERY

ENDA is a Masters of Music Technology student. He has a degree in Commerce and Masters of Accounting form UCD. He established and ran a Student Entrepreneur Society during his time in UCD.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I will ensure worthwhile co-ops for students, I can negotiate cuts better than anyone else ensuring the vital services aren’t cut. I will do what YOU need me to do

Why should students vote for you?

I am the only candidate with the real world experience to do this job in this climate. Leaving it to someone without real world business savvy will be disastourous.

WELFARE



EAMONN BOLAND

EAMONN is a 4th Year BBS student.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would work hard for the students who may put me in the position, change the brand of condoms from Mojo to Durex.

Why should students vote for you?

A Welfare Officer’s role is to look after and help students. I’m a friendly and open person and I would be able to fulfil this role.



THOMAS CRANLEY

THOMAS is a 4th Year Materials & Construction Education student. He has served as chairman of the UL Men’s Rugby Club and is the club’s current secretary.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

My main focus is to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable passage through UL by implementing new or improving current support services. See my manifesto for more!

Why should students vote for you?

I am approachable and responsible - I want to listen to YOUR problems! You’re forced to pay high fees - expect better service! Fair treatment for all students - Just come and ask!

EDUCATION



BARRY KENNEDY

BARRY is a 4th Year Computer Systems student. He served as Deputy Chair of Class Reps Council in 2010 and has been on the Electoral and Referendum Board, which oversees SU elections. He has also served as secretary and Trips Officer of UL’s Drama Society.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

If elected, I will do my best to help every student who comes to me with a problem. I will campaign for Co-op reform and improved services so that students get value for money!

Why should students vote for you?

I’ve been in the SU for the last five years, where I’ve learnt a lot about the University’s structures and regulations and I would like the opportunity to use this knowledge to help students.



AOIFE KENNY

AOIFE is a 4th Year studying for a BBS with Insurance and Risk Management. She was elected Faculties Officer in January, 2011. The Faculties Officer works with the Education Officer and liaises with Class Reps and faculty members.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would reform the role of Class Reps within the SU and challenge the Co-op, TP and Nursing Placement offices in respect to placing students and student interaction. I would have annual, structured faculty balls and ensure the Library facilities are for use of UL students and increase security.

Why should students vote for you?

As a fresh face in the Union, I can bring in fresh ideas. With me, actions always speak louder than words. Bee smart and vote for me!

CAMPAIGNS & SERVICES



ALAN O’SULLIVAN

ALAN is a 4th Year studying for a Bachelor of Business Studies. He is the incumbent President of the UL Darts and Pool Club, which he also co-founded. He was the campaign manager for a candidate who ran for the position of CSO last year.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would improve student safety with extra use of MnMs (Meitheal na Mac Léinn). I would also bring more Union visibility, deals with nightclubs in town, more quality bands and gigs on campus. Better services, better advertised.

Why should students vote for you?

I’m easily approachable and friendly. I’ll get the job done. I’ve experience of the issues. I understand the reality of being a student. O’Sullivan for CSO!



PADDY ROCKETT

PADDY is a 4th Year Science Education in Biology and Physics student. He has served as the Students’ Union’s Community Relations Officer and Fundraising Officer. Paddy ran for SU President last year but was defeated by incumbent, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, who secured a second term.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would bring cheaper gigs by refining the loose ends of the alcohol policy of the Students’ Union to allow for drinks sponsorship of events thus making tickets cheaper. I would create one of the best Charity Weeks and introduce new events such as Average Joe-lympics, bigger campaigns and new services.

Why should students vote for you?

I ran for President last year. Upon reflection and from talking to many students over the past year, the position CSO suits my skills and my own personality. I’m honest and very approachable. I love college life and the craic that comes with it. I’ve met some legends in my time here. I feel I owe it to students to run and work my hardest for them.

COMMUNICATIONS



KELLY O’BRIEN

KELLY is a 4th Year New Media and English student. She is currently the Features’ Editor of An Focal. She has served as PRO and secretary of the Drama Society and as sub-editor of Review Magazine (later renamed Pulse) in 2008.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I will continue to expand and improve An Focal by keeping up the high editorial standards set by Finn McDuffie, appointing more sectional editors and through the organisation of writers’ workshops. I will also introduce a new creative writing publication and push for a larger focus on online communications such as podcasts.

Why should students vote for you?

I’ve been involved in An Focal since my very first year in UL and I truly believe that it is the voice of the students. I am extremely aware of the level of dedication this position demands and am fully prepared not only to meet these expectations but to exceed them.



KEITH O’NEILL

KEITH is a 4th Year Computer Engineering student. Between 2005 and 2009, he was President, PRO, IT Officer and Treasurer of the Outdoor Pursuits Club. Last year, he was the Students’ Union’s Clubs’ Officer.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I’d strive to continue the high standards An Focal has reached this year while moving towards technology to keep students updated with the latest news, online and around campus.

Why should students vote for you?

I created the C&S site which has benefitted hundreds of students. I’ve designed countless posters/videos over my time here. This position will push me to even bigger and better projects. I haven’t run for an SU position before but I have worked on many other campaigns in the past and these experiences have inspired me to follow suit.

Union Elections 2011

These profiles provide a brief sketch of each candidate and their plans if they are elected.



KEITH YOUNG

KEITH is a 4th Year Materials and Engineering Technology Education student. He has served as 1st Year Rep on the SU Executive, Treasurer, President and Orienteering Officer of the Outdoor Pursuits Club and Clubs' Officer on the Clubs' and Societies' Executive/SU Executive. Keith has also worked on election campaigns in the past.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

I would endeavour to ensure that students, despite the current economic climate, gain the most influential, entertaining and vibrant time of their lives while at the University of Limerick. Collaboration, Interaction and Employability, these are my core values.

Why should students vote for you?

I'll work to ensure that the student experience isn't compromised and that the Students Union remains YOUR Students Union, there to support, motivate and encourage you through your time here.



TARA FEENEY

TARA is a 4th Year Arts, Psychology and Criminal Justice student. She is a Class Rep.

If you were elected, what would you do and why?

Grant reform, reinstate open door policy, scrap drop-in hours, one evening a week with late drop in, visibility and personalisation of Welfare, improve mental health awareness, sexual health: free contraception without the obligation of a donation.

Why should students vote for you?

I'm a fresh face with no agenda other than students. You can trust me to make Welfare what it's meant to be: for the student, on their terms.

VOTE ONLINE



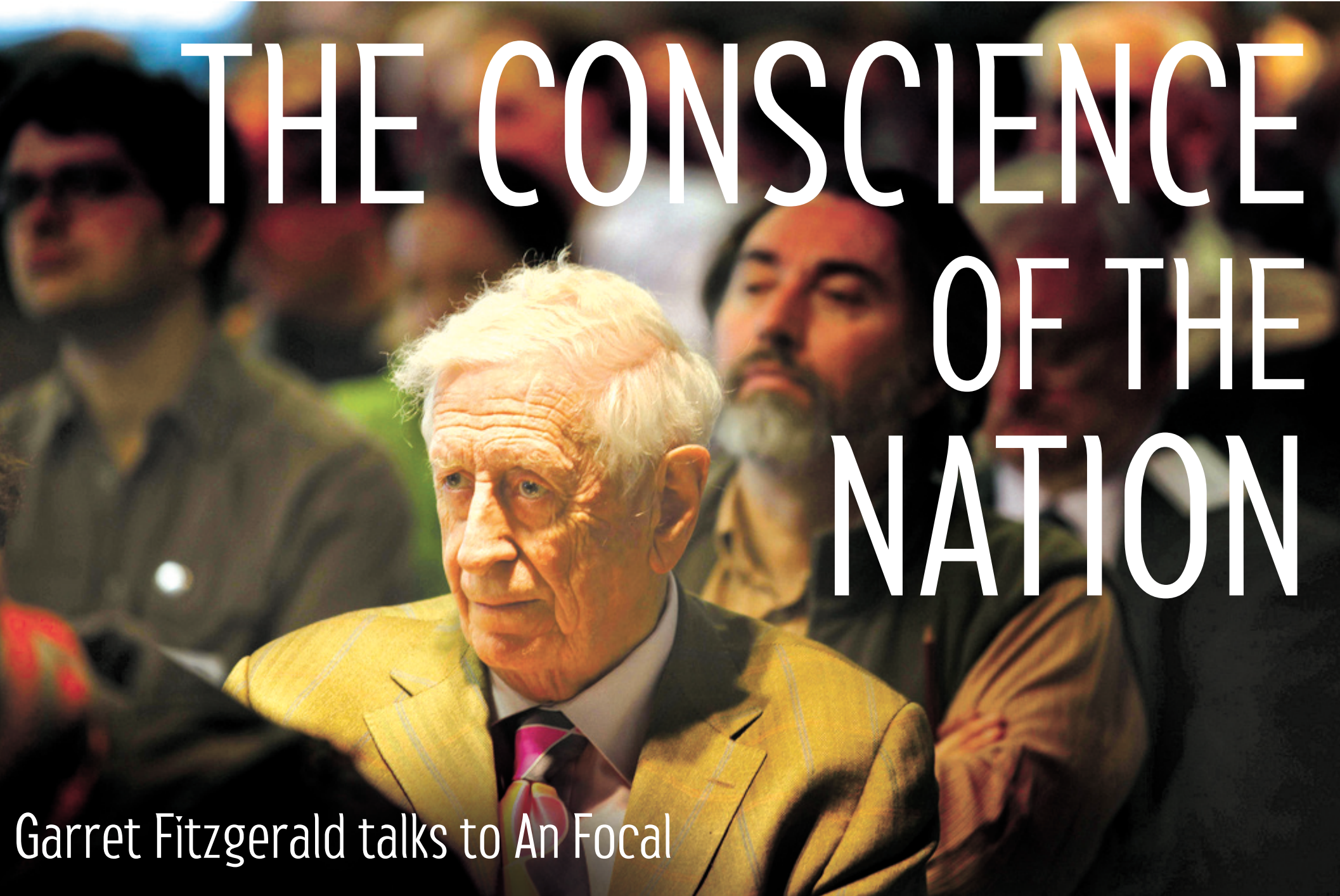
Visit
www.ulsu.ie
Thursday, 24 March.

ELECTIONS

2011



Interview



THE CONSCIENCE
OF THE
NATION

Garret Fitzgerald talks to An Focal

Written by **Darragh Roche,**
Deputy Editor

EXUBERANT is not the first word that we associate with an 85-year-old, but Garret Fitzgerald, former Taoiseach and our nation’s most respected elder statesman, seems to overflow with enthusiasm and energy. The members of the Debating Union, who awarded Dr Fitzgerald their Auditor’s Medal in Week 7, could be forgiven for taking his wispy grey hair and dependence on a walking stick as a sign of an old and tired man. But his endearing wit and powerful insight banished any such thoughts.

His fondest memories are of his days studying and teaching at UCD. His mind is never far from debates in coffee shops that changed his political outlook. “We’re lucky we have one third of young people in university,” he says with a look of genuine pleasure, “It’s enormously positive. I would prefer if the Government paid for it but the Government doesn’t feel that it or can or should. University benefits the community and students. Positive measures need to be taken to encourage people from less well-off backgrounds to attend universities. You must have measures to protect the less well-off!”

But it is his column in the Irish Times that allows him analyse today’s political landscape. Others have attacked the lack of women in cabinet, the age profile, the choice of ministers. “Fine Gael doesn’t have the women and Labour didn’t make full use of theirs. Labour has more difficulty. I wouldn’t have necessarily put all those people in those positions, but the

“Does that mean the end of Civil War politics, then? He scoffs, showing some derision for the first time.”

cabinet is of good calibre and has a lot of able people.”

After years leading Fine Gael, does he have anything to say about the collapse of the old enemy? “Fianna Fáil is committed to changing the whole system; that’s going to change the balance. Micheál Martin is able; he will be a good leader of the Opposition.” But will he ever be Taoiseach? “How old is he? 54? Yes, he could be Taoiseach in 10 years. Sixty-four is not too late. He has the ability. Brian Lenihan seems to have messed things up in some way and lost out to Martin.”

The coalition is good, but those “Gilmore for Taoiseach” posters were silly, weren’t they? “They were. But another gain like that...we don’t know. At the end of this period, people may vote Labour.” Does that mean the end of Civil War politics, then? He scoffs, showing some derision for the first time. “The Civil War ended for politicians in the 1930s. Fianna Fáil employed nationalist rhetoric. We are an open, pluralist society. Civil War politics is nonsense.”

Martin may be leader of the Opposition, but Sinn Féin, a party he has often criticised, has more influence than ever. Is he still as opposed to Gerry Adams? “He was never honest about it-the IRA, unlike his friend in the North [Martin

McGuinness]. However, Sinn Féin has the potential to protect the underprivileged. It doesn’t look as if they’re moving towards fulfilling a useful role. They’re reactionary.”

One of the issues burning up the wires has been the way the new batch of independents dress. No suits, no ties, no seat? Are the Dáil ushers really that tyrannical?

“Sinn Féin, every one of them, wore a tie. It would be nice if they did wear suits. People have their own way of doing things. They [independents] have the right to vote. I don’t think it’s important. The media has made too big a deal of it.”

Dr Fitzgerald has received many awards and plaudits since he retired as Taoiseach. The John Holland theatre was brightened and enlightened by his deep insights, humorous asides and convivial approach. As the Auditor of the Debating Union attempted to bring the proceedings to a close, the former Taoiseach chimed in “No, no! I can answer more questions! Go on, go on!” We and our politicians could all do well to be a little bit more like Garret, if only for his boundless energy and enthusiasm.



uSpeak
we Listen

Your opinion
Your student experience
UL Student Exit Survey
All final year students

Complete it now
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Questions?
Email: exitsurvey@ul.ie

