

# An Focal

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Tuesday

Official Paper of the University of Limerick Students' Union

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## Students Warned against Local Crime

Katie Harrington

Students have to be warned to be extra vigilant in light of the recent increase in criminal activity in the Castletroy area which saw a number of students falling victim to break-ins and robberies over the past three weeks.

The Students' Union has reminded students that they must take precautions to safeguard themselves against this sort of crime.

During robberies in College Court laptops, digital cameras and a phone were taken. A 2008-registered Peugeot car was also stolen but this was recovered the following morning in the Elm Park area.

A number of burglaries also took place in the Cedars where burglars entered the houses and each of the bedrooms in them by popping the locks with a crow bar.

In one such instance, valuable items such as laptops and televisions were left behind by the burglars while things like MP3 chargers, toilet paper and food were stolen. Dresses and clothes had also been stolen from some of the female victims, one of whom had two expensive dresses ripped and left on behind.

These incidents occur subsequently to a number of burglaries over the summer, one of which was quite

serious involving armed burglars.

A Garda spokesman commented that student areas are targeted as they are often empty at weekends. Extra patrols of the area are currently being laid out for the Halloween period, a busy time for Gardai and a time when many student houses are empty because of the bank holiday weekend.

A number of those arrested for robberies in the Castletroy area over the last few months have been prosecuted, the spokesman said, while more cases are ongoing.

Gardai advise students to make sure all windows and doors are locked, stating that a lot of the time burglars simply walk into homes where doors are left unlocked and take what they want.

They described the situation in the Cedars as a more unusual case which they will be following up on.

Gardai say the thieves appear to have ways of moving laptops in particular, so that securing them in any way possible is important. Students have been left devastated by the loss of laptops containing important coursework and photographs contained on them.

The Students' Union has urged all students to be alert to the risks that to their personal safety and the



Houses across Castletroy have been subject to a number of break-ins recently

safety of their homes and possessions.

Students' Union President Pa O'Brien commented, "I'd just urge students to be vigilant; make sure windows and doors are locked and don't assume it's friends who are in the house at night".

Mr. O'Brien also advised students against confronting the burglars, instead recommending that they wait and call the Gardai as soon as possible. He cited the incident over the summer in which the intruders involved were carrying weapons as

a word of warning to students.

Welfare Officer Catriona McGrattan commented that crimes such as these are "a reality we have to face up to".

She advised students to leave valuables such as laptops out of sight to minimise the possibility of becoming a victim of robbery. She urged students to be extra vigilant at weekends or when houses will be empty for long periods, and to report break-ins and attempted break-ins should they occur.

## Students Angry at Registration Hike

Aislinn Breen

Students have reacted angrily to the recent Budget which announced an increase of almost 67 per cent to the registration fee that all students must pay every year to attend third level education. Except those in receipt of the maintenance grant, students will be forced to fork out at least €1500 every year from next September to come to college.

SU President Pa O'Brien reacted negatively to Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan's 2009 Budget which was announced on Tuesday, 14 October.

"The money has to come from someplace to fund the third level system, but this move is very misguided.

"Applying an indiscriminate charge to all students of 1,500 a year, every year, will certainly prevent people from coming to University

"I'm in doubt that many students will be able to return next year. They may have to run up huge debts, and that's if the banks are even prepared to lend to them in the current economic climate"

The increase in registration fee is the interim solution according to Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe who has been mandated by the Cabinet to bring forward proposals on third level tuition fees.

The Minister is expected to have these proposals ready within four months to facilitate the discussion of the return of fees in time for a new system to be in place by the start of the 2009/10 academic year, and which is expected to run in conjunction with the hiked registration fee.

The future of the Free Fees Initiative introduced in the 1995/96 academic year remains in jeopardy.



Students refusing to accept 'Batty policies' in Cork on 9 October (photo by Adam O'Brien, CIT)

## SU AGM passes amendments

Aislinn Ni Raghallaigh

Five amendments to the Students' Union Constitution were passed at the SU AGM held in week 5 in the B-Block Canteen. As 200 students produced University IDs in the canteen before the AGM began, it was deemed that quorum had been reached. The quorate passed all motions proposed on the day.

A number of changes were made to the Constitution to reflect the changes in the Academic Calendar. Following the change in the Academic Calendar it was no longer possible for the Finance Council to provide details of their accounts by the first, third and fifth council meetings, as

was previously required. A change to the Constitution now requires the Finance Council to provide details of their accounts at the first council meeting following the 15th of a month in which an ordinary meeting of council occurs.

Changes were also made regarding the handover of Sabbatical positions to reflect the new academic calendar. Previously the Sabbatical Officers handed over their position on the 30 June following a two week induction for the new Officers. The quorate passed a motion that will see the Sabbatical Officers handing over the position on the 15th of June

following a two week induction and a third shadow week.

It was also required for a change that would allow the presentation of audited accounts to take place in the General Meeting of the Spring Semester rather than at the AGM of the Autumn Semester as previously required due to the inability of the SU's auditors to prepare the accounts in time due to the new calendar.

The title of Vice-President/ Publications and Publicity Officer was also changed to Communications Officer to reflect the growing spectrum of media used by the Students' Union to communicate

both internally and externally.

A change was also required in the Constitution following the Academic Reconfiguration which saw the six colleges become four faculties. Previously, a Council Officer for each college was elected by the Class Representatives to act as representative for the college. The Constitution has now been changed to show that their will be at least one Faculty Officer to represent each of the faculties, elected by the Class Representatives.

All motions passed are effective immediately.

# An Focal Digest

## In Brief

### Halloween Masquerade Party

Date: 30th October

Time: 10pm

Venue: Underground, Bakers' Place

Price: €5 before 11:30, €8 after

On the 30 October in Underground, Bakers' Place Out in UL is hosting a Halloween Masquerade Party. Beginning at 10pm, it promises to be one of the best Halloween parties set up by a UL club or society, with DJ Jeff performing traditional Halloween games (bobbing for apples, etc.) and prizes for best fancy dress. Masquerade masks will be supplied free of charge on the door, along with a surprise. Anyone who knows the Underground will know it is the ideal location for a Halloween party and this will be a night to remember.

### Music Soc about to Rock

Eoin Tomassi

What? A Music Society article?! That's outrageous. Believe it or not though, we're actually organising some stuff this year, so for the first time in ages we've something to put into an article. Anyways, here's what we've got planned for the next few weeks.

The big event is the Halloween Shindig in Baker Place on the 30 October (It's free, unlike some other events going down round then, so there's your first reason for going).

Basically we're teaming up with like-minded wasters in the Art College and LIT for some sort of musical extravaganza. We've lined up three bands for the night: November Trust, Ava Ria and Murdock.

If Ava Ria are half as good as they were in Daffy's last year, they'll probably melt your face. November Trust, you can take it from me that they are smashing. I've never seen Murdock before but they do have a song called "Alf Stewart vs. Harold Bishop", so they obviously rock my socks.

There will be a few promotions at the bar and as it's Hallowe'en, it's fancy dress and you are all expected to look silly/scary for the night.

Afterwards you can go to Underground (again free - we're really catering for the student budget here!) and listen to the aforementioned artsy young one types prattle on about Joy Division till closing time. It's good fun, really.

We've got some other stuff organised too. Check out Maslow in Baker's on the 20 November. They're just back from playing the Indie-Week in Toronto, Canada, and also a trip to Malawi (in Africa) in August (Kinda like Live Aid, except without the aid.) Their sound is spaced-out garage rock. Like the Kings of Leon on acid. Session guaranteed, especially if you run into the drummer Cal. (Make sure you run into Cal).

Plus we've got acoustic nights going regularly, stay tuned for those. If you want to join, want more info, want anything at all actually (within reason) you can email us at [ulmusicsoc@gmail.com](mailto:ulmusicsoc@gmail.com)

### Open Days

Thousands of secondary students descended upon the campus for the annual University open days on Tuesday and Wednesday, 14 and 15 October of week 6. The prospective students came to Limerick to visit the combined open days of UL, LIT and Mary Immaculate College.

### Paddy Casey and Declan O'Rourke duet at Charity Gig

Irish singer-songwriters Paddy Casey and Declan O'Rourke performed a special gig in the Stables on Tuesday 14 October entertaining the crowd individually and then in a special duet at the end of their show.

The duo appeared at UL as part of a fundraiser for St John's oncology unit in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin. UL student Siobhán Nolan lost her nephew Oisín Doyle to a rare and aggressive form of leukaemia earlier this year and decided to organise the concert to raise much-needed money for a memorial fund.

The gig rounded off a number of daytime events including appearances from the Bebo babes and soakings in the stocks.



Paddy Casey and Declan O'Rourke duet at Charity Gig

## In Words

- Ah, I've spilt coffee on my Blackberry.

- Is it still working?

- I hope not.

SU Communications Officer regrets that her accidental coffee spillage did not damage her Blackberry phone.

I usually have an earpiece telling me these things.

RTÉ's Mark Little defends his mistake calling Maurice Cotter to speak during the US presidential debate despite that the speaker had been changed to Mairead de Faolte.

We just want an excuse to talk to 18 year old girls.

SU President Pa O'Brien is eager to help out with the 'In Focus' section of this edition during the UL Open Days.

"He's history's greatest monster": Let's not give Obama the chance to prove the same.

Politics head Luke Ashworth likens 'The Simpsons' reference to Jimmy Carter with the US Presidential candidate during the debate.



SU Secretary General Tomas Costello drawing the winning numbers from the first Local Lotto which will raise funds for clubs and societies at UL.

## In Figures

5  
The number of American citizens in the American election debate, all of whom will/would vote for Obama on 4 November.

5  
The number of constitutional amendments ratified at the SU AGM in week 5.

50 per cent  
The amount by which the tax on low-alcohol beverages has gone down.

2500 - 3000  
The number of students from nine Munster colleges who took to the streets of Cork on Thursday, 9 October, to protest against the reintroduction of fees.

12,000  
The number of badges distributed during the positive mental health week campaign.

22, 17, 12, 3  
The winning numbers in the first UL Local Lotto draw

# Munster Says No

Aoife Breen - Editor

Almost 5000 Munster students descended on Cork city on Thursday 9 October, week 5, to protest against the reintroduction of third level fees.

Students from Limerick joined with those from Cork, Waterford, Tralee and Tipperary to voice their opposition to third level tuition fees under the umbrella organisation, 'Munster Students Against Fees'.

Two free buses left UL on the morning of the march to bring students to Cork to join in the protest and returned that evening.

With each college represented by a different coloured t-shirt, students

gathered in the UCC quad before marching to the city centre where student representatives addressed the crowd.

Gearóid Buckley, CIT SU President and Cal Dioláin, UCC SU President, spoke on the importance of the demonstration and the student resistance to the reintroduction of fees.

Union of Students in Ireland representatives Shane Kelly and Dave Curran also addressed the peaceful demonstrators.

The protest was part of the Students' Union's ongoing anti-fees campaign which will continue

following the recent budget which announced an almost 55 per cent increase on the annual registration fee that students must already pay to attend third level education.

SU President Pa O'Brien commented that the latest solution offered in the recent budget of increasing registration fees is, "just another stealth tax".

"[The government] prepared us for fees for months so that we would accept this as a compromise but we certainly won't take this lying down.

"They will still tell us that we have free third level education but

how could you classify paying €1500 as free?"

"They will continue to increase this figure until we pay comparable charges to fees that are just hiding under a different banner

"This increase will push those who are already struggling to make ends' meet out of third level education. Just when everybody has less they are asking us to pay more."

The Students' Union has reassured students that it will not accept this increase in registration fee and will continue to resist higher costs for third level education.

# New Look for SU

An Focal Reporter



University of Limerick  
Students Union  
Aontas na Mac Léinn  
Ollscoil Luimnigh

Students may start to notice a curvy symbol appearing around the campus shortly as the re-branding of the Students' Union identity introduces a new logo and colour scheme for the organisation.

Blink Design, a Limerick based company under the directorship of Louise Lawlor, were in consultation with the Students' Union over the summer to create a new identity.

Adopting a new abstract logo and three new colours as part of the re-branding, the Students' Union

and its shop will all undergo a re-launch of their identity in week 8 to kick-start the new branding.

Creating a "vibrant and fresh look that students can identify with" was the motive behind the re-branding, according to SU Communications Officer Aoife Breen.

"The Students' Union has had its old logo and colour scheme for quite a long time now and we felt that it no longer represented what we stand for or how we want to present ourselves.

"We also felt that we needed to update our colour scheme to include younger, more vibrant colours that will stand out and become identifiable amongst the student body."

The previous logo of the Students' Union adapted a sketch of the archway in the Stables courtyard where the SU building was situated previously.

Ms Breen commented that, "we are not about a building; we are about students and about representing students.

"The new logo is completely abstract; it has three interlinked curved lines representing the different strands of university life.

"The colours we chose to use - red, blue, yellow and white - are brighter versions of the University's colours - maroon, navy, mustard and grey - to highlight how we are closely connected but yet remain quite distinct in our role and the services that we provide for students."

As part of the re-branding

process, there will be a new line of apparel for SU staff - including shop staff - displaying the colour scheme and the logo.

"We hope that, eventually, students will come to recognise the logo and colours as being those of the Students' Union and what it stands for and, ultimately, create a 'brand' for the Union that is intrinsically linked with students," said Ms Breen.

All SU related materials will be consistent with the new identity from now on.

## ULSU SHOP specials

Owned and operated by students for students

- Spar Orange juice - buy one get one free! €1.59

- Spar cookies - two for €2

- Kelloggs Coco-Pops 375g, Cornflakes 750g, Just Right 500g and Branflakes 750g - two for €4.50

STAR BUY!

Buy any roll or sandwich from the deli, and get Maltesers AND River Rock 750ml for €1 more!

PHONE CREDIT

### OPENING TIMES

Main Courtyard Shop:  
Monday-thursday 08:30 - 20:00  
Friday 08:30 - 18:00  
Saturday 11:00-17:00

Dromroe Shop:  
Monday-Thursday 08:30 - 19:00  
Friday 08:30 - 18:00

See Euro Crunch offers in store:

- Spar Sparkling/Still water 2L...2 for €1
- Coca Cola cans...2 for €1
- Muller Rice Yogurt...2 for €1
- All butter croissant...2 for €1
- M&Ms -chocolate/peanut/crisp...2 for €1

# America Decides '08

Katie Harrington

Monday of week 7 saw the UL Debating Union debate the motion that 'this house believes a vote for McCain is a vote for global security'. Guest chair for the well attended debate was Mr. Mark Little, accomplished Irish journalist and former Washington correspondent for RTE. Proposing the motion were Debating Union members Kieran Murphy, Mairead de Faoite and Maurice Cotter along with head of the Politics department Luke Ashworth. Opposing the motion were Shane O'Callaghan, Eamon Quinlan and Adrian O'Higgins along with Kyle Murray of the Politics department.

A lively debate took place; the proposition insisting that McCain has the experience in foreign policy necessary to lead in a time of global turmoil while the opposition favoured Obama, citing his ability to deal with economic issues and his ability to unite Americans. The issue of the vice-presidency

also arose; many speakers citing the issue of John McCain's age, and the possibility that Governor Sarah Palin, whose experience, policy and background has been widely criticised, would become President.

A vote was taken after the main the debate, where the motion was defeated by a large majority. A straw poll of American citizens who attended the debate saw Obama take 100% of the vote. Mr. Little then gave his own comments based on his time as a Washington correspondent over four US elections, and extensively travelling in the US this year researching for his new book on changing ideology in America. Mr. Little emphasised that depending on factors such as swing votes on the day, and whether newly registered voters turn out on the day, the election could go either way. He indicated that swing states such as Virginia and North Carolina will decide the election, and that these are the ones to watch



Kyle Murray of the UL Politics Department speaking at the American Election debate held by DebU in week 6

on November 4.

Mr. Little then moderated a lengthy discussion from the floor which saw issues such as a re-emergent Russia, the economy, the powers of Congress and many more raised by the audience and responded to by Mr. Little.

# The testing times are over

Students and staff of UL have let out a collective sigh of relief as news of the improved service at the Mid West Regional's STI clinic was made known during the week. Gone are the days of a six week waiting list; the service has improved so much that on average those ringing on a Monday will have an appointment for the following Thursday i.e. only three days later.

Josephine Clancy, a nurse at the Mid West Regional Hospital, spoke with the Welfare Officer earlier this week and explained that as most tests are coming back negative

the staff do not have as much paper work to file and are available to see more patients.

She was delighted to say that members of the public only have to wait a maximum of seven days for an appointment.

Ms. Clancy also mentioned that the times at which members of the public can ring to make an appointment have also been extended, although as yet they have not been confirmed.

She encouraged students and staff wishing to make an appointment to leave a contact phone number if they are asked to leave a voice

message out of office hours so that they can be contacted the next day with an appointment.

Caitriona McGrattan, SU Welfare Officer, said, "I am delighted to hear that the STI Clinic has become more efficient; what was a good service is now a great service. It is invaluable to UL students. The extended waiting lists in the past no doubt put people off getting checked; now there is no excuse especially as the service is completely free of charge."

To make an appointment for an STI test, ring the Mid-West Regional STI clinic on 061-482382.

# UL Ogra Fianna Fail visit Dáil Éireann

Niamh O' Donovan

The academic year 08/09 has gotten off to a great start for Fianna Fail starting with our AGM on the 22nd of September which saw the successful election of our new officer board. The rest of the year promises to be very productive with a new team lead by newly elected cathaoirleach Derek Daly.

**Officer Board for 08/09**

Cathaoirleach: Derek Daly

Leas-Cathaoirleach:

Eamon Quinlan

Secretary: Aoife Harney

Treasurer: David O'Sullivan

Public Relations Web and Events

Officer: Niamh O'Donovan

1st Year Representative:

Adam Davis

Following the AGM Brian Stokes a long standing member of the Cumann was nominated to run for the local elections coming up next year. To round of a productive night was a bit of craic in the Lodge, where the new Officer Board and the Cumann had a bit of a session to toast the new academic year.

To get the ball rolling for the year we took our annual trip to Leinster House on the 30th of September where we got a guided tour of the two houses the Dail and Seanad. Luckily enough we also got to meet several of our TDs, including Timmy Dooley TD, Michael McGrath TD, Thomas Byrne TD, and Senator Denis O' Donovan, who looked after

us and showed us around Dublin for a night out.

We also managed to fit in a visit to UCD and Trinity as they recruited so being good guest we rolled up the sleeves and helped out a bit. But what definitely made the day for the Cumann was witnessing the great debate in the Dail on the bail-out plan recently rolled out by Brian Lenihan, Minister for Finance to arrest our current economic problems.

The year is looking good, we've got a lot planned and are more than happy to welcome in new members and ideas. So if you like politics and a bit of a bit of banter meetings are held weekly at 6pm on Thursdays in the Students' Union.

# Students warned against dangers of fireworks

Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

In the run up to Halloween UL students are being warned against the dangers of fireworks. Although entertaining to look at, without proper use and care fireworks can be extremely dangerous, especially when used under the influence of alcohol.

Fireworks are illegal in Ireland and the any that are found for sale in the country are highly unsafe. The fireworks, which are usually imported, do not adhere to safety standards and the fuse can often be unpredictable. This makes it highly likely for them to explode prematurely

while still being held.

The misuse of fireworks can cause serious injuries. Most often fireworks inflict burns to the hands and face and these can be as serious as third degree burns. Third degree burns will cause permanent scarring and may require skin grafts. Fireworks can also cause injuries to the face and body through contusions when the firework sets off unstably and strikes someone standing nearby. Burns and contusions to the face can both cause blindness or deafness.

Fireworks are also extremely

unpredictable and are not guaranteed to fly straight up in the air. They are highly likely to fly off at an angle and striking cars or houses and causing serious and devastating fires.

If you do insist on using fireworks in the coming weeks ensure that you never use them while drunk. Never use fireworks indoors, never return to a lit firework and never aim or throw a firework at anyone. Make sure to always use them in a spacious, safe area where there are not crowds - that does not mean the car park of your student accommodation.

## Out in UL

Present:

# Masquerade

## party

**Venue: Underground Baker Place**  
**Date: 30th October.**  
**Entry: €5 before 11.30pm & €7 after**  
**Doors @ 10pm**



**Masks and surprises will be given on the door**  
**Prizes for best costume**



# Positive reaction to Mental Health

Caitriona McGrattan  
Welfare Officer

Week five, semester one will be remembered as the week of oddities on campus; first there was nearly two thousand Maori-wanabees in the Arena on Monday followed by a small, but true-to-its word, love parade through campus on Wednesday, not to mention that the whole week was showered with green and red badges.

If you weren't around for the Pay it Forward Positive Mental Health week here are just some of the highlights of the week:

The Limerick Mental Health Association organised what was hoped would be a world record breaking attempt at the most people performing the Haka at one time on Monday morning in the UL Sports Arena. Over 1,600 people from all over Limerick city and county, including a couple of hundred UL students took part in the Haka, which was lead by none other than the rugby commentator, George Hook. Mr Hook gave a powerful speech about what Mental Health meant to him and he encouraged all those in attendance to think about their mental health and not be ashamed to admit when something is bothering us. This was the real winning message of the day; although the record breaking attempt may not have been successful, the numbers were about 1,400 shy of the current world record, the event achieved the recognition for Positive Mental Health Awareness it had aimed for.

Those interested in photography were given a rare treat on Tuesday when they were given the opportunity to spend the evening with the award winning Irish Times photographer, Brenda Fitzsimons. Brenda kindly reviewed the portfolios of UL's up-and-coming photo journalists and went into great detail on how to take the perfect shoot in a workshop that lasted nearly two hours.

'Free Love' was the message on the banner that lead UL's first love parade through campus on Wednesday, October 8th, and although the participants did not spread the love literally they certainly spread their good humour. Dressed in the finest



students performing the haka in the arena

60s clothes students, sabbats and staff from Student Counselling were lead by a Volkswagen Beetle blasting out some of the classics of the love generation. Anyone who met them on the way couldn't but walk on with a smile on their faces, it's not everyday you meet something resembling Woodstock outside the Schumann.

Students from the department of Psychology and Mental Health nursing played their part in the week by measuring the stress levels of students and teaching relaxation methods respectively. The psychology students based themselves in the prime location of a lab near the Stables and examined the stress levels of hundreds of staff and students through the week. While several fourth year students of the Mental Health Nursing programme shared their skills teaching

The red 'Fancy a favour?' badges appeared on campus towards the end of week four and by Tuesday of week five could be found as far a field as

Dundalk, Dublin and Donegal. These badges were devised to encourage the students and staff of UL to do good deeds for one another, and the craze took off better than had been expected. The need for the green 'I have, have you?' badges, which were given out in recognition for having done a favour for someone, was obvious from early on Monday morning. A testimony to the success of the badges was the fact that only a very small number of both badges left at the end of the week.

The idea behind this semester's Positive Mental Health Week was two fold, firstly to get people thinking about their mental health and secondly, to remind people that there are supports available to them here in UL if they feel that their mental health could be healthier. The Students' Union Welfare Officer, Caitriona McGrattan, reminds us that 'Not only are we very lucky to have the Student Counselling Service but this week has shown that the idea of community and community support

is alive and well here in UL; we are one campus, one community after all.' The week-long activities were organised in association with the Limerick Mental Health Association (LMHA), who

promote awareness of mental health throughout the year. Michael O' Mahony, the chairperson of the LMHA and also a member of the UL Counselling staff, described the Positive

Mental Health week as their All-Ireland Final but was quick to add that mental health isn't just for mental health week but for everyone to think about all year round.



Some of the members of the Love Parade that circled the campus during week 5

## sustainabUL campus awareness



**Gavin Harte**

*Climate Change, Energy  
and our Ecological Footprint*

22 October - Week 7 - 2.30pm, Jean Monnet

*Over the last decade, Gavin Harte has been one of the most engaged figures involved in the Climate Change debate in Ireland. He is a founder and developer of Ireland's first ecological and sustainable village in Cloughjordan.*

Sponsored by the UL Environmental Society



NTR plc invites third level students to take part in

# PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTED TO TACKLING **CLIMATE CHANGE**

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE  
**Friday 14th Nov, 2008**  
 CORK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HOTEL  
 AIRPORT BUSINESS PARK, CORK



**THIRD LEVEL STUDENT SPONSORSHIP**

NTR plc are providing sponsorship for third level students to attend this important conference. Students from disciplines including environmental sciences, engineering, geography, climate change, commerce, planning, business studies and humanities are invited to apply. Please notify

**Envirocom@ul.ie**

if interested and apply via email titled third level sponsorship to: [info@partnershipforchange.ie](mailto:info@partnershipforchange.ie)

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**Supporting Bodies**



# Inclusion Soc: what societies in UL should be doing

Aoife Breen

*This article may or may not be the opinion of the Students' Union. It is, however, the opinion of the author and the editor's response to 'Exclusion Soc'.*

In the last issue of An Focal, an anonymous contributor submitted an article entitled 'Exclusion Soc' highlighting the alleged manipulation of elections in three named societies, the Debating Union, Drama Soc and the UL Ógra Fianna Fáil Con Colbert Cumann.

In the immediate aftermath of the release of the article, there was considerable debate asking questions about the allegations. Were they true? Where was the evidence – if there was any, of course? And was the author simply someone with an axe to grind against the societies in question?

Floating above all of these however was the question regarding

the writer's identity.

Firstly, let it be said, that anonymous articles are not unknown or rare in An Focal. The pseudonym 'An Focal Reporter' is a regular contributor to these pages. It is a useful way of allowing for anonymous contributions in the news section to ensure that articles that may (or may not) be of a particular nature can be covered without the writer having to deal with any potential aggressive fallout.

It is sometimes the editor who writes these news articles but, for political reasons, it may not appear in the best taste to have the editor signing said article. It sometimes may be another writer who was involved in the investigation, but, again, may not wish to have his or her name appear on the piece.

In the same edition as 'Exclusion Soc', 'An Focal Reporter' also wrote about the Saw Doctors headlining the Freshers' Ball, but

no one really minded that.

It was only when no one could be blamed for pointing out alleged failings of integral organisations that people started calling for the author's head on a platter.

Another grudge that the accused held was that there was no concrete proof put forward in the article.

Firstly, the actual allegations made by the author were not really all that serious in the first place. Election manipulation, while not considered as the most appropriate way of thrusting forward the great beacon that is democracy and therefore socially unacceptable, is not an illegal activity and is known to be an established practice in pretty much all organisations up and down the country.

Simply put, democracy is a nice idea in theory, but in practice there needs to be some leeway to ensure that every administration isn't overrun by those who are less than suited for the positions

available.

Of course societies also engage in this. Pre-deciding who would be best suited for a position and who could best contribute to the society's running is not a crime. Yes, it doesn't follow the tenets of glorious democracy to a tee, but it is the pragmatic interpretation to allow for a human implementation of the philosophy.

The three societies listed are three of the larger, better-run societies in UL. By the very nature of the people involved in DebU, Ógra Fianna Fáil and Drama Soc there are always going to be strong-minded, confident individuals involved and probably a number of opposing factions 'with axes to grind'.

Any election defeat will always be a blow to the ego and there will be fingers pointed in an attempt to avoid the reality that people voted for whom they believed was the better candidate running for

the position.

Succession plans are not wrong; they're practical for the successful continuation of the society.

In particular, in the case of Ógra Fianna Fáil, as a political unit operating more under the auspices of its parent party rather than UL society standing orders, the article was flawed in accusing it of 'election fixing'; it doesn't – at all. For it to do so would be wrong.

But of the members, there are surely the favoured and best suited to carry the Cumann forward. However, no one is prevented from standing for election for any position and there is no 'exclusion'.

'Exclusion Soc' highlighted the imperfections of democracy. It also highlighted at a grassroots level the need for greater transparency in committee elections. There were specific problems in one of the committees mentioned during last year's

election process – or perhaps 'processes' is more appropriate. And what has been done to prevent this from taking place again?

This year's committees are all newly elected to their positions. It is surely the responsible thing to do to assist them in ensuring that their societies are carried forward in the most open and transparent way by putting in place key election standing orders.

Core committee members should not be allowed to hunt for candidates; precise minutes of all elections should be mandatory for all societies; external, impartial reps should be involved in the count.

Societies are about bringing students together, including them in activities they share. Let's not start tearing them apart in the inconsequential politics of it all.

## Understanding the value of education

Katie Harrington

What is the goal of free education? Is it to pander to the whims of the 'pampered youth' as Emma Kerins maintains in the previous edition of this newspaper? Are we simply spoilt brats, too caught up in our own self-importance to realise the true value of education?

Thousands of students turned out in Limerick in September and Cork at the start of this month to make their feelings known; many of them final year students for whom the reintroduction of fees will not have any effect – hardly the actions of stubborn, lazy students, unwilling to compromise.

Across Prime Time, the letters page of the Irish Times and any other forum for debate, two sectors of society are discussed without end: the ludicrously wealthy and the vastly underprivileged.

This ignores the reality in which the majority of us would fall into: the ambiguous area of 'the middle class'.

For us, it may be possible to pay for our education, but this could mean our parents re-mortgaging their houses, or working for another few years before taking their well

earned retirement.

"Get a job you student bum" the cynics shout, not bothering to take into account that one is only 64 per cent to graduate with a first as another if they are forced to work just fifteen hours a week whilst in college.

Of course Ms Kerins is right; we need top class universities and they don't come cheap. Politicians and University heads are, as they must, trying to deal with the immediate crisis of the 'R' word, and funding third level education over the next number of years. Students, surprisingly, are thinking further ahead.

The theory that having students pay for their education will result in better universities and ultimately a well-educated workforce is flawed. Over the next number of years Ireland will be dealing (badly, no doubt) with the medley of companies leaving, now that the tax credits are gone; if students graduate with huge debts, who will pay them, and how?

We'll emigrate of course; the fine Government of Oz will benefit more than the Irish government from this decision. After all, even if you're unemployed in Australia, it's still

sunny most of the time.

'Brain-drain' has affected economies all over the world; it is naive to think it won't happen here – again. If, on the other hand, we invest (even in this recession) in not only third level, but also research and development we can tempt companies to stay here and take advantage of our graduates.

The cost of the PR alone for the launch National Development Plan (€340,000) would send 56 Irish students to university for a year. Bertie's make-up bill last year would send another six. The Living Bridge could have been scrapped in favour of a year in college for 2,666 students – that's pretty much all of the UL's graduating class of 2008 covered.

Dispensing with frivolities such as these, and 'ghost' civil service staff would go a long way towards . The recession is expected to last until the end of next year, but we have to make a decision which is feasible in the long run.

We can charge students and risk brain drain without seeing any real benefit to the economy, or we can for once look beyond the immediate crisis we are faced with and choose to invest in something that will show long term benefit.

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# Q&A

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## Environment

## ireland's burning environment



Ireland's future may not be so green

For nearly eight years Paul Cunningham has been reporting on environmental issues for RTE due to the increasing coverage that the topic has gained since the start of this decade. On Wednesday Week 5, he delivered a lecture in the Jean Monnet on the current debate on climate change and Ireland's role within it. It was also to highlight his recent publication of his new book *Ireland's Burning: How Climate Change Will Effect You*, where he aims to clear up the complacency around climate change. Following his lecture I interview him in the Canteen in the D Block:

**Ciarán O' Driscoll:** *It has only been in the past decade that the Environment has become a popular topic internationally and has a growing awareness here in Ireland. However did Ireland have any particular policies before this sudden upsurge of interest?*

**Paul Cunningham:** One of the things, due to the Economic War and such, we were very self dependent due to a policy of isolation, and what we ended up doing, was doing things ourselves. But if you talk about how things are going to be in the future, doing things ourselves is going to be harder, we import 90% of our fuel into this country. I'm not saying

we're going back to dancing at the cross roads, but the Scout phrase of be aware and be able to it yourself is advice to take up.

**COD:** *Where does Ireland now stand compared to other European countries for its management and development of green policies?*

**PC:** We're not very good, we have always been driven by the EU rather than taking a lead and I would like to see us move to the vanguard. If you talk about EU pollution, we've got three judgments against us in the European Court of Justice about such an issue. If you talk about EU gas emissions we are the second worst in the EU, because basically we've said we're going to keep our emissions below 13% of 1990 levels, but we're now at 25%. According to the Economic and Social Research Institution (ESRI), we're going to jump 4.7%, where clearly we have got a problem, even if its 2% of an increase, we're still going in the wrong direction. By European comparisons we're not doing well, but do we have different things – yes we do; we have a very large agriculture sector where it accounts for 27% of our total emissions. There needs to be a greater understanding of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and what it does for farmers and the EU 2020

targets and what it is asking farmers to do, but at the moment there is little cohesion between the two.

**COD:** *What are your views on the recent debate on Ireland possibly going nuclear in the future?*

**PC:** Firstly, Ireland currently has no nuclear plants, so I don't think it's going to happen in the short term. Secondly we are effectively nuclear because we take electricity from the British grid and you can't define what's nuclear and what's not. More importantly while we might pay a gas station to fire up some fuel and we take it across interconnections, when we buy on the spot market, we're buying nuclear. So when you look at it we're nuclear already. I think the question for us now is just to work out how we can become energy efficient in the future, when you ask should be go nuclear by 2020, no not until we can work out how to generate electricity from a product without generating a problem.

**COD:** *How is Minister Gormley fairing in his position, first as the representative of the Green Party and secondly compared to previous TDs who have held the position?*

**PC:** I think as a minister, he had a difficult start; he had Tara, the Dublin waste incinerator so while

Eamon Ryan just slipped in and was able to keep quiet and work away, Gormley was battling away right from the start. But I think that he has done reasonably well; he said water quality is something he is going to do and I predict in the next budget he is going to do very well, where money for waste water treatment will not receive budget cuts. Because we have come foul of the EU in a numbers of judgments in the ECJ, most recently just last month, we cannot afford to get bad records. So what I think he will do is push for a new climate change strategy, but ultimately he has clearly spoken publicly, he can do some stuff but he needs to get support from the rest of the cabinet. And that will ultimately determine whether Ireland meets its targets. He needs the Department of Transport, Agriculture, etc to get involved because he can't tell them what to do. But what he can do is come into the next general election without having delivered his plan on climate change or the very reason for him going into government will have failed.

**COD:** *If you were Minister for the Environment, what changes would you bring in to ensure Ireland sets itself as the Green Man of Europe?*

**PC:** I would do two things, first I would revise our national climate change strategy which would give realistic and honest options on who we're going to achieve the targets we're about to sign up on, such as EU 2020 and which we already have like Kyoto. It's that level of honesty that the government needs to look at.

The second thing I would do, would be to try and sort out the problems that are already out there – from emissions, air quality, 29% of our rivers are polluted and these are problems that we have to get fixed. But to be the vanguard of Europe, the key thing is business; it is ensuring that our business and economy changes into what is now greentech and that means positioning ourselves in the new green energies of Europe. And that would be where I would be really focused, because take from the money that was assigned that is going to produce the brains gives us that greentech – it just doesn't make sense.

**COD:** *Realistically does the Kyoto Protocol have any chance of meeting its targets, considering that even Ireland as you mentioned, whose contribution is minimal to green house gas emissions compared to China, will not even*

*meet the targets expected?*

**PC:** It will because one of the things it will have done is that whole idea that you need to have an international deal. The Kyoto Protocol asked 35 countries plus the EU to cut their emissions, now we have more countries that have ratified it. Currently there are negotiations on an agreement that be the successor to the Kyoto Protocol which would take on after 2012. We expect an agreement to be signed in Copenhagen by December 2009 and that would only have happened if Kyoto was seen to work; pressure was put on Russia to sign up and then on America. The current presidential election that is going on out there, both candidates are saying, the Bush policies are gone, they are going to reduce emissions and their arguing over who's going to do more, so things have changed and Kyoto is part and package of it all.

**COD:** *From your experience is there a significant change with people on the ground relating to changing their lifestyles in a way that is beneficial to the environment?*

**PC:** Yes of course; people are now far more converted to climate change and also the wider picture and the bigger issues. People

understand what a clean environment is and they want it. But there is confusion, and that confusion comes from the mixed messages from the government like the EU 2020 their basically saying yes we are going to sign up, but we've no idea how to achieve the targets! And clearly as well, honesty is needed for people to respect you on that.

**COD:** *What would be your own snap shot advice to students on the environment?*

**PC:** Your future is going to be green, employment opportunities are going to be in the green sector, even business are now coming from a green focus because of marketing yourself due to the expectations that customers now demand. So if you're talking about students going forward, like in engineering you have to look at sustainable building; in economics its now at environmental economics and politics is going to be about green energy and climate change. It penetrates just about everything, because whatever your going to do you will encounter it, so by getting on board now its going to mean more for you in the future.

*Ireland's Burning* (Poolbeg Press) is available in all good book stores from €13.99

# Ireland's Burning

How Climate Change will affect you



PAUL CUNNINGHAM  
RTE Environment Correspondent

*Ireland's Burning* - Paul Cunningham's recent book release



## Finance

# Indebted to the Future

Claran Lyne

Often, some of the most crucial decisions we make in life are made in a very short amount of time. Students often find themselves in this particular dilemma; it is the night before a final exam, and you have two topics left to cover (A and B) but only enough time to study one. You pick the topic which

you think will benefit you greatest (A), but you are unsure if it is the correct choice. It is unclear at that time whether you have made the right decision.

If the topic you studied comes up and you pass the exam then no one will ever know how close you came to failure.

However, if topic B appears on the exam and you fail, then a quick

analysis will show you that the reason you failed was not because the night before you chose topic A, but due to negligence on your part going back over time (missed lectures, too many nights out etc.).

Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Finance, found himself in a similar situation on 29 September: he had very little time to make a crucial

decision, and a limited number of options available. So, he chose the one he thought would be of the greatest benefit.

However, if his rescue plan does not succeed, a quick analysis will show that it is not because of the decision he made on 29 September, but because of the lending practices of Irish banks for the last decade.

The decision Brian Lenihan made was announced by the government on 30 September and involved guaranteeing the deposits in Irish-owned banks and building societies, as well as all their borrowings, for the next two years. This drastic measure is designed to safeguard the Irish financial system and to prevent the collapse of an Irish bank, which would have dire consequences for an Irish economy already officially in recession.

This decision has been the subject of much attention and media scrutiny both in Ireland and abroad in the past number of weeks. There are serious cases to be made on both sides of the argument debating

whether it is a good proposal or whether a different approach should have been used. The British, for example, have decided to recapitalise their banks by taking a stake in them.

If Lenihan's decision turns out to be successful then many Irish people will never know how close we as a country came to economic ruin.

So, it is time to ask the key question: how will it affect me?

The first key point that needs to be understood about the plan is the vast amount of money involved. A similar financial rescue plan in the United States is estimated to be worth around \$700 billion, with GDP (Gross Domestic Product is one of the measures of national income and output for a country) of around \$13 trillion this is not a huge cause for concern for the US.

But Ireland's guarantee involves over €400 billion (in dollar terms it is close to the US amount) whereas our GDP is only approximately €190 billion. This is a huge cause for concern because

– taking the worst case scenario – if the government was required to honour its guarantee, national debt would increase by over 200 per cent.

To put this in perspective, the national deficit this year looks set to be 25 per cent, and the government have announced the toughest budget in decades. It is widely believed that taxes will be raised significantly as well as severe cuts in public and capital spending.

If Lenihan's plan fails it will expose every man, woman and child in Ireland to €92,000 in debt.

If this occurred one important point for students is that college fees would almost certainly be brought back in and furthermore high levels of taxes would likely result in many graduates emigrating.

Benjamin Franklin once famously said "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes". Irish students are now looking at a future in which debt and taxes will be certain.



## Budgeting for 2009

Katie Harrington

"In the Budget, I will set out steps to stabilise and restore balance to the public finances by amongst other things prioritising current and capital public expenditure to reflect the changed realities."

These were the words of Mr. Brian Lenihan, as he set out one of the harshest budgets in a couple of decades. Taxes rose and spending fell (a bit), but what does it all mean for us college kids?

The registration fee for third level almost doubled to €1500, widely hailed as a 'backdoor' way of re-introducing fees; Brian and Brian Ltd stopped short of re-introducing means-tested fees.

Perhaps surprised by the level of demonstration from students, seen at protests in Limerick, Cork, Galway and Dublin, they decided an open discussion and decision on the matter would be far too much of a headache. Significantly, increasing the registration fee, which has risen by over 400 per cent in the last ten years – not exactly in line with inflation –, was by far the easier option.

One good idea this budget took hold of was that of getting rid of State bodies which are duplicating each others' roles and overlapping so significantly as to be wasting the State's money.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training and Awards Council (FETAC), will be merged into a new body which will take responsibility for quality assurance at third level. The CAO didn't get so lucky, losing its High Court challenge to be recognised as a public body.

While previous budgets have been said to give with one hand and take with the other, for students this one just plain took with both hands.

Of course, they can't leave the issue of fees alone forever. Minister of Education Batt O'Keefe has announced that he has been mandated by the

Cabinet – who are obviously a bit peeved about their own 10 per cent pay cut – to bring forward proposals on tuition fees.

The rise in the registration fee is a temporary measure, Batt indicated; we'll believe its reversal when we see it.

Minister O'Keefe's proposals are supposed to be ready in the next four to six months, for implementation next September. ULSU Education Officer Shane O'Callaghan commented that, "this could further isolate students who are already on the margins. Expecting students to pay this increased registration fees and a tuition fee is unfair and students across Ireland won't stand for it".

Child benefit has long been extended to the age of 19 for those who remained in full-time education – but no more; beware my first and second year friends, this may have been the very cash your parents passed on to you that you spent in the Lodge. Next year the amount received will half, before disappearing altogether in 2010.

Speaking of the Lodge, your favourite bottle of vino will be going up by 50c, in the usual excise duty increases. Cigarettes are also up by 50c, but this has been greeted by a certain amount of relief among smokers, after initial fears of a hike between €1.20 and €2. Beer remains untouched, so fear not for your pint of Fosters while tax on low-alcohol beers has been lowered by 50 per cent.

We won't get too haughty about the fags and the booze – we know they're luxuries and ones we're not too keen to give up on, but one shocker that came was the 8c increase in the price of petrol. Secret spies tell us that there was a queue from Esso all the way back to the Groody roundabout after that little announcement; no more driving to college from Elm Park then.

As we bemoan the rising costs of living, going to college and going for a session, at least we have the grant to keep us going. Oh wait, no, grant cheques are, as always late. Better luck next year.



Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan recently announced this year's Budget.

## Columnists

### Pete's Pet Peeves

What really pisses me off are shops like Tesco, Aldi and Lidl. At first glance these seem like nice, cheap places to shop – especially for students, and more especially in the wake of the recession enveloping the whole of the consumerist-capitalist world.

Sure, it looks great to go in and get cheap food right now, but how are you all going to feel about it when you've effectively put every butcher and every local farmer who sells fresh produce out of business? How are you all going to feel when you can't possibly find a cut of meat that's either Irish and/or tender enough to eat? If you want fresh and/or local vegetables from the dirt that you all know best, then go to the bleeding Milk Market on a Saturday morning; go to the local market we have here at UL! There is no excuse for anyone. If you want fresh (good and decent) meat, then go to one of many (struggling) local butchers.

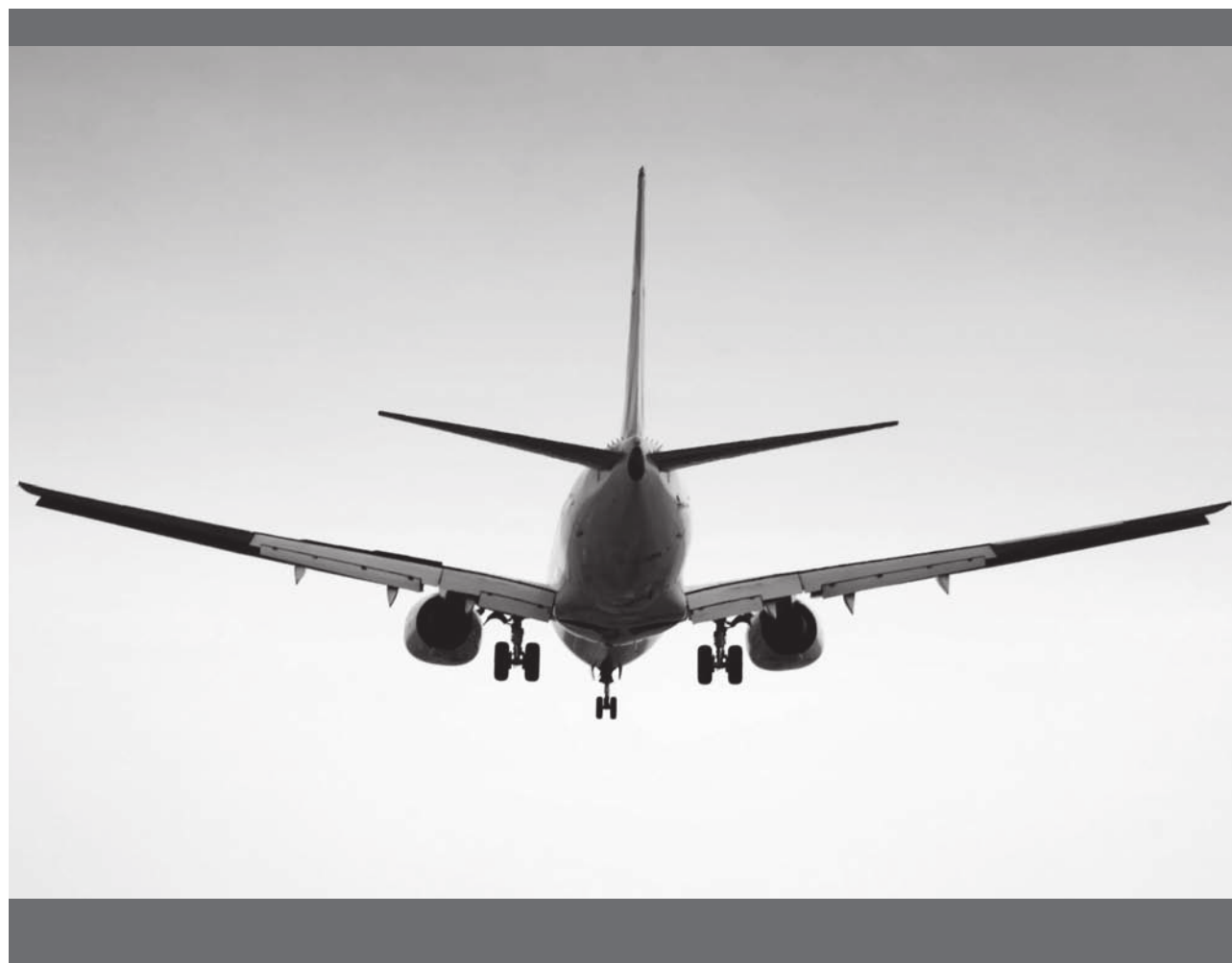
As this economic crisis will inevitably worsen in the very near future and lasting into the very distant future, it is high time we started looking back within. Just because it's a "global" economic crisis, doesn't mean we can't seize this as an opportunity to burgeon the local Midwest/Shannon Region economy and empower ourselves and our choices locally.

This crisis can be safely blamed, not only on our feckless government that has been producing short-sighted policies since the early 1990s, but we can also see the problem squarely in the mirror when we, as individuals, look into it every single day. We've spent over a decade buying crap we don't need; cars and homes that we really don't own. The Irish middle class has been a decade-long delusion, and we're starting to find out who really owns what.

We can seize this historical moment, however, and make it our very own. If we don't, then we will likely see this region of this country decline into conditions not seen since the 1980s.

It is, however, necessarily going to involve people taking personal steps of being conscientious about how and where they choose to shop. Tesco, Aldi, and Lidl may seem the rational choice option in taking personal saving steps, but it can be even more potentially disastrous locally than anything.

This crisis should serve us as a lesson that "cheap and easy" ain't always the best long term option. By shopping at these cold, heartless and cheap facilities, we're only enabling the further destruction of the local economy. Moral of the story: there are other options. You can catch more flies with honey, and you won't find much local honey in Tesco, Aldi or Lidl. You shouldn't have to use eBay to buy and trade with your neighbours!



Members of I Spy's intrepid crack troops set off on our travels this week. Armed with just our lack of common sense, fourteen glow-in-the-dark condoms and a Snow White costume, we set off for Bristol. Our mission was to drink irresponsibly, check out the local sights and give our friend a good send off before his impending death – or marriage as it's known. Yes, folks, it was a stag weekend!

We know the point of this article is to compare things, so we decided to go head-to-head on a weekend in Ireland versus one in Bristol. Oh where to begin: drink. While you only get 80 pence for your euro in England, you get a lot more for that 80 pence than you would for said euro. We hit the pubs on the main strip along the canal bank. It looked like the common tourist trap at first, a kind of Temple Bar of sorts, where I was recently relieved of €16.90 for a vodka and coke and pint of Heineken. What I found was the horrible realisation that everyone gets when they leave this country:

we are being fecked over big style.

Nowhere in Bristol would you pay more than £3.00 for a bottle of beer, even in the classiest clubs and fashionable bars. In a regular bar, a bottle came in around £2.10 which is about €2.55; the pints were suitably priced at £3.00 and the shots for £2.50. After a feed of cheap drink, we were bound for the club. We decided to hit what the internet termed "the hangout place for Bristol's young and fashionable", so it was a bit surprise when our group of neither young or fashionable scruff monkeys gained entry!

As I approached the door I dreaded the impending £20 levy, only to find they were only charging £5, on a Friday night. Here in Limerick you would have to part with €12.00 in Angel Lane for the same pleasure; madness. When it comes to beer and clubbing, advantage Bristol.

This same value couldn't extend to everything I thought. Especially because our alcohol taxes are so high, so I went in search of food.

Anyone knows that as soon as you set foot in any restaurant or pub in Ireland you will be parting with €20-€30 at least. Yet for just £6.00 we got a burger and a beer in an Eddie Rocket's type place. On the second night we went more upmarket and ate in a bistro. Here, I had a pasta dish and two bottles of some Italian shite for £13. Yet again, advantage Bristol.

All of us on tour agreed that the women of Bristol were good looking girls too. I won't comment on whether they were cheap or not – I'm not that kinda guy! – but they were friendly and liked our accents which encouraged us to give them a bit of the auld Blarney. For the girls, I can't really talk about how fit the men were because I was too busy looking at the women. I did notice a number of fun gay bars though so you do have options in Bristol whatever your inclination.

Flights to Bristol cost €40, and I managed to spend the €400 my mother and brother lent me for the weekend. But it was all worth it and

I never felt like I was getting ripped off.

One of our group was not so wise with his money. As is custom on a stag we did, of course, end up in a lap dancing club. Dances were £15 (or so I was told!). For the aforementioned member of the group a dance was simply not enough so he decided to commit £50 to spank the dancer 10 times, that's €7 per spank, people. I don't know how much it is spank a male or female here but I Spy advises students not to spend money in this frivolous way!

As we alighted from the plane in Shannon we decided that a few softeners in Bunratty would go down well. Having never visited Nelly's before it was a really cool spot. Just as I was set to settle down for the evening I bought a round for the lads at which I was shocked and appalled. €5.50 for a pint bottle! I nearly got back on the feckin' plane. I Spy is moving to Bristol!

Columnists

Perhaps it's a reflection on the impact of three months in the job on the Breenie, but I just can't be as nasty as she wants me to be. The problem isn't the SU - not that they don't have problems to discuss - dodgy business at the AGM for example (see below), but I have a confession to make first.

My point in the first week was that the SU is not capable of telling the students that they've done something wrong as a result of the editor being a member of the executive. This was a technical point - in fact, an entirely theoretical one. The point of this column was to point out the ways in which the SU was failing in its task to represent the students, thus giving the paper some credibility from a journalistic and democratic standpoint. Without some form of 'opposition' or critical voice, those in power become lazy and content to do nothing. All a question of democracy really.

The reason this democratic criticism of the SU is a theoretical one is that this problem only matters in theory - not practice. It only matters if people care, and in practice people don't care. A story from the last issue and the fate of the AGM held two weeks ago shed light on this point.

Firstly, a disgruntled, by the looks of things rather sensitive, and probably either usurped or mistreated student wrote about

what he or she (just for the record I'm guessing a girl) saw as the development of undemocratic practices in certain Clubs and Socs.

So the world of Clubs and Socs is falling apart and all is wrong with the world. As a result of? Wasting students money?? Holding orgies in the common room? No - not holding fair and open elections. Forgive me while I get a tissue, I'm beginning to well up.

I realised at that point - reading that interesting, but nonetheless pointless, article that I had been harping on about democracy without realising that people only care about democracy when it suits them. No doubt had that disgruntled/snubbed C&S individual not been snubbed, we wouldn't have seen such self-righteous stuff in the last issue.

Not only does this article, with all its emotive and earnest references to bullying and exclusion show that the writer was up to her neck in these societies and feels very hard done by, but also that outside of the world of C&S this story were like tears in the rain. Clubs and Socs run dodgy elections? Really? Tell me something I didn't know, or at least something I think I don't know. Common 'knowledge'. For all their talk of constitutions and standing orders etc, these organisations are not democracies - in fact, if they were to run like

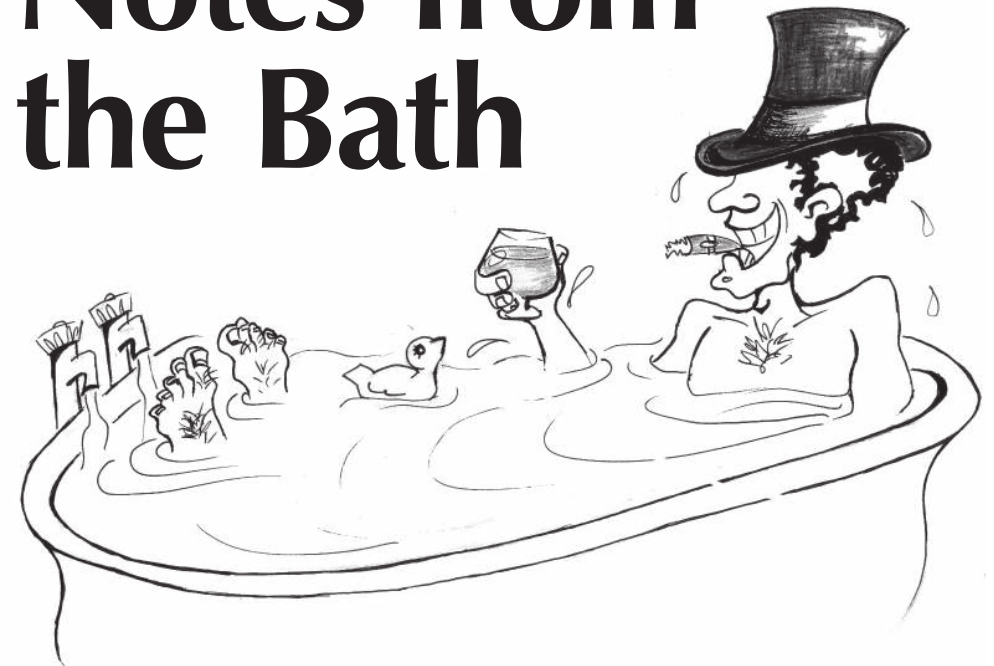
democracies, pure ones, they would likely never get anything done.

The average student is probably a member of a number of societies, active in perhaps one. As long as events are organised and run vaguely properly, no one really cares who's who and whether they were elected fairly or by coup. The Exclusion Soc story will be forgotten in a few weeks and has already been forgotten by the vast majority of readers. They don't care how the student institutions work as long as they don't fuck up.

Speaking of which, the low (Quorate? Pull the other one!!) attendance at the AGM on October 8th is surely a reflection of the good job the SU is doing - that is to say, not achieving anything other than the right to boast that they haven't done anything particularly wrong yet. One could ask what have the executive achieved at this stage but that would be to assume that the SU executive is genuinely capable of achieving something other than cosmetic change, and they did sort of run on a campaign that hinted more of the same, except better. Hooray for Irish politics!!

The passing of the motions to spell check the constitution, change the PPO's title to Communications Officer and the other relatively unimportant changes were made through a technicality. When asked was the meeting deemed quorate,

# Notes from the Bath



no one opposed it - not really in the spirit of the law I would have thought.

Ok lots of people passed through the canteen, but come on, are they really attending the AGM? Anyone eating their lunch in there minding their own business, all of a sudden became an attendee. What sleight of hand! What treachery! Well, actually not.

Perhaps a different question. What's the point? If it doesn't affect

anyone, and it makes the SU run ever so slightly better, then is it not a good thing? They can't make people go to the protests, you can't make people vote. The idea that you can make a horse drink water just by trying to be a bit more encouraging is wrongheaded. Exec can't perform miracles and to expect them to stop fees returning without the help of their constituents is ridiculous (although the entire

protests are pointless considering the mess the economy is in.).

I'm beginning to understand that reference to democracy in these institutions is a myth and trying to understand them based on an ideal of democracy is always going to make the SU look bad. Democracy is a myth and they should be judged only on their performance. God is dead and we killed him. Finally, a breakthrough. Dr. Philo (see pULse) would be proud.

## From The Working World

The innermost thoughts of a co-op student

Finn McDuffie

### 29 September 2008

I'm back in UL! What follows is a little UL-based. But when on Co-Op, you tend to miss the place like Brian Cowan misses his life as it was before he became Taoiseach. And now that I'm here, far from being asked how Co-Op is going, I'm getting asked about this Co-Op diary.

The big question is whether the noisy, sex-mad neighbours above us are real. Yes, the story is true. They're as real as Sarkozy's Lisbon lust. However, their lust is for each other and since they're Polish, it may possibly never extend to the treaty. The good news is this; I've noticed the neighbours are quieter lately. I put this down to the kitchen brush; a handy tool which not only cleans the floor, but extends to the ceiling and makes a satisfyingly loud bang on speedy contact with the plaster.

Some have asked whether I'm telling porkies. Well... I kid you not. The majority of the stories herein are true. Of course, some are lightly coloured with a dash of exaggeration. I don't usually lie but I occasionally enjoy being economical with the truth. Like the Sun, but without the libel.

### 30 September 2008

Were you at the Saw Doctors? Are you one of those who had an umbrella with you? Think you're smart don't you? Think you've got some rock-concert pizzazz? Yeah.. Well.. I was standing behind one of you. Couldn't see a thing. Nice Wellington boots by the way. Leopard skin? You know who you are!

### 1 October 2008

On my return to the campus I heard a rumour that Education Minister Batt O'Keefe made SU President Pa O'Brien so mad that he made a speech at the Stables in Week 1, which was stirring enough to make all of you roar loud enough to give the local residents cause to complain. By following a not-so-logical but gratifyingly conclusive chain of causation, it was

O'Keefe then, who annoyed the local residents. Keep it up guys!

### 2 October 2008

Back at work. Yay. My enthusiasm knows no bounds.

### 6 October 2008

I know we're all feeling the pinch, but living in Dublin is really expensive. I earn about €350 a week. Once you take rent, food, refuse collection, ESB, travel, dry cleaning and unforeseeables out of that, you're not left with much more than the payslip and some pocket change. I do recognise that Co-Op is a serious bonus to have on graduation. I understand that its merits extend far beyond its pitfalls, such as long hours, low pay and placement length. And I also recognise there are students not getting paid at all (an activity that I vehemently oppose and hold as exceedingly exploitative and unfair.) But I do argue that Co-Op students are not stupid, that they can be and are given relevant work which carries high responsibility and finally, that the work they do is often of a high standard and profitability to the employer. It is only fair that the work our salaries should reflect the work we do.

### 9 October 2008

I met a classmate of mine for lunch today. She works at a leading Dublin law firm. To cut to the chase, she told me she'd been asked by a senior partner to mop up a leak coming from one of the toilets. I realise my 6 October entry discusses the merits of Co-Op. But when some snob with a six figure salary, and a couple of years' partner status has the audacity to start ordering educated students half way through a degree to clean the toilets, I begin to question the integrity of my argument. This Partner's hot headed ego is so big you could slap Virgin on the side of it and send it around the world. I'd name and shame, only the previous sentence is libellous.

## A Fresh Approach

Jason Kennedy **Diary of a First Year**

I live in one loved-up house. After seeing my brother and sister's college houses years ago, I thought that communication between co-habitants was constricted to the likes of "Any idea where the cheese grater is?", but the last month of living on-campus has proved me wrong.

Not only do we watch Father Ted and films together, but we share our food, we already wormed our way into each other's bebo top friends, as well as all sorts of quirky madness that I'd be slaughtered for writing here, like one housemate's penchant for interesting headgear and kinky gloves and the needy girls' cuddles before bedtime. Even given my roomies eccentric nature I wouldn't swap any of them, despite the fact that one of them left a bruise on my leg from whipping me with a damp tea towel.

The only thing I don't like about Cappavilla is the irritating streetlights. They're left on all night and must wind up every other resident facing the main pathway. It wouldn't be so bad if the curtains weren't wafer thin, allowing every ray of yellow light to filter through. Still, it's just a minor annoyance when I think of the brilliant time I'm having here. Even the week five house inspection was surprisingly easy, granted we weren't told that beforehand. We had the place spotless; the bedrooms were immaculate, the sinks and toilets were gleaming, the normally overflowing bins were emptied and all the plates and cutlery weren't piled on top of the draining board. Still, it was only the oven and freezer that got (briefly) glanced at. At least the contract cleaners will not be in our house - for now anyway.

Back on the whole educational side of things, I'm still loving my course, despite the fact that assignments are being thrown at us left, right and centre. For the first time since I got here, I'm actually feeling the work level pile up, but at least they're all interesting. Even though shorthand is difficult, I still find it fascinating; needlessly complicated, but fascinating.

Our class did have a great bonding moment on Tuesday of week five, at the expense of poor Karl Spain. The man just wanted to relax after his comedy gig in the Stables, but typical journalists just couldn't leave him be. I could clearly see the irritated look he was shooting the lot of us, as we all crowded around him for a few pictures and a chat.

I still can't believe that I'm here six weeks already. The time is flying, yet it feels like I've been here for months. Still, I can't imagine living anywhere else.

# In Focus: Watching the

## A Little Insight into Election '08

Paul Bellew

Most Irish children grow up dreaming of scoring the winning goal in a World Cup or an All-Ireland final. Others have ambitions to become rock stars and movie icons while the odd few retain the elusive hope of becoming an astronaut. Not so for Mark Little.

From a young age he has been consumed and fascinated by politics. "I love politics; international correspondence is what I always wanted to do; it's addictive; it's a bug. You never get rid of it; this is my Olympics." Possessing a particular passion for American politics, Little spent six years in his dream role as RTÉ's Washington Correspondent. Now that he is back working in Ireland this has actually allowed him to do more in-depth work on America than when he was actually based there.

It soon becomes apparent that Little's interest and knowledge of America far exceeds the superficial level one might expect of a journalist passing through. He is eager to discuss the monumental social changes that are occurring throughout the United States, something we cannot grasp from our television screens or newspaper reports. America is changing and this election is the first signal to the outside world that this is so.

If one was to consider this particular election as similar to those of the recent past, a few minutes in Little's company soon dispels such thoughts.

He speaks of a "moment of history" that will possibly result in a revolutionary realignment of American politics. The mass

migration within the US from the decaying cities of the Mid-West to the South and West of the country and the effects it will have are the real issues that are worth discussing and the impact it is having on this election. He believes that Barack Obama's candidacy is the manifestation of this change that is occurring throughout the US.

When suggesting that many Irish people have an unhealthy obsession with American politics especially come election time, Little offers a balanced response. It is, he says, "car crash TV" and that while this fear and fascination on a superficial level may be unhealthy, we are inextricably affected by the outcomes of November 4 and therefore have a duty to pay attention to this election.

"If we do not understand America we are doomed, it affects the price of my mortgage, the petrol I put in my car, the peace of the world depends on America".

Who then does he believe is best equipped to handle such challenges?

Beginning with John McCain, Little speaks fondly of his meetings with the Arizona Senator and of his admiration for his character especially for what he endured as a POW in Vietnam. He believes McCain remains marked by the South Carolina Primary campaign against George W. Bush in 2000 where he fell victim to malicious campaigning by the Bush team.

To a lesser extent than Obama, McCain's selection as the Republican nominee is another symptom of change in America. Like Obama he appeals to Republicans who want to end politics as we know it.

"Bipartisanship is not an empty slogan, both of these guys' careers are founded upon this. I still believe that's what drives McCain."

In that sense they are the 'dream ticket'.

However despite his maverick persona, Little believes McCain remains the "fear of change" candidate. This is in part due to the hijacking of his campaign by the Republican base that is largely anti-McCain. His faltering on the economy at this critical point is an obvious weakness that may well decide this election.

What then of his selection of Sarah Palin as his Vice-Presidential candidate? Little attributes this decision to two defining factors. Firstly, she was expected to pick up the female 'Hillary Democrats' who weren't convinced by Obama, of which there were many.

Secondly, he wanted someone on the right wing of the party to shore up the Republican base so to allow him move to the moderate middle ground in an effort to appeal to independent voters.

While acknowledging that it was "a gamble that could have paid off", the timing of the global financial crisis has not only made Palin ineffective, she has become a liability. It is, he argues, the "watershed moment" of this campaign.

In contrast, Barack Obama played safe with Joe Biden. Little has been hugely impressed by Obama's performances since the beginning of the Democratic Primaries last January. Despite the fanfare that has surrounded his candidacy, he believes Obama himself has stopped short of embracing the drama that has engulfed his supporters.

Indeed, he says the slogan that may well define his campaign is "no drama Obama" and that his own decisive, calm and methodical demeanour has struck a chord with many voters who may have been put off by the fanfare that has surrounded him. However, he remains a big risk for many.

When we discussed Obama overlooking Hillary Clinton for the Vice Presidential nomination, Little attributed it to the failures of her own campaign rather than personal relations between the two. She ran a badly organised campaign, overspent budgets and had warring factions within her team. This was in sharp contrast to Obama.

Also, Hillary Clinton was overly aggressive in playing to "the tribal aspect of politics"; the very politics Little argues that Americans are increasingly turning away from. He cites these as more influential factors than personality differences in Obama not selecting Hillary Clinton as Vice Presidential nominee.

In the event of Obama winning this election I asked him what this would mean for American foreign policy. Little warns not to expect a revolution in American foreign policy but a move towards multilateralism and a reluctance to become involved in military actions around the world. He believes the American people on the whole do not want to be involved in the world. The idea of an American empire is to "fundamentally misunderstand the American people; they don't want to be in Kabul or Baghdad". The only area that may witness radical change is in environmental policy and the Obama/Biden plans for climate change.

Moving on to the impact of the



RTE's Prime Time correspondent Mark Little on the US Presidential Election 2008 (photo by Yann Ryan)

elections outcome here at home, Little is sceptical of the view that a McCain Presidency would be of more benefit to Ireland. Agreeing that McCain has been active in initiating an Immigration Reform Bill and has established close links with Irish-American activists in doing so, he shares Obama's view that such legislation cannot possibly make a special case for the Irish at the expense of other nationalities or ethnic groups.

Of more pressing concern to Ireland is the stated aim of both Obama and McCain to bring American multinational companies and jobs home with Ireland being identified as a major loser should such an ambitious plan be successful. He highlights how McCain has referred specifically to the Irish corporation tax level as threat to American jobs. He sees little to distinguish between the two in their dealings with Ireland.

Referring to the Bush era, Little argues that his legacy may well be the "killing off of the Reagan legacy",

of the free market and less regulation which served America well to a point.

The Bush era, he believes, fundamentally misunderstood the change occurring in America and in a globalised world and managed it badly. S

Who will take the White House and what are the chances of a meaningful revolution in American politics?

"Watch Virginia and North Carolina; if they go over to Obama we are witnessing the realignment of American politics. It's Obama's to lose with a potential for a landslide but there's an imponderable there.

"While the overt racism is overstated, there remains a fear of the other. Obama has managed to lose a few percentage points towards the very end of most primary campaigns. The key issue is whether the youth vote and the black vote come out for him. Again, it is his to lose, but I won't make confident predictions regarding November 4."

Name: David Studer  
Course: MA in Peace & Development Studies  
Obama or McCain? Obama.  
Why? 'Cos a vote for McCain is a vote for global security!



Name: Orla Doyle  
Course: Financial Services  
Obama or McCain? Don't care.  
Why? It's going on too long at this stage; I just can't wait until it's over.



# White House: US Elections '08'

## The US Presidential Election: why it matters.

Eric Doyle

With the exception of the recent economic troubles, the twists and turns of the US presidential race have dominated our headlines in Ireland. As a nation we see ourselves as having a special relationship with the USA; they are our cousins across the Atlantic, both figuratively and literally with the New World being the destination of choice of many of Ireland's emigrants down through the years. But nostalgia apart, why should we in Ireland care who is in the White House?

The US has seen its reputation soiled in recent years. With several military debacles in the past two decades, much of the world now resents American preponderance as the sole super power since the fall of the Soviet Union and its foreign policies are seen to have exacerbated relations with the Islamic world. More recently, the banking crisis has been blamed on Wall Street and the American financial system.

However, despite all this, America still stands as the guarantor of democracy and human rights. The EU has grown steadily as a world player but it still has many internal divisions to resolve before it can take on such a mantle. China may have liberalised economically, but its human rights record is still appalling; Brazil and India are well on their way to one day joining the great powers but that journey is far from assured as their neighbours may yet sink such ambitions; Russia has yet to be fully rehabilitated as a world power and still turns to Soviet-style solutions when it suits. So against this climate, the US is still the safest horse to bet on.

When we look at the candidates themselves, here too it is important



for Irish people to sit up and pay attention. Ireland and the US have very strong economic links, many of our multinationals are US and whoever becomes President will affect our economic situation as much as it will affect that of the US or even the world for that matter.

Both Republican and Democratic candidates are keen to make a break with the previous administration. However, we must be conscious that each comes with a set of specific values and ideas which will have consequences for our little Island, in particular with regard the current global finance problems.

Economics aside, climate change and international terrorism and crime, drugs and emigration are just some of the areas where the US is still the world leader.

In particular, with regard climate change, the US is one of the major polluters and the policies of the next President are going to have enormous consequences for carbon reduction

and the development of newer, cleaner energy technologies. In terms of security, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq regardless of its motivations has to be fought and won, not just for the security of the region but for the credibility of our democratic values.

In fact, in most areas, the US is still the best placed to lead. The previous administration has done a lot to undermine this. The Bush era saw the polarization of US politics domestically and of attitudes towards the US internationally, and the next President will have a difficult job undoing that damage.

But in spite of this, nobody else can – or should be allowed to – lead. As far as super powers go, the US is not the worse, and whoever takes over the top job is going to probably be an improvement.

For us here in Ireland we are but spectators, yet considering what's at stake we would be foolish to stop paying attention.

## Campaigning for Change

Kieran Costello

Katie Berry spent the Autumn semester of 2006 in UL, studying international business and Irish music.

A 2008 graduate, the Iowa-native decided to get involved with the Obama campaign, as campus organiser at the University of Saint Thomas (UST), in Minneapolis-St.Paul, Minnesota.

*When did you decide to become involved with the Obama campaign, and for what reasons? What exactly is your job?*

I'm working as campus organizer who recruits college students to knock on doors and make phone calls in support of the campaign. I've been involved canvassing neighbourhoods. The actual campus organizers working at UST are about 8-10 people in any given week, each working 15 hours a week.

I became interested in the campaign during the fall of 2007 while researching the Obama campaign for a Rhetorical Criticism class. I was trying to decide which candidate to support during the Iowa Democratic Caucuses and examined Obama's proposed policies and Senate initiatives. I became involved in the campaign and decided to support him because I was impressed with his commitment to making college more affordable for students.

I also had the opportunity to meet Obama and converse with him about the financial struggles of college students. He talked with me about his plan and I was convinced that he genuinely cared about making college

affordable for students.

Lastly, I became involved because I believe that the power of grassroots politics is with people on the ground talking about why Obama is the change that America needs. I think that if you do not like the direction that the country is headed, then it is your duty to work to change that direction. I feel a great sense of hope and excitement knowing that my work could improve the lives of millions of Americans.

*Why is Obama best suited to the job as next President of the United States of America? What can we expect from an Obama presidency?*

Obama is best suited to the job for a number of reasons. First off, he emphasizes diplomacy and collaboration with other nations and understands the importance of repairing the international relationships that have become fractured under Bush's presidency.

Regarding the unpopular war in Iraq, Obama wants to work with other members of the UN to support the various levels of the Iraqi government and encourage Iraqi stability and uphold the new constitution. Obama says he can get "most" U.S. troops out of Iraq within his first 16 months (2010) while McCain has said that he will continue to fund the war for as long as it takes to get the job done.

Obama wants to help fix America's suffering economy and aid working class families by providing tax cuts for middle class families and repealing the Bush tax cuts that have caused the budget deficit to be at an all-time

record high.

He also wants to keep jobs in America by ending the tax breaks for companies that send jobs overseas and reducing unemployment in America by creating new green jobs in America which will reduce America's dependence on foreign oil by supporting new research and exploration into natural resources.

Obama has also committed to supporting UN global anti-poverty initiatives and working to end genocide around the world especially in Darfur. He has spoken out against human rights infractions around the world especially in areas such as Tibet and China.

*How would you counter accusations that Obama is too inexperienced for the role?*

While people may question his inexperience, he has served two terms as a state senator in Illinois and is currently in his first term as a US senator. While in the Senate, Obama has held assignments on the Senate Committees for Foreign Relations, Environment and Public Works and Veterans' Affairs.

In January 2007, he left the Environment and Public Works committee and took additional assignments with Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. He also became Chairman of the Senate's subcommittee on European Affairs.

As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Obama has made official trips to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. He has also co-created legislation in the Senate with his fellow Illinois senator Dick Durbin.

*What could Ireland expect from an Obama presidency?*

The Irish and American economies are so closely tied together and Obama seems to understand this. I think both will be better off economically if Obama is elected. He has already met the Taoiseach and is eager to rebuild diplomatic relations with Ireland and collaborate on human rights issues and anti-poverty initiatives.



A rally in Minneapolis, MN, in February 2008

Name: Michael Burke  
 Course: MA in European Integration  
 Obama or McCain? Obama.  
 Why? Sarah Palin – she's Obama's best campaigner.



Name: Kyle Murray  
 Course: Politics department  
 Obama or McCain? Obama.  
 Why? One word – Sarah Palin.  
 Editor's note: Er, Kyle, that's two words...



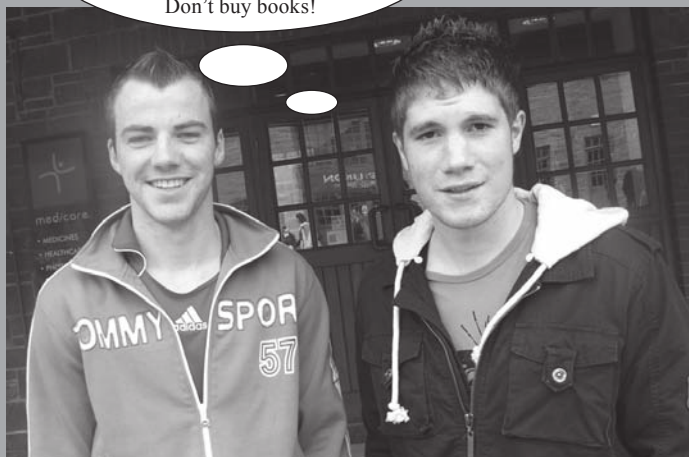
# Student Speak

## As were now drowning in the depths of a recession, apparently, *Eamon Heavey* asks UL what their top money-saving tips are.

Sean McTiernan  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Music Media &  
Performance Technology Wipe  
with both sides.



Daniel Lane and Barry  
John O'Connor  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Law & Accounting  
Don't buy books!



Kelly O'Brien  
2<sup>nd</sup> Year New Media & English  
Steal food off him...



Ciarán Cronin  
1<sup>st</sup> Year Materials Technology and  
Engineering Wearing your undies four times  
– normal way, back-to-front, inside out  
and inside out back-to-front.



Chris Kelly  
2<sup>nd</sup> Year Law & European  
Studies  
Quit smoking.



Kevin Cronin  
MA in Journalism  
A big bag of grain at the start of  
the year and one scoop per day  
for gruel.



James Kavanagh  
2<sup>nd</sup> Year Biomedical and Advanced  
Materials Go to the offy



Jody Wallace  
1<sup>st</sup> Year Nursing  
Avoid the sales!



Kieran Moynihan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Year Sports Science  
Drink vodka, not beer.



Ruán Dillon  
McLoughlin  
4<sup>th</sup> Year Construction Management  
Investing in Java's



Editorial

# An Focal

University of Limerick Students' Union  
 University of Limerick, Plassey, Co Limerick  
 Volume XVII, Issue 4  
 Tuesday, 21 October, 2008

*Letters to the editor may be sent to the above address or alternative may be emailed to editor@ulsu.ie. Please note that submission of a letter does not guarantee publication, but you never know, you may be lucky.*



# Including C&S Pa's Propaganda

One of the biggest difficulties facing the Students' Union Communications Officer is merging the role of being a newspaper editor and a student representative. While the former demands that impartiality chooses the subject matter for each edition of An Focal, the latter role dictates precisely what the content will be and how it will be presented.

In the last edition of An Focal the problems of combining the posts emerged in the decision to publish the controversial article, 'Exclusion Soc'. While the editorial decision was to run with the article criticising the management of committee elections in number of societies, its publication seemed to be an example of the Union criticising itself. The opinions expressed in the article were not necessarily those of the editor or of the Students' Union, or, indeed, its executive.

However, it had earned its place in the Opinion & Debate section of the paper as it was just that – a student's opinion backed up by anonymous sources.

There has been much criticism directed towards the author and the editorial in the fallout of the publication. However, there will not be an apology for printing such an article.

While the actual content of the article – the subject of election manipulation – has been pushed aside, discussion has focused on two things: the anonymity of the author and the reasoning behind publication.

To address the first, it is only necessary to say that the author wished to remain unknown because he/she knew the article would not be popular. This does not make the article spineless or worthless and those who dismiss it as such do not

realise the complexities that can arise in journalism and the resulting personal injuries that can result from signing ones name to a controversial piece.

Moving on to the second issue – that of the article's publication – and it becomes more difficult to explain. The shock of such an article's publication arose not from the content but from the bruised egos that were suddenly left exposed to the critical nature of the media for all of the campus community to examine.

Although focusing purely on societies, the article was a harsh reminder that the cushioned world of clubs and societies and whatever alleged wrongdoings that may take place there are not exempt from negative exposure from time to time.

UL's clubs and societies receive two-thirds of the Students' Union

capitation. Without a doubt they are a core element of the campus community and provide an essential asset to student life at UL. However, when there are cracks in the system, surely it is better to expose them sooner rather than later?

There are, of course, official channels through which anyone with complaints can follow up their objections, but to make known to the wider student audience any grievances with how societies are run there is the student newspaper.

'Exclusion Soc' was printed because it is known that committees have succession plans; it is known that there are preferred candidates for core positions; and it is now known that clubs and societies are also included when it comes to being held accountable for their actions.

Hey everyone welcome to week 7, or what I like to call the business end of the semester! I'm sure everyone's getting down to study now and attending all lectures (after mid-day obviously), and if you aren't it's probably a good time to start. If you're in first year and you're beginning to think that there is no possible way you could pass, then think again! There is still loads of time to pull it out of the fire, just ask a few friendly class mates to fill you in on what's gone on already and what's coming up. Specialise in a couple of areas in the subject and you should be grand – never failed me anyway.

For when you aren't studying, we have the Halloween Ball coming up for you in Week 8. This is always a crazy event so make sure you get your tickets early, they're on sale now! On the Monday night of Halloween we have Pritchard and Dainton of 'Dirty Sanchez' fame. The show includes lots of horrible stuff that is rarely nice to see, still though it's like anything rotten – you just have to stop and have a look!

By the time you read this the government's budget will have been made public and they will probably have raised registration fees to €1,500-plus. This is not the kind of result we would have hoped for from our fees campaign.

Having at least stalled fees, we are now faced with this charge which will be applied across the board and will be much more indiscriminate than fees. Those of you who don't receive a grant will be liable for this fee from next year on.

This raising of registration fees is college fees by another name. It's the government trying to be sneaky about it and we need to respond.

Anyone interested in joining our "Anti-Fees Working Group" send me an e-mail at [pa.obrien@ul.ie](mailto:pa.obrien@ul.ie) and we'd love to have you help out.

That's all really; have good Halloween and do your best to scare the sh\*t out of somebody, don't light any cats on fire though, that's not cool.

Take it easy,  
Pa

## Letters to the Editor

Patronizing Soc what an focal writers are really writing

Madam,

In the last edition of An Focal, an article was published by an anonymous writer which made serious allegations regarding the running of three societies on campus. The societies in question the Debating Union, the Drama Society and Fianna Fail, were alleged to actively exclude members and manipulate internal voting. The repercussions of such serious claims do not need to be highlighted if they were to be proved, however in the article in question they weren't.

In fact, the author failed miserably to offer anything more than assertion and conjecture to back them up. The article talks about alleged 'sources' from each society who have come forth to substantiate these accusations. But unfortunately none

of these 'sources' had the courage of convictions to publicly support said claims. In fact the writer even fails to offer a direct quote from any one of them. As I read the article I failed to find even a shred of actual evidence in the entire text to make this anything more than a bitter rant by someone who it would seem has an axe to grind with regard said societies and doesn't see a problem using the student media to that end.

To further damage the case this article crudely attempted to argue, the article makes several not-so-subtle jibes at members of those societies. Out of pure ineptness, spite or an awareness of how flimsy the evidence is, all the writer seems to have concocted here is a bunch of paranoid conspiracy theories about cabals controlling societies, aimed at the senior membership of these societies. Criticising societies

is one thing, but attacking individuals, named or not, is low, especially without anything close to real proof.

At best this diatribe was a terrible example of tabloid journalism; at its worst this was a vile attempt at abusing the privilege of our paper to avenge some perceived personal slight that has aggrieved the writer. There was no effort to balance the text by inviting each society to comment and I can't help ask that if such problems exist why has it come to light now, and why have only DebU, Drama and Fianna Fail been targeted? In summary, if there is evidence of such behaviour amongst societies, it needs to be brought before the official channel, which is the Clubs and Societies Exec Council, otherwise retract the article.

Regards,  
Eric Doyle



## The Advice Bureau

### The Mature Student Office

With the support of the Mature Student officer, Noreen Coveney O'Beirne and the staff of the mature student office (MSO), which includes Katherine Martin, administrator and Gerry Golding, Peer Mentor Coordinator, thousands of mature students have successfully obtained degrees, diplomas and certificates from UL. There are currently 600 mature students studying here.

The MSO is located in room number DM034 in the main building. The invaluable services they provide for the population over-23s in UL include basic computer skills, study and writing Skills sessions, essay writing techniques as well as tuition from the maths, science and information and communication technology learning centres. Career guidance is also arranged through the Careers division for those requesting it.

The staff of the MSO recognises that many prospective mature students, some of them may have been away from formal study for a long period of time, may be apprehensive about making a lifestyle change to that of mature student and as such they have two programmes, the Pre-degree Induction programme and the pre-degree access course,

designed to support mature students even before they begin their undergraduate here in UL.

This year the MSO are also rolling out a new peer mentoring support programme designed to help students with the transition to university by linking incoming first year students with matures already in the system. Those looking to become a mentor or a mentee should contact Gerard.golding@ul.ie.

The UL Mature Student Officer, Noreen Coveney O'Beirne was herself a mature student in UL and as such she is all too aware of the issues facing mature students; she has researched the needs and aspirations of adult learners. She encourages all mature students to make contact with her during your time in UL.

One of the best features of the MSO is their drop-in support sessions, which run daily from 10.30am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday. Appointments to meet with any of the staff members may also be arranged outside of these hours. The MSO prides itself on supporting students through their transition to university and during their time here in UL, so make good use of their time and resources; Noreen and co are here for you!

## Damo's Piece



Good day students of UL. After three weeks of crutches and no Lodging, I'm sure life can't get any better or worse. Honestly, though, I never again want to be so incapacitated again so I've decided that the next time I'm faced with a skydiving dilemma I'm going to just plough straight into the ground and let the nurses look after me for six months...I'm joking.

These things have impacted on every aspect of my life though. Taxis everywhere; can't have a proper night out and even the other day when I decided that getting my lunch as takeaway at the Stables I forgot my inability to carry items across the courtyard. On that note I want to thank the smiling blonde fourth year business student that helped me out of that predicament!

Did I mention that I've also fallen at every major event we've had in the last month, and all due to crutches!

Speaking of nights out, here's where this piece turns into more of a diary entry than a sophisticated piece of writing. Lately, now I don't know if it's my age starting to show or what but instead of going out to the Sin Bin and Molly's, having a few drinks and falling home – no pun intended – I've found myself going to gigs, having a few drinks socially and then heading home at a reasonable hour. Couple that with me not having played the Playstation in over a month and the signs are clear: I am taking this career move way too seriously!

I've also extended my scope of places to go but that's not really a discussion for here.

Moving on, work wise I've been busy all the time with gigs, discipline stuff, trying to round up sponsors and of course fees protesting.

But I have to ask a question of the readers of this paper, where is the student machine. Really folks, the students of UL alone could bring Limerick to a grinding halt all by themselves, yet we've not yet reached full potential in terms of numbers at events; hoping to see an improvement as the threat of fees becomes even more real.

Looking ahead we've got the Halloween Ball and hallo week, need I say more.

As ever check out this edition for details on the NiteLink, SafeCab and free Nokia Repair services just a few of the things that are buzzin' around my office like flies.

On a final note did ye all see page seven of a certain paper a few weeks ago. How controversial was that eh...all those special offers on sweets in the supermarkets!

"If Milty Mingleton can shove himself into that weenie bikini, then you don't need to be shy about making your donations to the swim team."

## Glyde Dam

### Description

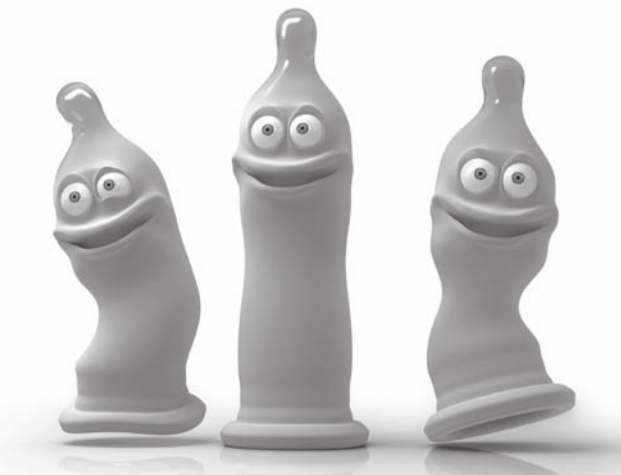
A barrier method that a male or female can use to prevent contracting sexually transmitted infections.

### Also called

Rubber dams, dams

### How it Works

The Glyde Dam is oblong sheet of latex used to reduce the transmission of STIs during oral sex by acting as a barrier to vaginal and anal secretions that contain bacteria and viruses.



### Advantages

Glyde dams come in four different fragrances, they are colour coded: Violet = Blueberry, Brown = Chocolate, Pink = Strawberry and White / Clear = Vanilla.

- They are see-through when wet so you never have to worry about not being able to view the fullness and openness of your partner.
- Glyde dams act as a barrier to bodily fluids, they help reduce STI transmission. (Many STIs, such as herpes, genital warts and HIV, can be transmitted through oral sex)
- They are long enough to cover both the vagina and anus at the same time making it easier to slip the tongue from one area to the next, although the makers of the Glyde Dam do not recommend doing this as germs can pass from anus to vagina.
- Dental dams are very easy to use

### Drawbacks

- Like every safe sex method glyde dams must be used correctly and consistently in order to be effective.
- They are a little awkward to use in the beginning
- They can easily fold back on themselves bringing the user into contact with the very fluid they wish to avoid.
- Oil-based lubes and lotions can degrade the latex and decrease the glyde dam's effectiveness.
- Glyde dams are for one-time use only

## Let's talk about sex baby!

An Focal sex columnist Annie Glyde-Dammes

Lately I was having a chat with some lesbian friends of mine, who attempted to educate me in the ways of the world and tried to explain the different categories of lesbian to me. I didn't know that there existed multiple kinds of lesbian, but there you go. Sadly I didn't come out of the conversation with a significantly deeper understanding of the various categories but I did start thinking about the obsession that everybody seems to have with categorising sexuality and sexual behaviour. The world is just obsessed with giving everyone a box to fit into based on their sexual preferences.

There's a general opinion out there that if a guy kisses other guys on a regular basis then he's gay, or bisexual if there are a few girls thrown into the mix for good measure. For some reason it is either unacceptable or unheard of for a guy to just enjoy the experience of kissing other guys without everybody feeling it necessary to catalogue or question or comment.

It's the almost the same for girls, except they get three categories – gay, straight or attention seeker. Sometimes, none of those labels are fair or accurate. Sometimes you can just want to show affection for another person and this is the way you want to do it.

So why can't two people of the same sex share a kiss without having the whole world bouncing up and down to pin a label on them? Why can't these people be allowed to act out their curiosity or attraction to each other in the same way that two straight people are?

I know plenty of people who don't classify themselves as bisexual because they know that doing any more than kissing somebody of the same sex would make them feel uncomfortable, but they do enjoy sharing a kiss every so often.

One of my best friends used to greet me, outside of school of course with a kiss on the lips and we often held hands when the mood struck us, particularly if one of us was upset. So did we get disapproving or curious looks?

Yeah, of course, we regularly got the standard shouts and catcalls from multiple guys, mostly because they thought it was important for us to know that they found the basic level of affection that we displayed very arousing. That, and the fact that our behaviour caused their imaginations to go into overdrive.

Someone once asked the question: would the same guy approach a heterosexual kissing couple and feel it necessary to inform them of how much of a turn on he found their embrace. I'd go with probably not because he would more than likely receive a smack in the face.

Next time you feel the urge to comment, point, classify, mock or judge – just don't. You never know when you might be on the receiving end.





# The Advice Bureau

## PSA Notes



The Postgraduate Students' Association AGM will take place at 1pm in the PSA Common Room on Wednesday 22 October 2008 (Week 7) at 1pm. The meeting will elect the new officers of the PSA executive committee, outline budgets for the coming year for the Association, present accounts from previous years, address motions and resolutions which have been tabled as well as to address any concerns or queries which have been brought forward for discussion by members of the Postgraduate community on campus.

The positions of Deputy-President, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Events Officer and Mary Immaculate Representative are all vacant so elections for these positions will take place at the Meeting. The positions are all voluntary positions and those elected will have a responsibility to

ensure the development of the Association. I would encourage anybody who is contemplating becoming visibly involved in the Association to come along to the meeting. Some of the other issues for discussion at the meeting will be Postgraduate Teaching and the development of the working group on teaching, payment for teaching, the Postgraduate Charter and the development of the Common Room space.

The subject of the re-integration of the Postgraduate Students' Association into the UL Students Union has once will be on the Agenda for discussion. Last year a motion was tabled and passed by the PSA to re-integrate with the ULSU. It was the opinion of some of my predecessors and of past officers of the ULSU that the implications of the split between

the two organisations were not wholly thought out and the results have been negative for the Association as the PSA was established in order to fulfil a representative and social role necessary for postgraduate students in the University but this hasn't necessarily been the case.

The primary problem with separation from the ULSU has been that the PSA President has become a full time administrator which has distorted the role of the President and therefore the substance which is necessary to fulfil this social representative role has been affected. The PSA President, is the sole employee of the PSA, has the responsibility of dealing with all accounts for the Association including the paying and declaring all taxes of the PSA. These administrative tasks, as well as the numerous other roles that are expected of the President, are extremely time consuming and require

training and expertise to perform, tasks which the Secretary General permanent staff of ULSU are trained to and employed to do. In essence they detract the President's focus away from their main job, which is the representation of postgraduate students on campus. Therefore, a reintegration into the Students' Union would reduce this administrative burden considerably and allow the President to focus on a restructuring of the PSA so as to ensure its main role is fulfilled.

The extent of responsibility on the President of the Association is immense and it is unrealistic to assume that every PSA President will be an accomplished manager and has the skills to run an organisation. The PSA President has little or no accountability, is bound by very little employment laws and does not even sign a contract when they take office therefore if a PSA President were to walk out of the job it could leave the entire future

of the PSA in doubt. Although the PSA is responsible to the University for management of Postgraduate capitation, the University has never asked for an account of the money, assuming, I believe, that the ULSU acts as a watchdog in these matters.

The issues of transparency and accountability tend to be at the forefront of the debate in question. In the current situation, the PSA President is the sole person in control of the capitation fee which is received by the PSA each year. There are no controls on what cheques are issued and where money will be spent. The President is the sole signatory on the PSA chequebook which could very easily allow for a mismanagement of funds. The possibility of a breach of PSA funds has been dealt with and made more accountable in the past year yet the level of accountability which is portrayed is at the discretion of the President. It is not in the interest of the Postgraduate community for so much power to be vested in one person. Although in theory the PSA executive and the college reps should keep checks and controls on the President, in reality this tends not to be the case. In reality, the only body that has been willing to regulate

financial matters in the PSA is the Students Union, its Sabbatical Officers and current and previous Secretary Generals, which has been done in recent times through various agreements.

One of the primary fears of re-integration with ULSU is the loss of political autonomy for the Association especially in the light of the failure to have quorum at the ULSU AGM and UGM last year. Therefore what the PSA executive are proposing is an agreement between the ULSU and PSA executives in relation to the overseeing of the finances of the PSA which will require a minor constitutional change of the PSA constitution and no change of the ULSU constitution. The proposed agreement will be brought as an item for discussion at the AGM. I would urge you all to come to the meeting and air your opinions as it is for the good of the Association and for the betterment of the future of the Association.



### ULSU Nitelink Timetable for Academic Year 2008/09

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

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

Returns to UL via Flag Pole Entrance

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

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

Returns to UL via East Gate entrance

**Route C 23.30 Only**

Route A+B Stops on Request  
Drop off only

## Ents Listings

We've decided to take it handy for a few weeks and give you a break. But we'll be back with a bang! Last week in October sees the arrival of Halloween: a week of spooky, creepy fun all finishing up with the eagerly anticipated Halloween Ball. For more details read on...

### Halloween

**Monday 27th October**

*The Return of Dirty Sanchez*  
*Pritchard & Dainton*  
*The Stables 9.30pm*  
*Tickets €12 from SU*

Halloween begins with the return of Welsh filth purveyors Pritchard and Dainton. The two boys take to the stage on bank holiday Monday at 10pm for a night of god only knows what? One thing is for sure, it will be a mixture of laughter and downright disgust as the two abuse each other and their audience, going to extremes we dare not think about.

Remember don't do this at home... These men are highly trained; in what, we don't know, but they are!

It's a Bank Holiday Monday so buy your tickets in advance, please. If you want to get off the bus and come straight to the gig we'll have a cloak room on the night for your stuff.

### The After Party – Fright Night at Trinity Rooms

Trinity Rooms  
€5 or Free With Dirty Sanchez Ticket Stub  
We have the first night of Halloween finishing at closing time so off we go to Trinity Rooms for the Fright Night Party. Horror Movies galore plus lots of spooky fun.

### Tuesday 28th October

*ULSU Ents & UL Music Soc*  
*Presents*  
*The 2008 Battle of the Bands*  
*The Stables 7.30pm*  
*Free Gig*

Over the past four weeks UL's finest have battled for a place in the final of the Battle of the Bands. Now six of them remain and they hit the stage on Tuesday of Halloween to see who will be last band standing.

While we are waiting for the judges to make their decisions, we'll have a bit of a Green Session. This time out it's the

**The Aftermath**  
*The Stables 10.00pm*  
*Free Gig*

Midlands-based band The Aftermath recently spent eight weeks in BBC DJ Chris Moyles' top unsigned bands chart, are still the only Irish band

to have featured in the influential chart, and are back on terra firma for the release of double a-side 'One Is Fun/Are You Not?'. The Aftermath, named after Longford brothers Johnny and Michael Cronin's favourite Rolling Stones album, returned to Ireland after years battling the toilet circuit in the UK. They set about putting a band together with Mullingar guitarist Justin McNabb that could play as big as the noise they had in their heads. After a few false starts it came together and recording began in France with producers David and Karl Odium and is a stellar affair. Check them out on myspace.com

### Wednesday 29th October

*ULSU Ents & UL International Society*  
*Presents*  
*The International Food Fair*  
*The Stables*  
*Tickets €5 from SU*

The International Food Fair was for a long time one of the biggest social events on the UL calendar. Cheap food, great music and an atmosphere that was hard to match. This year sees the return of the Food Fair.

So if you like:  
Austrian Kaiserschmarrn, Belgian Waffles, Chinese Ribs, Dutch

Oliebollen, Finnish Salmon Soup, French Tart Tatin, German Potato Fritters, Greek Tzatziki, Irish Stew, Italian Pizza, Japanese Sushi, Moroccan Couscous, Norwegian Farikal, Senegalese Yassa, Spanish Paella, Swedish Meatballs, Swiss Berner Rosti or US Pumpkin Pie...

We hope to add more. If you have an idea for a dish or your country isn't listed then get in touch with us (regina@eightball.ie) and we'll see if we can get you involved.

And that's just the food. We're hoping people will turn up in national costume and they're be lots of music in the mix too – maybe even some multicultural karaoke. And seeing as it's Halloween, we might even do some bobbing for apples and a little bit of Trick or Treat.

When it's all over then we'll head to the Stables for the

*Halloween Green Session*  
*feat.*  
*We Should Be Dead*  
*The Stables 9pm*  
*Free Gig*

Meteor award nominated "We Should Be Dead" were one of the highlights of the Freshers' Ball way back in September and here they are again except this time they get to be the headline act.

One of Limerick's finest they have had a massive 2008. They were nominated in the new band category at the Meteor award but narrowly lost out to Ham Sandwich on the night. As a result of the nomination they gained real exposure and songs like "Forget Romance, Let's Dance" and "Zero Point Five" got lots of airplay. They have spent the last few months recording a new album in LA and are heading back there in the new year to finish the album and do a US tour.

Come see them before they go massive.

### Thursday October 30th

*ULSU Ents*  
*presents*  
*The 2008 Halloween Ball*  
*The South Court Hotel*  
*Tickets €15*

It's a busy week. There something on every night, but it's all just a build up to the biggest off-campus night of the year: the Halloween Ball. The night when everyone dresses up and pretends they're someone else. So it's real easy to get away with all manner of stuff, although we are watching you; all the time; spooky eh?

So dress up or dress down, buy a costume or make a costume, but just

make sure you buy a ticket. This gig sells out every year and this year will be no different. 2000 students will descend on the South Court which looks nothing like a hotel on the night, and definitely looks nothing like a hotel the next morning!

Entertainment on the night is provided by local favourites, Escapade, joined by Mr Lightweight. Throw in a DJ til late, a little bit of magic, some very small surprise guests and it all adds up to a "reel gud neet"

The theme for this year is Pirates so think Jonny Depp, Blackbeard, Steve the Pirate etc. Lots of grrrs and eye patches, maybe parrots on shoulders – who knows? Obviously, you don't have to come dressed as a pirate but there will be a competition on the night to find the best dressed pirate so it will be worth your while. There's also a competition for the best dressed non-pirate. Prizes are VIP tickets for Rag Week – free in to all the gigs and back stage access.

Tickets on sale now from the Students' Union.

So that's Halloween. We can't wait; we're well looking forward to it.



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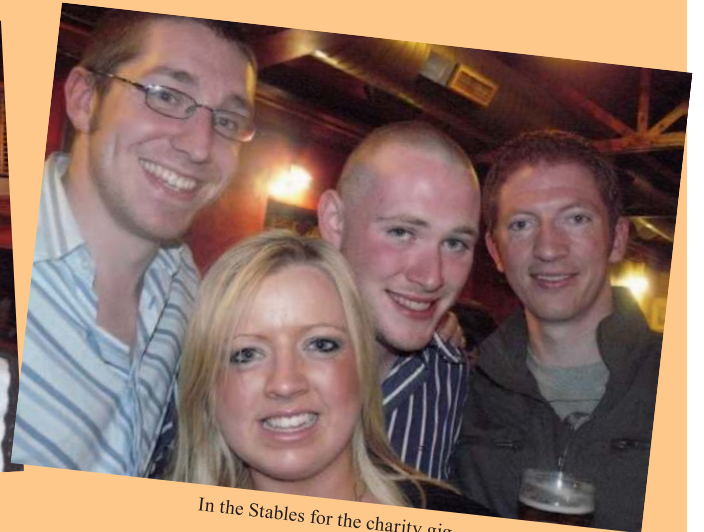
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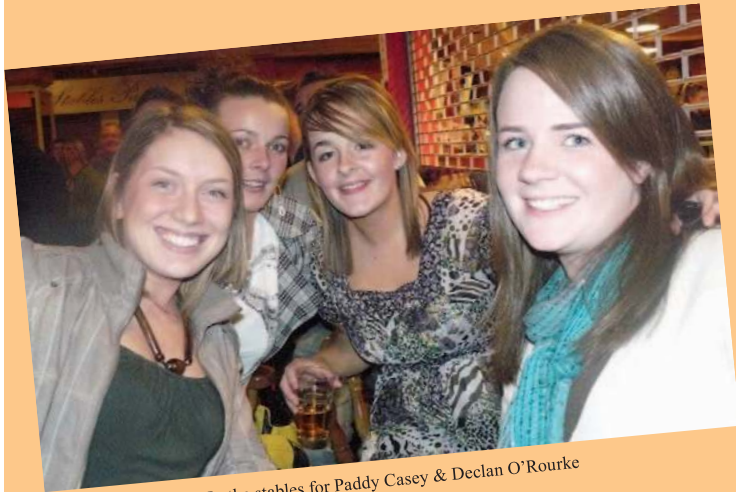
Enjoying Paddy Casey & Declan O'Rourke



Stables staff taking a night off



In the Stables for the charity gig



In the stables for Paddy Casey & Declan O'Rourke



Cathy Davey during her Penguin Session in the Jean Monnet



I spy with my little eye



Paddy Casey on stage in the Stables



Maurice Cotter arguing that 'a vote for McCain is a vote for



Declan O'Rourke during his charity gig



Enjoying the charity gig in the Stables



Get the Paparazzi away from me!

# Joy in the ‘Hood

Hi guys, my name is Paddy Rockett and I'm your Community Relations Officer for the coming year. Basically, it's my job to get you guys to grips with the basics of residential life within your community, be you a Cappavillian or an Oaklawnian chances are that there is someone somewhere in your residence that will not be a fan of what (or who) ever you're doing.

This is just a brief rundown of what's hot and what's not while you're livin' it up at UL over the coming months.

Let's kick off with some basic 'dos and don'ts' while you're in the 'hood:

“...This is just a brief rundown of what's hot and what's not while you're livin' it up at UL over the coming months.”

## DO

- Introduce yourself to those around you: they may have food!
- Keep your surroundings clean: you may find a student asleep in your rubbish...HPSS more than likely
- Have people over for a few pints: not pints of vodka, mind and I stress “a few”!
- Be aware that there are children living around you as well: they're really tiny so look out for them and they will out-scream you given the chance so don't start them off— keep it quiet in the first place; no one likes to make mammy angry.
- Implement a security plan with your housemates: there are things outside of you're house that want what's inside you're house!
- Be safe in your vehicle: there are other people around...they're the ones without the alloys and massive exhausts which serves no other purpose than to sound like a constipated sheep!



## DON'T

- Challenge or be abusive to those around you: they've gotta live here too!
- Think any of the following will aid your neighbours flower or grass growth:
  - Dutch gold (or any other beverage)
  - vomit
  - urine (or any other type of bodily fluid) “what? looks like the flower's crying?”
- Think any sign from the surrounding area would look good in your room: It won't – and people need to know how to get to Killarney.
- Have loud parties: and not expect a reaction from those around you. Many of your neighbours actually got up before noon, worked a tough day and are wrecked. They deserve some sleepy time.
- Think people need to hear ‘Ireland's Call at 4.30 in the morning: You're Irish, rugby's class and you have a wonderful singing voice; ‘nuff said! And most have a family that are catching some Zzz's.
- Give anyone any reason to complain be it naked hula competitions in the front lawn or the fact that you think you could well beat Jimmy in a pissing competition: “50 points if you hit the dog!” “No! Stop it! Bad man!”.



## The big issue

Okay guys, the biggest issue I gotta tell you about is the fact that whether you know it or not, it is, in fact, illegal to walk around with an open naggin, can, bottle of Bud...in fact, with any open container that has alcohol in it. So, please, don't do it.

If you're going from one house to another, wait 'til you get there to crack it open. With an increase in Garda presence (particularly around the Lodge, once a prime location for the auld 'crouching tiger hidden naggin'), there comes an increase in on the spot fines of 75 yo-yo's which is the equivalent of a few good nights out for you well-deserving students. Heightened Garda presence will mean a clampdown on this type of behaviour. So keep the classy in Classytroy and keep the scotch on the rocks at home.

## Safety

Recently there have been many incidents of theft, breaking and entering and assault around the campus environs and this makes baby Jesus cry. In all seriousness guys we need to be extra vigilant these days that means:

- Locking all doors and windows
- Making it look like you're at home even when you're not
- Do not leave expensive items on show for thieves to see
- Ensuring you have worked out a security plan with your fellow housemates

Also, when you're coming home from college or from a night out, be aware that it's dark and scum who carry out this type of activity love the dark because it makes you vulnerable. If you have to, the best alternative is to walk home in groups or there's the free Nitelink bus brought to you by the Students' Union. It goes to all the on-campus and off-campus accommodation and it's freeeeeeeeeeee so you've no excuse. The timetable for the routes is printed in this, and every, edition of An Focal so jump on. After a night out, if you find yourself really stuck, avail of the Safecab taxi service provided by Plassey Cabs (061 336 336) and get home safely. Sign up for it in the Students' Union.

Your safety is a key concern of mine and the Students' Union and although this article is somewhat light hearted I would hope that you

take the precautions seriously and never ever walk home alone – particularly as the days are getting shorter and darker earlier allowing for these mo-fos to prey on you guys!

So stay safe! And stay classy!

“...Your safety is a key concern.”

## Litter

As the ads say, it's disgusting... and so are the people doing it! Folks of UL, littering is gone out of fashion. Everyone knows it's hip to recycle and save the world and all that, but if you can't manage a Captain Planet rescue, at least throw the Dominos box in your wheelie bin and not out your bedroom window onto the lawn. Also, when your friends have dispersed after your 'few pints' (see above under Dos), be a dear and toss the cans into the bin; the footpath doesn't need decorations – it's not Christmas yet. And remember the litter police are around and you can get fined.

## Safety First



*get home safely...*

*with*

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

# Maguire's Mudbath

Mike Considine

Since we all returned to college, just over a month ago, we have all experienced the usual back to college feelings and experiences. Be it a whole new raft of first years, the by now customary late night in the Lodge, or trying to figure out exactly why we signed up for that module, that nobody seems to have a clue about what's going on in it. And for your regular UL GAA person, you can duly add in the appalling disgrace that is Maguire's football pitch.

For those of you unaware of this, Maguire's is the training field where the very large bulk of college teams train. On any regular day there could be four or five GAA teams out on it, along with the UL Vikings and if you're lucky, you may also have the soccer teams out there, just for good measure. When you consider these facts, added in with the dreadful summer that we have all just experienced, you will then begin to understand how poorly we have been

treated by the college as a whole.

The University of Limerick has a reputation in Ireland and abroad, as being one of the top sporting campuses available to a prospective student. Granted, we have a sports arena of which we can rightly be proud. However, the standard of training pitches which we have been given really does tell us what the college thinks of our sporting ambitions. For every team to be given a fighting chance on the playing field, they need, and deserve, to be training on pitches which can help to give them a fighting chance.

UL does not actively seek players for sports scholarships, so already we are at a disadvantage. That has not stopped some of our teams from making significant impacts in their competitions, but this has only been achieved through sheer will and collective spirit. To achieve true success these teams need to be backed properly and it is the college's responsibility to do so. The mud bath that is Maguire's must take first priority.

## Know skydiving, Know Life; No skydiving, No Life!

Megan Maguir

Our very own editor, Aoife Breen, took this statement into account when she went skydiving for the first time a couple of weeks ago and wrote an amazingly descriptive article about the buzz you get from it. Skydiving is the most incredible thing you can do in your life. The fear, the adrenaline and how unstoppable you feel when your feet touch the ground is beyond belief. And now more and more Skydive UL members are going to know what I'm talking about.

Since the last issue of An Focal, over 20 students have gone and did their first jump course and are now trained to jump out of planes. Just like that! So, a big well done to those brave youngsters. And every Wednesday and every weekend we will be shipping ourselves out to our local jump centre looking for our high.

Skydive UL also has some pretty exciting events coming up that you don't want to miss out on. On Wednesday, 22 October, Skydive UL and the Wind Surfers' Club are getting together and throwing a speed dating night. So, if you're sick of going to your average table quiz, if you're looking for love or just a laugh come along and bring your friends. I recommend attending this...Have you seen how hot the Wind Surfers are!?! I have a feeling this night is gonna be a good one!!

Then, a clever Skydive UL member came up with the idea of a 'Rubix

Romp'. Curious? You won't be by the end of the night! Basically, you have to wear all six colours of a rubix cube to the party (i.e. red shoes, green pants, yellow shirt, etc) and you are not allowed leave the party till you are wearing one complete colour (i.e. green shoes, green pants, green shirt, etc.) Now, that's a party I wanna be at! Details about this party to be followed. So keep a look out for 'An Focal', posters around the college, on bebo and on our forum.

Now, back to business. First jump courses are still running so it is never too late to become a member and go skydiving. Raffle tickets are also being distributed to make the course even cheaper for Skydive UL members only. So try and get your hands on these. Our own Eimear Maloney got her first jump course for less than €100. Turned out her auntie won the main prize and didn't want it so she gave it to Eimear. By then Eimear had her jump already done, so she was credited with €280 of jumps instead!!

Packing Classes have also begun. If you want to be certified, you must know how to pack. Not only that but it knocks off a few pounds off the price too. Anyone interested contact [mmoore@skydiveul.org](mailto:mmoore@skydiveul.org).

If anyone needs more information e-mail: [info@skydiveul.org](mailto:info@skydiveul.org) Updates can be seen on [www.skydiveul.bebo.com](http://www.skydiveul.bebo.com) and on [www.skydiveul.org/forum](http://www.skydiveul.org/forum) We look forward to hearing from you. And if we don't, see you in the sky!

## UL Hockey Club just lose out to Quinns

UL Hockey Club was back in action this weekend when they played Harlequins from Cork at home, in what was always going to be a hard fought game against tough opposition.

Harlequins have been top of the table for the last few years however this did not faze the UL side. The opening half was played at a fast pace and packed with intensity as was expected.

The UL forwards of Laura Peters, Jane Quinlivan and Jen O' Loughlin were making some great runs and found some open space making the Quinn's defence work hard. Some great tackles in the defence and mid-field held Harlequins off and it wasn't until minutes from half time that Quinn's penetrated the UL side.

Goalkeeper Louise made some super saves and the opening goal was unfortunate.

The half time whistle was met with great relief from both sides and after some water and a talk with coach Anne Logan, UL were rejuvenated and oozing confidence, one nil down to Quinn's at half time inspired the team to push even harder to try and grab back an equaliser.

Some excellent passing between the mid-field and defence opened things up even more in the second half for UL and there were chances on goal however they were not converted. UL's mid-field trio of Sharon Carey,

Fenagh Smith (Captain) and Carol Hickey were immense throughout helping the defence break down the oncoming attack.

UL were unfortunate to give away a penalty corner in the last ten minutes of play and Cliona Sergant slotted the ball into the goal.

Not to be disheartened UL picked themselves up again and continued to press hard on the Quinn's defence. Substitutes were made to keep everybody's legs fresh and UL were unfortunate not to find the Quinn's net.

The full time whistle blew and the final score was 2-0 in favour of the away side. Harlequin's is a team packed with experience with players such as Eimear Creegan and Karen Baitman and a young relatively new UL squad took them on showing great heart and fight.

UL were unlucky not to score in what was such a thrilling game but they can walk away with their heads held high after a superb performance so early into the season.

Team: Louise, Ellen, Nikki Sterrit, Eileen, Claire Mulcahy, Sharon Carey, Fenagh Smith (captain) Carol Hickey, Laura Peters, Jennifer O'Loughlin, Jane Quinlivan, Jennifer Hyde, Grace Brennan, Doireann De Paor, Lorraine

## 21st century Thomond Park

Liam Togher

Wembley and Lansdowne Road are national team venues that were demolished in the last ten years. The former has now been completed while the latter is currently being reconstructed. In Wembley's case the work was finished four years behind schedule and frighteningly over budget. Lansdowne Road is set for a similarly poor reputation. Thomond Park in Limerick was also redeveloped in recent times. A much smaller ground, the building work was done and dusted ahead of scheduled finishing time and well within budget.

And what a sight it is! The roofs of the newly-constructed stands can be seen from the terraces of the nearby Gaelic Grounds and from the courtyard of King John's Castle. Tourists often wonder what the building is and we can now enlighten them that it is the legendary Thomond Park, home to the fabled Munster rugby team.

The primary reason for the ground's revamp was to almost double its capacity to around 26,000. Such was the demand for tickets for much-anticipated games at the venue that a decision was taken to accommodate hundreds of people that had been disappointed in the search for tickets so often in the past. Not only can the stadium hold many more fans, it has also been taken into the 21st century. A 14,000-capacity ground does not do justice to the reigning Heineken Cup champions. When Munster first won the competition in 2006, two 'home' games in the knockout rounds had to be played at Lansdowne Road because the ERC deemed Thomond Park too small for these matches.

The first official match played there was a Magner's League game between Munster and Glasgow on 4 October. The atrocious weather did not deter thousands of fans from getting a first inside look at

this new gleaming testament to rugby's astronomical growth in the province. It has also managed the perfect hybrid of maintaining its proud tradition while moving seamlessly into the modern era. This fantastic new arena is the ideal setting for a team whose attributes are unique in world rugby. What an occasion the Munster-New Zealand game promises to be on 18 November. Thomond Park has well and truly come of age.



# AGM

Wednesday 26th October  
C1-060

Free food and drinks afterwards

Details of foreign trip

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# Let's make the Euro go further

John Condren

If the 2006 World Cup in Germany was the footballing equivalent of listening to a morose radio debate on the Irish economy, then Euro 2008 went a long way towards restoring faith in the game – for this writer at least. Full of exciting attacking football, the Spanish, Dutch, Russians and Turks lit up Europe for a fortnight and reminded us of the glorious days of Platini, Rossi and van Basten. The Portuguese were disappointing, the Italians dull, the French dreadful and the Germans downright lucky to make it to the final. Croatia and the Czech Republic were frustratingly eliminated before they could truly get a chance to shine – and that brings me to the kernel of this article.

The European Championships, quite simply, needs expansion. The World Cup has blossomed since ballooning to 32 teams, and with the European Union alone comprising 27 members, surely the time is right to create a tournament of 24 teams. Look at the countries who failed to make it to Austria and Switzerland

– Scotland, England, Belgium, Poland, Serbia, Norway, Denmark. All of them are decent sides with capacity for improvement and did not deserve to be sitting at home twiddling their thumbs while the boring Greeks and mind-bogglingly bad Austrians strutted their stuff before the eager eyes of European football fans.

The Republic of Ireland, too, would benefit from a larger and longer tournament. Had Steve Staunton not destroyed our chances of qualification with his ridiculous selections and inability to motivate, we would have celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Ray Houghton's infamous goal against the English in the streets of Vienna and Geneva. Instead, we sat at home, burning with envy as Fernando Torres, David Villa, Cesc Fabregas and Marco Seena powered Spain to victory. We must now wait until 2012 before returning to the finals of a European Championships – I can hear the reruns of Smokie's famous song already!

We have the players to affect a triumph in Europe's premier international competition – Glenn Whelan is showing his essential abrasive qualities, Aiden McGeady is a classy old-fashioned winger, Robbie Keane is approaching his prime, Shay Given is still one of the best goalkeepers in the Premier League and Richard Dunne is an inspiring and dauntless centre-half. If the tournament were to be inflated, we would be able to put together a run of at least five games (assuming qualification from our group), improving all the time and learning from our mistakes over the course of the tournament. Thanks to his attention to detail and belief in hard work, Giovanni Trapattoni has restored a feel-good factor in Irish soccer not evident since the innocent and fondly-remembered scorching days of USA '94. Five games unbeaten – we have rediscovered our pride and banished the demons of Kerr and Staunton. Now, if there was just some way to eliminate Kevin Kilbane...

# Ireland needs Ireland

Alan Keane

Irish football is looking up. We have an experienced manager at the helm, and there is hope that we may actually qualify for the next World Cup. However, I feel that all this positivity will come to nothing if Stephen Ireland does not come back into the Irish set-up.

His second name is devastatingly ironic because without him, the Irish team is a non-entity. The first scorer of a goal in Croke Park and the saviour in San Marino, he has turned his back on Irish soccer and to be honest you can see where he's coming from. He has hit a purple patch with Manchester City in the most exciting time in the clubs

history and he wants to focus solely on maintaining his place in the first team and winning trophies.

Maintaining his place shouldn't be a difficulty for a player of his calibre. For all the talk of the Samba boys Jo and Robinho, it was Ireland who is leading the way at this early stage in the season. He received the man of the match award in the 6-0 drubbing of Portsmouth, without actually scoring a goal. He has exquisite vision and his range of passes is phenomenal. He scored a stunning goal in the defeat to Liverpool and has been receiving praise from all angles. Mark Hughes has been quick to praise this academy graduate. No less an important voice in Irish soccer than Eamonn Dunphy has written

an open letter to Ireland pleading with him to rejoin the Irish team.

Ireland is undoubtedly eccentric, what with the whole "dead grandmother" fiasco and his pants-flashing goal celebrations, but what difference does this make if he can play football? Eric Cantona was a nut-job but my God could he score goals. Stephen Ireland may have a car with pink alloys but he could also be the difference between the Irish team participating in the next World Cup or watching it on the box. Scorer of four goals in his six internationals, his passes can unlock defences and having him in the Irish midfield engine room could be what's needed to propel the Irish ship. Otherwise, I fear it's already sunk.

# Another case of Nick being Nick

For those of us who all covered our head in our hands on news of Nick Faldo's appointment as Ryder Cup captain, the fiasco of Valhalla represented a sad vindication of one of life's worst kept secrets – Nick Faldo can't run a bath, let alone Europe at golf's most prestigious team event.

The catalogue of errors made by this man were utterly extraordinary. From the omission of Europe's most in-form player from his wildcard selection to his overuse of a visibly exhausted Padraig Harrington and to ridiculously leaving his strongest players to the bottom of the singles order while we trailed 9-7, the Englishman never shirked from fully displaying his total incompetence. The opening blunder of leaving out Darren Clarke was truly inexplicable. The Dungannon man has experience from five previous Ryder Cups, including the infamous Brookline event when the Europeans encountered vociferous American fans, deemed

a crucial factor in determining that event and not too dissimilar from those they met in Valhalla this time out. But aside from experience, Clarke had won two major European tour events in the run up to Valhalla. There is no precedent in the history of team selection for ignoring that type of form and leads to believe that Faldo had a hidden agenda in omitting Clarke.

However the Faldo selection strategy must come under further scrutiny due to his confession that he was aware of Padraig Harrington's poor conditioning following a 'long, hard season'. He admitted he noticed the three times major winner falling back asleep four times on the flight to Louisville and sleeping during the daytime of tournament week. Well, why on Earth did he use him so frequently during the double's events of Friday and Saturday? Harrington was deployed as, or more, often than any other European player at Valhalla.

But the lack of plain common sense doesn't end there. Despite trailing the Americans 9-7 heading into the singles events, golf's version of Steve Staunton had the brilliant idea of opting to put his best performers towards the end of the team line-up, so the Yanks could have the trophy nestled away nice and safely before our big guns had even finished their practice shots.

This article may seem a little harsh to say the least toward the Englishman, and I know that roared on by their vociferous home support the USA would probably have triumphed anyway, but I have never ever seen as inept an effort at team management in all my life as that which Faldo served up, not even from Stan...not even from Eddie. I know a lot of people in Europe felt that an American victory was required to inject some life into the cup after three consecutive European hammerings, but let's not just throw it away next time. Please.

# UL DANCE!

University of Limerick Student Dance Club

Showcase

Wednesday, 22 October

basement of foundation building

At 5, 6 and 7pm.

Come along to find out more

And sign up!

Classes include:

Break dancing

Hip Hop

Ballet

Jazz + Tap

Contact Jenny @ 0857335302

# All is changed, changed utterly?

Eoin King

So the deed is done. Leaving the wilderness, Galway and Antrim have been parachuted into the Leinster hurling Championship. With about 80 per cent of the vote, the Special Congress of the GAA decided to allow the two counties participate in what is essentially Kilkenny's play pen. First up for the Tribesmen is a meeting with Laois in the quarter-final stage while Antrim must face Dublin, one of the most outspoken voices against the idea. So what now? If after three years it is viewed as having been unsuccessful shall Galway need to be removed once more? Yet the criteria for calling it a success is flimsy at best. Must they win an

All-Ireland final? A Leinster title? Or preside over a period when Kilkenny forget how to win? As for this Kilkenny team, it seems more a case of adding fuel to the fire. Miffed at a pair of upstarts entering their domain we might have a situation where the slow build up to September is replaced by a manic desire to pummel all that steps before them. What is certain at this moment in time is that Galway and Antrim are in a better place than last year. Already Antrim's first match is competitive. With Ger Loughnane's future still uncertain it may be a bit much for Galway to expect a Liam McCarthy yet even the simple pleasure of watching Joe Canning

in early summer can't be disputed against.

Other decisions made by the Special Congress included the rejection of an under-20 grade to replace the existing under-21 format.

What could be more telling than the trial run of Galway and Antrim in Leinster is the new disciplinary rules that were accepted. The rules will be tested in next year's National Football League and National Hurling League. Termed 'highly disruptive fouls', players who commit an action such as tripping or bringing an arm or hurley around the neck of an opponent will be dismissed yet replaced by a substitute.

Comments

# The Score

Tomás McCarthy

### In The Hunt

Noel and Stephen Hunt are in flying form for Reading in the Championship at the moment. The two Waterford lads are either scoring goals or creating goals for each other. Hunt and Hunt for Ireland anyone?

### Worlds Apart

Forget about the European section of the World Cup qualifying look further abroad and you will find far more exciting ties than Ireland v Cyprus. Among the many bizarre matches I found were Botswana v Mozambique, Tunisia v Seychelles, Malawi v DR Congo and my favourite Tanzania v Cape Verde Islands!

### Trust Me I'm A Doctor

West Ham recently broke Premier League rules by letting an unregistered doctor treat their players. No wonder Kieron Dyer, Craig Bellamy and Dean Ashton have spent so long on the sidelines!

### A Bit of Banter

The announcement of Man City's new owners may have been good news for supporters of the Eastlands

outfit but it hasn't spared them from ridicule. At the recent Wigan v City game fans at the JJB started chanting "You can stick your f\*\*\*ing Arabs up your arse".

### Value for Money

Portsmouth have some incredible offers in their club shop that are too good to be true. The Portsmouth dashboard spring is available for a stunning £3.99. However, what really caught the eye was the Portsmouth tax disk holder for £2.99!

### Motor On

Vauxhall Motors is not the name of some garage based in England; they are actually a team that play in the Northern Conference. On a recent browse of their website I found the following headline "Reserves Crash to Defeat". Brilliant!

### Odds-On Favourite

After their incredible double giant killing of Tottenham and Arsenal new boys Hull are strolling through the toughest league in the world. Why not put a euro on them at odds of 2000/1 to win the league. Money well spent!

# Poker Society Table

- 1st -- Jeff Teehan - 59pts
- 2nd -- Thomas Fortune - 53pts
- 3rd -- Paul Grisewood - 46pts
- 4th -- John Lynch - 40pts
- 5th -- Ciaran Carey - 23pts
- 6th -- Charles Coyle - 22pts
- 7th -- Rory Griffin - 21pts
- 8th -- Stephen Brosnan - 21pts
- 9th -- Shaun Dooley - 21pts
- 10th -- Donagh Murphy - 21pts
- 11th -- John Culloty - 19pts
- 12th -- Nathan Finnegan - 19pts
- 13th -- Paul Kiernan - 19pts
- 14th -- David Charlton - 16pts
- 15th -- Sean Murphy - 15pts
- 16th -- Kevin Douglas - 14pts
- 17th -- Bill O Leary - 09pts
- 18th -- Ciaran Callaghan - 7pts
- 19th -- Donagh Stck - 06pts

# Magic Numbers

Liam Togher

- 96 Years since Tottenham made such a poor start to the league. Even Derby had more points after seven games last season than Spurs managed to notch up this time.
- 2 Red cards shown to Napoli defender Fabiano Santacroce in the first three games of the season. It gives him a chance to warm up the water in the showers for his team-mates later on.
- 1 Margin of victory in three of the Clare senior hurling championship quarter-finals. That provided adequate relief for those bored with the lop-sided All-Ireland decider.
- 35 Premier League players eligible to play for Ireland. Only France has more foreigners in the top flight.
- 86 League games unbeaten at home for Chelsea after their 2-0 win over Aston Villa at Stamford Bridge. Only three players remain from the team who began that formidable run.
- 13 League games without a home win for Galway United before their 3-1 victory against Cork City at Terryland Park. Nine of those were defeats.
- 15 Age of Barnsley striker Reuben Noble-Lazarus, who made his debut in the Tykes' recent meeting with Ipswich. Most of us at his age were doing our bloody Junior Cert!

# Quotes of the Edition

Liam Togher

**"It's the first point Sunderland have picked up against a top four side since their promotion in 2007, so that's progress of a sort."** Today FM's Michael McMullen speaking five minutes after the Black Cats conceded a last-minute equaliser to Arsenal. He must have known Roy Keane wasn't listening.

**"2-0 down, 3-2 up, Dirk Kuyt's goal has wrapped it up, nick nack paddy-whack give a dog a bone, City have just lost at home!"** Togher revels in Liverpool's dramatic win at Man City. He's a haven of creativity, that Togher.

**"You're a c\*\*t"** Joe Kinnear goes for the direct approach when addressing Daily Mirror football writer Simon Bird at the Newcastle manager's expletive-laden press conference.

**"Thank you."** Bird's response

**"It's worse than watching paint dry, and that is an insult to interior design."** This assessment of the Doora-Barefield v Inagh-Kilnamona match is not the greatest advertisement for Clare senior championship hurling.

**"Oh Bramble's fine. He sleeps during the match."** Johnny Giles sings the praises of Wigan defender Titus Bramble after wondering how the Latics' coach Steve Bruce sleeps at night.

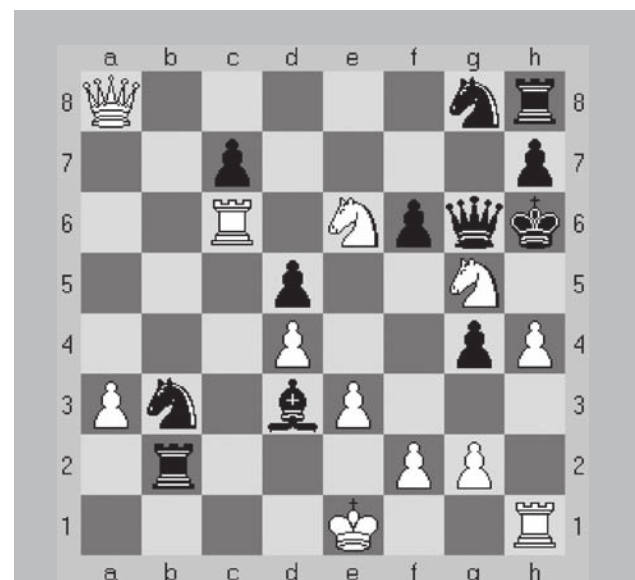
**"The goalkeeper has come from Serie B and it shows. The defenders are all at sea. The midfield is a shambles. The strike force has scored one goal in three games and provided plenty of material for YouTube clips of dreadful misses."** An Italian football magazine reviews bottom club Cagliari's start to the season. Apart from those faults they're doing quite well.

# Sports Quiz

Liam Togher



1. Which African nation does Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor represent?
2. Who is the abrasive Australian forward that has just signed for Leinster?
3. Which country will host the 2014 World Cup?
4. Which team was beaten in last year's All-Ireland Club football championship final?
5. Who was named man-of-the-match following this year's hurling final between Kilkenny and Waterford?
6. How many All-Ireland finals have Kilkenny appeared in under Brian Cody's stewardship?
7. Who is the current head coach of the English rugby team?
8. Cristiano Ronaldo was the Premiership's top scorer last season. Which player came second?
9. What is the nationality of Formula 1 title challenger Felipe Massa?
10. Which Irish athlete won the 1978 World Cross Country Championships when they were staged here in Limerick?
11. Who won the Serie A title last year?
12. From which Super 14 side did Perpignan sign New Zealand ace Dan Carter?



C. Murphy – K. O'Flaherty Limerick Open 2007

Black has just played Bxd3 threatening checkmate next move, but black has underestimated whites attack as white has checkmate in 2.

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

Solution: 1. Qf8+ Kh5  
2. Nf4#

### Answers to Sports Quiz

- 1: Togo
- 2: Rocky Elsom
- 3: Brazil
- 4: Nemo Rangers
- 5: Brian Cody
- 6: 9
- 7: Martin Johnson
- 8: Fernando Torres
- 9: Brazilian
- 10: John Treacy
- 11: Inter Milan
- 12: Canterbury Crusaders

## Under the Spotlight

# Waterpolo



UL Waterpolo is one of the longest established and most successful clubs on campus and aims to bring the vibrant and exciting sport of waterpolo to UL. Waterpolo was first played in 1876 and has been developed into the sport that it is since then. It involves a team of thirteen players with one goalkeeper and six field players with six others as substitutes. For anybody who still doesn't know what we are on about, there some videos on our website [h20polo.csn.ul.ie](http://h20polo.csn.ul.ie)

We have both men's and women's teams that compete in a variety of different competitions that suit all levels of ability, ranging from the Irish National League to the Munster League and of course, the annual Intervarsities.

Last year, all senior players competed in the Irish National League, whilst all college players competed in the Intervarsities and the Somerset Invitational International Tournament and new players

competed in the Munster League. While placing highly in both Leagues, both teams reached the Semi Finals in the Intervarsities. Our finest performance last year was to win the Somerset Invitational Tournament.

The Swimming and Life Saving Intervarsities are taking place in Belfast on the 29 and 30 November (end of Week 12) and we are sending a team to that. Anyone interested in taking part can contact us at the address below.

Membership for the year is just €5) and this opens up a world of opportunity to you, including training in the Arena as well as trips to games in Galway, Cork, Belfast and Dublin. The club also has a great social aspect, with many nights out on trips away with other teams as well as everyone in the club.

The weekend of the 11 and 12 October saw UL take part in their first games of the season as the first leg of the Irish National League

kicked off in the University Arena. The ladies started the season playing arch rivals UCC in a match that clearly saw UL as the favourites, with Nicky Beirne and Ciara Ryan putting UL ahead in the first quarter. The defence, made up of Sandra Byrne, Catherine Long and keeper Lisa Waldron played a huge role in limiting UCC's goal count. Well done to Fresher Grace Doyle, who scored her first goal for UL to give the ladies win their first win.

Next up was the men's team who played a spirited Clonard team from Belfast. Fresher Kyle Merritt had a fantastic game, scoring 3 goals, assisted by John McCall, Ryan Kehoe and Colin McNamara. The defence had their work cut out for them with Oisin Tong, Aaron Desmond and Sam Kazakhi having their work cut out for them to contain the Clonard attack. The game ended with Clonard winning.

In their second match on Sunday, the UL ladies took on a strong St.

Vincent's team that travelled down from Dublin. Once again, UL shone above their rivals with particular applaud going to the performances of freshers Grace Doyle, Catherine Long, Hannah O'Keefe and Justine Roussel Good matches were also put in by Sarah Power, Maria Murrinan and Lisa Waldron, as well as captains Nicky Beirne and Ciara Ryan. UL won convincingly.

The men played two matches on Sunday, both against opposition from Belfast, starting off playing Setanta. The men benefited from their loss the night before showing off their superior skills to produce a win. Goals from Kyle Merritt, Peter Shone and Eoin O'Sullivan, coupled with superb defence from Patrick Egan, Cathal Ronan and Ted Vickey (who also scored his first goals in 17 years) and excellent goalkeeping from Danny O'Hare meant UL came out on top.

In their second match of the day, UL played the recently demoted



24A UL Vs UCC (photo by William Lyons)

Grads team and put up a good fight to contain them with a fantastic goal coming in the second quarter from Dave Kelly. Overall though it was a very defensive match with UL's fitness really coming into play. Great defence from Dave Richardson, Brian O'Keefe and Ted Vickey, as well as keeper Danny meant the scoreline was kept low, unfortunately with Grads coming

out on top.

Training takes place in the arena on Mondays and Thursdays at 21:30 to 22:45, with a swimming session taking place on Wednesdays from 21:00 to 22:00.

For more information please contact [ulwaterpolo@gmail.com](mailto:ulwaterpolo@gmail.com) or see the clubs and socs notice board.

## The nation's finest: UL Outreach



24B ULO receiving their national title at BICS last May

UL Outreach was voted the 'best new or improved society' in UL last April by the other the clubs and societies on campus. We went on to win the Board of Irish College Societies (BICS) 'best new society' award at the national award ceremony held in Dundalk in early May. ULO was established to fill the need for a charity on campus when the UL branch of the Society of St Vincent de Paul dissolved towards the end of 2007. We remain one of the more popular societies on campus; we have over one hundred members from all walks of life: engineers, teachers, scientists, bio-chemists, historians, architects.

ULO is a very active society; we run projects everyday of the week,

including weekends so we really do have an activity to suit everyone's timetable. Starting on Monday, homework club in St Mary's boys and girls primary schools takes place everyday (except Friday) from 2.15pm to 4pm. ULO members are brought to and from the schools by taxi from campus.

At homework club, we help the children in third to sixth class with their homework. It is great fun, although at times it's a little embarrassing watching university students struggle when they have to go back to the basics, like adding and subtracting fractions. After the children are finished doing their homework we play gamesto help them relax after a long day of school.

As an added incentive to attend homework club, the children who behave themselves are brought swimming in the Arena once a fortnight. They are free to play games and basically do what ever they want because it is their reward for attending homework club. After swimming, the children are given a hot dinner in the Sports bar. Swim club takes place every Wednesday from 4pm to 6pm.

The Travellers' homework club follows much the same format as the St Mary's Homework club. It takes place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the Community Centre of the Castletroy Halting site. The children range in age between five and thirteen.

Most of the children are in

primary school but one of them is in secondary school so the range of subjects you may be asked to help with will vary from English to Economics, Geography to German and everything in between, but don't worry about not knowing something there is always a qualified teacher at the Travellers' homework club.

Like the children in St Mary's, the children who behave themselves at the Traveller homework club are treated to a different fun activity every week as part of the Friday Fun Club, which takes place on a Friday or Saturday.

Other clubs and societies in UL have been very good to us in the past by facilitating the Fun Club for example the Outdoor Pursuits Club have, on more than one occasion, let us use the climbing wall, which the children love. We also bring the children on nature walks through campus; they adore the campus and especially the view of the Shannon on the Living Bridge.

For our volunteers who don't want to work with children we have hospice visitation. We visit the patients in Milford Care centre, which is beside the flagpoles, twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays for bingo and a good auld fashioned sing-song.

Often the clients in Milford do not receive visitors from one end of the week to the next because either they have no relatives or

because their relatives don't live near enough to the hospice to visit very often. The patients love seeing young people coming in to talk to them. Your company will be especially appreciated if you have a deep understanding of GAA for the elderly men or if you can sing all twelve verses of Boulavogue, but even if you don't have either of the above your company will be welcomed with open arms and a cup of tea.

Of course, none of our activities could happen without money. Our fundraising team work tirelessly to raise money for the society. ULO does not receive funding like the other clubs and societies on campus; because our society spends money on people other than UL students we are restricted in the amount of money we are entitled to from capitation. On average we spend €330 per week running our activities and of this only €80 is spent directly on students, so we must fundraise the rest. Our fundraisers, including the Valentines' Ball, waxing and shaving during RAG week and the county colours ball have been hugely successful in the past. This year we will be running even more memorable events, but the second annual ULO Valentines' ball will take place in 2009.

The old saying goes charity begins at home, but at the same time we in ULO believe that we should not forget those struggling

overseas. Last summer three ULO members spent a month volunteering in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Dave Delaney, Cillian Burke and Cairtriona 'Bubbles' McGrattan volunteered on a number of projects including in a homeless shelter, in an orphanage and they spent their weekends working in the favelas with children.

Although the work was very tough, it was an amazing experience for all three members. The people of Brazil were so welcoming and just like the Irish, a poca loco (a little crazy)!

Before they left, plans were already being made for next year's cohort of ULO members; they'll have a list a mile long of jobs to do before they arrive. ULO would like to thank all those who donated old clothes to the charity for distribution. Every stitch of the 30kgs of clothes the lads brought out with them was given out to the homeless men and women of Belem, one of the twelve districts of Sao Paulo.

By the time they left, UL hoodies, Cork jerseys and Munster rugby shirts could be spotted everywhere. Next summer we hope to send at least six volunteers to Sao Paulo.

UL Outreach makes a difference both at home and abroad, if you would like to be part of something special during your time in UL please send an email to [uloutreach@gmail.com](mailto:uloutreach@gmail.com) or check out [www.bebo.com/uloutreach](http://www.bebo.com/uloutreach).