



AN FOCAL



e-mail ceo@ulsu.iol.ie

THE UL STUDENT NEWSPAPER

www.ul.ie/~ulsu

TERM 1 WEEK 12



**Especially for
the millenium**

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**Orbital @
the Point**

ents +
reviews pg.24



**C+S Lose
Their Hair**

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Students Well Catered For By Newly Opened Retail Outlets.

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Their are five retail outlets in the new centre, three of which have been occupied, the fourth, a pharmacy, is awaiting confirmation from the Health Board that it can take up the unit and the fifth is yet to be filled. There is also a contemplation space in the centre, positioned between USIT and Interpoint, two of the retailers.

The three current retailers
contd. on pg. 3



John Frawley of Interpoint talks Joanne Ryan, USIT, and Pat McCarthy through their service

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Meeting to discuss An Focal's progress to date

*we're looking for opinions,
comments, ideas
etc*

Thursday Wk 12
6.00pm
new student center
all are welcome

Environmental Society Suspended

Over the last two weeks the Environmental Society have found themselves stuck in the middle of a controversial storm.

The controversy arose because of sponsorship received by the International Society for the Multi Cultural

Food fair, an event that has run without controversy for the last ten years. The end result is that the Enviro. Soc. have been banned from all financial activities for the first four weeks of term and faced a seven hundred and fifty pound fine if the sponsorship

had been affected.

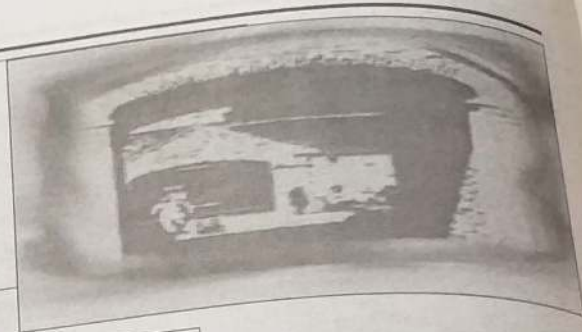
The sponsorship in question is money received from "Monsanto", a multinational who are renowned for their research into Genetically Modified Foodstuffs. This area has proved to be contro-

contd. on pg.3

Just To Let You Know.....

A word from the Sabats.

Each issue, we'll give you a quick dose of what we're up to.



the boy mccarthy's been on a meeting since 8.30 this morning. we let him off writing so little this week

Development Committee, Sports Building Committee etc., etc. The library are currently working on trying to improve their services for students, so myself and DeeDee spent Monday afternoon at a workshop which was designed to develop ideas and solutions towards making the library a better place for everyone.

The problems that people are having with computers and access, internet, print times, etc. are known to ITD and are being currently worked on. This is a particularly busy time for ITD at the moment as they are working on making sure that nothing blows up at the stroke of midnight. So well be pushing the other student gripes once were back after Christmas.

After that all that really remains to say is have a great Christmas and a very Happy New Millennium.

Pat

So this is Christmasa nd what have we done?

Well, since the last issue I was in court for the registration of the new Scholars Club, which was successful so we're well on our way now for having the new bar open for the start of the next semester. If you havent already filled out a form to apply for membership then you must do so before you can be allowed in. The application form is now available on the ULSU web page at www.ul.ie/~ulsu.

There have been many meetings since the last issue also. Library Committee, Finance Committee, Campus

hostile's recovering from a free bar on saturday night. but the here's the low down on what she's been up to

Dave will think I'm lying when I say this, but I've hardly had time to think over the past two weeks.

The festive season is finally upon us and I don't doubt that most of you are feeling the pressure with projects essays etc. piling up. Don't stress too much, you have the New Millennium to look forward to!!

The Welfare Office has been busy the last couple of weeks trying to get ready for a quiet!! Christmas. The Outreach Society has finished for this semester but will resume early in the New Year.

News on Rotaract Membership - an official ceremony will be held early in the next Semester, those students away on Co-op will receive membership for their efforts this term. Wednesday, 15th December sees the society doing their collection for the Children's Hour Initiative.

The Outreach Society have worked hard (voluntarily) and given up their time for this worthy



Co-op to read all leasing agreements and other information regarding their housing arrangement. This semester saw an increase in Landlord/Tenant problems. Be careful and don't sign anything without reading the details first. Any information or help you require please call in at any time or e-mail me at deppresident@ulsu.iol.ie

Financial Aid is available this week (12). Students in receipt of Creche Bursaries must reapply next semester. There will be a number of changes on the new form but this will not be finalised until after the Christmas break. If students require information on

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dayvoh's off to amsterdam next week to check up on his correspondents over there. in the meantime.....

OK, before I say anything else, there's something I have to apologise for.

Last issue we did a feature on Ross Cooney, after what happened in Dublin's National Basketball Arena. We did this in an effort to highlight what he meant to so many people and what he had contributed to all those who knew him, to his community, his school and to the college in the short time that he was here. Introducing the feature we did in this section of the last issue, I made the mistake of calling him the wrong name. When I first heard about the incident, I was told

a different name, and for some reason, that is the name I typed when I was writing the article, even though I did know Ross' name, as I had put together the articles on him in the paper. This article is the last one that's done each issue, as



upon us and most of you are feeling the pressure with projects essays etc. piling up. Don't stress too much, you have the New Millennium to look forward to!!

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The Outreach Society have worked hard (voluntarily) and given up their time for this worthy cause and this should undoubtedly be recognised by all. New members are welcome, call into my office at any time and let me know times that you are available.

With the start of new term looming I would like to warn students who may be changing accommodation or returning from

Co-op to read all leasing agreements and other information regarding their housing arrangement. This semester saw an increase in Landlord/Tenant problems. Be careful and don't sign anything without reading the details first. Any information or help you require please call in at any time or e-mail me at depressed@ulsu.iol.ie

Financial Aid is available this week (12). Students in receipt of Creche Bursaries must reapply next semester. There will be a number of changes on the new form but this will not be finalised until after the Christmas break. If students require information on Creche places call to Mary Maloney in the Creche or myself for more details.

To finish I would like to wish you all a happy and stress-free Christmas (difficult I know with the prospect of exams). See you all in the next Century!!

DeeDee

things come in very late, and we are under severe time time pressure. As such, I don't always get to read over the article, as I'm usually running out the door with it.

This isn't an excuse for the mistake that I made, only a reason. Can I apologise to both John's friends and family for any upset that this mistake may have caused them. I know that it can't have helped anyone through what was

already a very difficult time. It also belittled what I was trying to do by featuring Ross in the first place.

The only other thing I'd like to say other than this is that I'd like everyone to read the editorial I written on pg. 7. I think it's important, and everyone should know what's going on.

Talk Soon,
Dave



the beautiful claudia, joanne and james, USIT's finest

Students Well Catered For By Newly Opened Retail Outlets.

from pg. 1

are O'Mahoneys bookshop, who extended the premises which they occupied last year, redeloping their shop with the extra space provided by the new retail unit.

Another operator who was on campus last year, but has completely moved office, is USIT. Previously situated in the Stables Mall, USIT has now made a bigger and far brighter home for itself in the new courtyard. The new premises comes into line with many of the USIT offices around the country, with its new ticketing system and counter presentation. Claudia, Joanne and

James are manning the desk to look after your travel needs.

The two new retailers on campus are Interpoint, an internet cafe, and a pharmacy, which has yet to be granted a licence to trade here by the Health Board, but it looks like this decision will not be long in coming.

Leo Colgan, of Interpoint, told An Focal that the cafe will supply internet access at a special student discount of 10p a minute, compared to their price of 15p a minute in their premises in Limerick city. He commented on the fact that students had been travelling into town to

avail of the facilities that the cafe provides, and felt that opening an outlet on campus would be of benefit to all. Other services provided by Interpoint are a high speed printer which prints 60 sheets a minute, and a cut price phone service. Call in to the cafe, and John will give you more details of the services that they provide.

The question has been asked as to what the huge window in the courtyard is all about, and the answer is that it is a contemplation room, with internal design by Fergus Costelloe Studios.

Beautifully decorated with stunning wall lights and



An example of the design in the meditation room

wood sculptures, the room is intended to be a place of relaxation and removal from the stresses of everyday life. Fergus told An Focal that the

room will have "a character of its own at night".

Daily mass will be held in the room, as well as many different eucharists.

Environmental Society Suspended

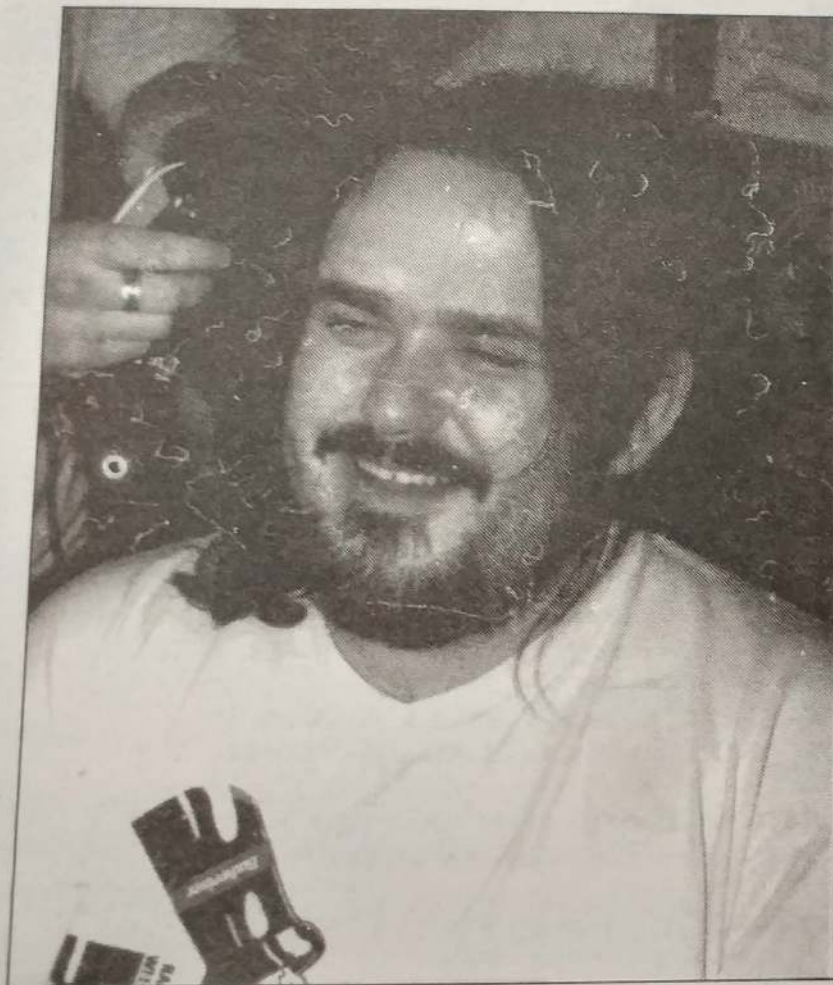
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the Environmental Society and the issue was thrown open to the floor. The general consensus was that it was improper for a society to interfere with the sponsorship process of another society but there was also the opinion that no society should be punished for

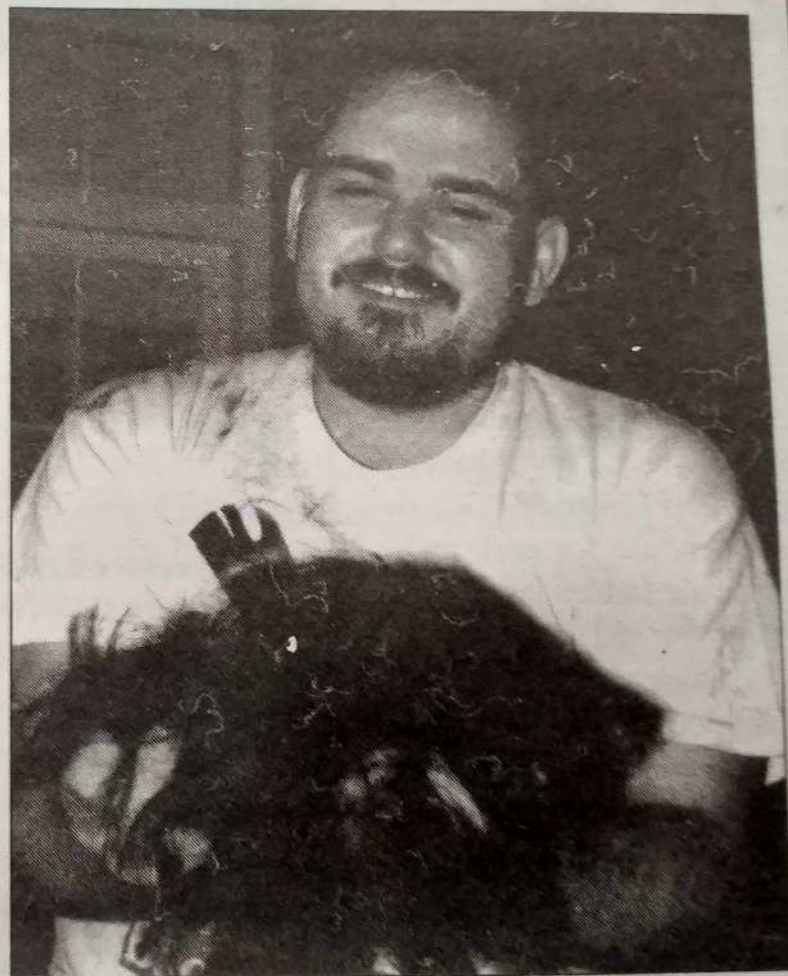
Sponsored Shaving In Aid Of The Childrens Hour Appeal

read the details, pg. 5



before ; hairy tim

courtesy of UL Photo Soc.



after ; scary tim

courtesy of UL Photo Soc.

Environmental Society Suspended

from pg. 1

versial and they have been subject to protests/demonstrations from Environmental Groups and even sabotage from the more extreme environmental pressure groups. The Environmental Society in accordance with the belief and outlook of the society objected to the sponsorship from Monsanto and moved to act on it.

It was their actions from that point in time that offended the International Society and generated the controversy. The Enviros. sent a fax on UL headed notepaper to Monsanto outlining their objections to the sponsorship and the fact that there would be no representative of Monsanto at the fair. There was also a with a questionnaire attached which asked questions with regard to Monsanto's practices.

Monsanto, on receiving the college headed paper assumed that it was the college that were objecting to the sponsorship and contacted the International Society to express their concern. The Food Fair went ahead as planned but the matter was raised at the following C&S Council meeting where a heated debate ensued.

The International Society put a number of questions to

the Environmental Society and the issue was thrown open to the floor. The general consensus was that it was improper for a society to interfere with the sponsorship process of another society but there was also the opinion that no society should be punished for carrying out the stated aims of their society. Despite calls for the dispute to be settled between the two societies themselves C&S Council decided that there would have to be a reprimand issued there and then. It was decided that they would be banned from all budget activities in the first four weeks of Term 2 and that if the sponsorship did not come through that they would have to compensate the International Society to the tune of 50% ie. Seven hundred and fifty pounds.

The International Society have since received the money and the sponsorship is unaffected. So the second part of the reprimand is unenforceable. The issue as to whether a society should be punished for carrying out one of the stated aims of their existence is, however, unresolved and something we are bound to hear more about in the future.

see letters pg. 7
clubs + socs pg. 34

Yours Hungrily,
Hungry Students

Mistaken Identity

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you with respect to the controversial suspension of the Environmental Society concerning the sponsorship of the Food Fair by Monsanto.

I feel there is a need for clarification of my involvement in the issue about the questionnaire sent by the Environmental Society to Monsanto recently. I will address three main points any student and staff in UL should be concerned with.

Since I came to UL in 1989 I have been indirectly and sometimes more directly involved with various student clubs and societies. I enjoy doing it, get great satisfaction out of it and I think a little bit of help is always needed. Whether it is the Hispanic Society, the International Student Society, the Environmental Society or the Dance Club, I have always tried to work with the students for good causes. It is part of their overall education and keeping in touch decreases the generation gap between us, and the apathy into which we could all easily fall.

I recently sent a fax to Monsanto on behalf of the Environmental Society using the fax cover sheet from my Department (LCS). This is issue number one and I have apologised to my Head of Department and the Dean of the College of Humanities for doing so. I have been reassured by the response given by the Dean of Humanities, Colin Townsend. He fully understands that the GM food issue is highly controversial and acknowledges the need for students who are prepared to challenge the industrial concerns that are promoting it. And as far as he is concerned the internal matter is closed, but the larger issue of GM foods will be with us for some time to come.

Issue number two is far more important. The receiver of that fax paid more attention to the cover sheet than the actual content of the letter attached to it, and tried to use this against our institution. I think this

still sponsoring them, and were reassured they would get their £1500. However they decided to bring the matter to the Dean of Humanities' attention as though they wished to cause problems for myself. Nevertheless the Dean recognised that we would be a poor University if our staff and students were not sensitive to controversial matters such as these.

Monsanto has played their game strategically trying to make UL appear as if we, as an institution, were backing up the questionnaire put to them. Do we not send questionnaires around all the time? What was so different or special about this questionnaire? I think they were simply using their influence to make UL and, unfortunately U.L. clubs and societies as well, reflect upon what is more important at the end of the day. And it is immensely worrying if the message that comes across is that 'it is money and nothing else', regardless of the conditions and impositions it brings with it.

Why did Monsanto not simply answer the questions in the fax? We, as consumers, have the right to know and with the information, we can make our choices. Why did they not reply to Nancy Serrano in the Environmental Society and instead looked, mistakenly in this case, for a higher level in the system to deal with the issue? Are they exercising pressure on some student/s in UL whose research project/s or future jobs is/are depending on their money? These are simple questions that arise from this situation. Even Brian Connolly, the main organiser of the Food Fair, had his own reservations when this offer for sponsorship came out of nowhere.

As an educator I cannot separate morality from the rest of my activities. The fact that in our university, 'an educating institution', a group of students take action and reflect upon many crucial issues where profit and morality clash, can only make us, the university community, proud. I was fully aware of the content of the fax when I decided to send it, and I, as many in UL, support the right any citizen has to get information on issues that concern them.

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Issue number two is far more important. The receiver of that fax paid more attention to the cover sheet than the actual content of the letter attached to it, and tried to use this against our institution. I think this should be a matter of concern to a great number of staff, lecturers and students in U.L..

It was stated very clearly at the beginning and at the end of the letter that Nancy Serrano from the Environmental Society was the person sending the fax and the Dean, Colin Townsend, recognised that in his response to me also. Also the fax contained a questionnaire looking for transparency of their business that, whether we want it or not, does affect our health. Although the organisers of the Food Fair had rung Monsanto themselves to make sure they were

strategically trying to make UL appear as if we, as an institution, were backing up the questionnaire put to them. Do we not send questionnaires around all the time? What was so different or special about this questionnaire? I think they were simply using their influence to make UL and, unfortunately U.L. clubs and societies as well, reflect upon what is more important at the end of the day. And it is immensely worrying if the message that comes across is that 'it is money and nothing else', regardless of the conditions and impositions it brings with it.

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I have to admit that this has escalated beyond unforeseen proportion and I really wonder why. Is it that it is seen in the context of the worldwide protest against the WTO where most of the human rights organisations were present? Why have they not been able to get to any agreement on these crucial issues in Seattle? Are we being witnesses of a time where we have to follow and do what we believe in and not just follow the crowds or money? Do we have a Student's Union that are turning a blind eye on the challenges of today and would rather keep themselves and

more words for there's loads of

the students ignorant?

Issue number three is concerned with the impact that the sanction on the Environmental Society could have. After being the Society of the Year in 1998, it is banned for complying and acting according to their principles? Good move on the Students' Union part. Next we'll ban societies such as Amnesty, One World, and who else? What sort of example is the Students' Union setting for their students and others, when self-interest is the primary goal with no consideration for future consequences. I CALL FOR ALL CLUBS AND SOCIETIES TO REFLECT ON THIS CONTROVERSIAL SUSPENSION AND FOR ALL STUDENTS IN UL TO FORSEE THE CONSEQUENCES AND ACT NOW BEFORE IT HAPPENS TO THEM.

Nancy Serrano Snr
*Lecturer in Spanish
Department of
Languages and
Cultural Studies*

In response, the recommendation to ban the Environmental Society came from the Societies Executive, was passed by the Clubs and Socs Council, and was ratified

by the Students' Union Executive.

We've Got Nurses??!!!!!!

Dear Editor,

What's going on lads, we spend 4 days a week in the University, which adds up to approx. 20 hours. We have to do more of a variety of subjects than a majority of students in UL (that I know of) like for example, Sociology, Physics, and Anatomy & Physiology, but after saying all that we seem to be treated least like UL students, Who are we? The nurses of course.

You may say that we have use of all the facilities and the student card and all that but I've seen the look on other students faces when I mention I'm a nurse - it's either the 'WHAT THE HELL ARE YA DOING HERE' look or the 'WHERE THE HELL ARE YOUR NURSIE FRIENDS' look. I'm less than impressed!

We also missed fresher week due to the fact that we started on the 27th September rather than the 20th like all other 1st years. I suppose in all fairness we did get a grand tour of the place (even though trying to find jacks in this

Since the first An Focal came out all those years ago, there's been some article that we'll always remember, serious, sad and funny.

Looking Back.....

The millenium has prompted us to look through the archives, and put a few memories into this issue

Referendum Called for New Students Centre

An Focal, Wk 7, 1996

A new student centre to bring UL into the next century. That will be the clarion call for the students union for the coming week.

A referendum has been called for Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th of March to decide whether or not students should provide funding to help build a new facility.

What will it entail? The new building, if endorsed by UL students, will consist of a proper theatre for Drama, Debating, SU Meetings, Film and also medium size gigs. There will be a bar/lounge. Proper facilities for a radio station will be included. There will be a larger grocery and stationary shop and an increased photocopying area. A new pool room will be included. There will be meeting rooms for the clubs and societies. A coffee room/common room is essential. A conference room with audio visual

facilities will be provided.

Why now? The student population of UL has doubled in the last six years. This has put all campus facilities under severe strain. But more significantly this population explosion has hit the social amenities which are there to help students enjoy their time at UL. The Stables/The Paddocks and the restaurant are put under enormous pressure because of this increase, a sight familiar to all students. Also, as some of you may be aware the pool room is to be demolished to make way for the Aeronautical building.

But the rationale for a new centre goes beyond this basic need. Over the last few years students involvement in clubs, societies and other activities has mushroomed. If this growth is to be further encouraged and harnessed there is a fundamental need for a well designed area where students can congregate

and interact. Student inspired activities, be they through clubs, societies or organising once-off events, are the lifeblood of any healthy campus. By providing a new venue, meeting rooms and bar/coffee shop under the one roof it is felt that the students union taking a huge step in the right direction. It is the responsibility of the SU to make college life as enjoyable and worthwhile as possible for students and by driving this project the Union feels it is addressing many of the needs expressed by its members.

The key question that students will be asked is whether or not they are willing to pay £30 per year to build a centre that won't open until 1999. This is the issue on which the referendum will stand or fall. It is hoped that UL students will send a positive message and vote yes.

Mike Sadlier

An Focal, Wk 2, 1996

I mean where do you start? At how outrageously gifted he was? If so, which area of his talents will you prioritize?

Was his ability as film maker more noteworthy than his prowess as a musician. Do memories of his oratory outshine those of his writing? Should one mention his success as a drama director as a precursor of him becoming programme of Aprils Film Festival? A power has passed from earth.

Yet, for all his huge abilities, it is as a friend that most people will choose to remember him. As well as being the most remarkable student on campus, Mike, quite probably was the most popular. That fact was acknowledged while he was alive and not merely invented after his death.

Mike's truly outra-

His successor as Societies Person of The Year will be the first recipient of the Mike Sadlier trophy. Mike's memory will have pride of place in the Clubs and Soes Office through a commemorative stone. The societies festival this semester has been dedicated to his memory.

However, it is personal memories that are most cherished. I remember meeting Mike one cold night on a porch in Newenham Street and talking to him for about 5 minutes before he abruptly stopped, "Oh I nearly forgot to ask you," he said with an air that indicated this would be important, "Howsago'in'?"

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Mike's truly outrageous laugh and unique intoning of "Howsagoin'?" defy description. They also defy forgetting. In fact, being forgotten is one fate that Mike is, without doubt, safe from. Even if one wanted to forget it would be impossible to. Go through any record of student life over the last few years and sure enough you will meet Mike Sadlier. It could be photographs of him filming, it could be minutes of meetings emblazoned with "Mike Sadlier Speaks!!" or it could be old copies of an Focal with Mike making front page news.

There are various different ways that Mike's enormous contribution to the lives of the people on campus over his years (and years) here is being marked.

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Another cherished memory is Mike's 5 minute oration at a union exec meeting. It is not so much the erudite and philosophically incisive nature of his comments that stick in mind as the look of blank comprehension on his fellow officers' faces. And still he just sat there refusing to offer any further explanation. He left it to the rest of us to draw up our own conclusions.

I remember also the last time I ever saw Mike. He was getting on the bus that I had just disembarked from. Wearing soccer shorts and looking decidedly scruffy in comparison to the refined elegance of Sandrine who stood beside him, Mike was as normal, smiling and looking forward to having a good time. We exchanged just a few words but I left him with the feeling one normally left Mike with. Glad to have met him.

Matthew Hamilton

Why Men Love Breasts

An Focal 14th February, '94

If you think it's just for their size, think again.....it's that feel good factor.

Men just love breasts - big ones, small ones, pert ones, floppy ones - they can't keep their hands off them. Shape and size doesn't matter - what's important is the texture. Creamy, soft to the touch, simply irresistible. So why are women so paranoid about their most endearing, appealing feature? Why don't they realise that implants are a turn-off and men cherish the real thing. Respect your breasts, says Simon Burton, and enjoy them.

I love breasts. Boobs, whammers, knockers, jugs. I love them all. Big or small. Saggy or pert. They fascinate me. I think women were so lucky when the good lord was handing out the dangly bits for humans. The female received two gloriously

fabulous mounds of soft flesh - veritable love-pillows - whereas the loose appendages the male had bestowed upon him were two hairy eggs and a wrinkly sausage.

This is not fair. I wish I had breasts because I would treat them with respect, dignity and fun - something women rarely do. I don't think you appreciate them enough. You always seem to be moaning about their size or shape, treating them as an obstruction. They're not. They're a beautiful construction. If I had some, I'd play with them for hours on end, tweaking and kneading, stroking and bouncing. Yes bouncing them I'd have fun moving my chest backwards and forwards and up and down, watching my breasts bounce.

My fondness stems not just from sexual desire, although that is obviously the primary cause, but because I am enthralled by the

dynamics of busts - the way they move and the way one breast interacts with the other.

You are probably surmising from that anecdote that I belong to the "Get your tits out for the lads" school of thought. Not true. Well not entirely. I do like looking at breasts, but my interest is far more well-rounded and involved than that.

Breasts are great but the trouble is women seem to think size and shape are the be-all and end-all. The angst can only have been only have been compounded after years of being hammered with pictures of page three girls and their Olympic size boobs. I know men would have great problems if images of elephantine penises were plastered all over the place. But this worry about size and shape should not detract from the pure joy of the breast.

We're getting close to the year 2000. so we asked one of the lads who's been here since about the year 1000 to give us the lowdown on the changes and 'stay the sames' that he's witnessed.

My Time In UL

Well the Millennium is nearly upon us and it's time to take stock of where we are at this point in our lives. What have we done and what are we going to do. Not only is it time for us to do this personally but we should also look at what our college has done to shape the next Millennium.

Well, I've been here for a few years longer than most and I just thought that I'd go back over some of the events that I've seen happen here and some of the ones that I have only heard about. As most of you know, UL came into being in 1972 when one Dr. Ed Walsh finally got his dream of a third level institute in the mid-west realised. Back then UL consisted of around 170 students having class in Plassey House. A big difference to today when there are around 10,000 of us roaming around 15 or so rather large buildings. But hey, what is progress for unless we get to share it with more and more people?

I arrived in UL in September 1994. The sabbats were Matt Hamilton, Caroline McGrath & Cormac Daly. Ber Angley was still the Ents Manager and the college still had an Arts Office. The first edition of An Focal for the year came out on September 28th with a cover story about Jack Charlton receiving an honorary Doctorate of Science.

Park was a club not an adult education centre and The Globe was called Wiseguys. It all seems so long ago. But what the hell, everything has to change eventually.

As you can imagine, the whole place was a lot different then. Not only was the physical layout of the campus different but also the things students were looking for were also different. For example, repeats only existed for 1st & 4th year students. If you were a second year and you got an F you had to repeat the year. Nasty or what? The student centre only existed in the mind of future sabbatical candidates because the sabbats at the time had found out just how much money the Union really owed (about £150,000) and were trying to sort out that mess. To this end Gerry Barry was brought in as the union's first full-time General Manger. So not a whole hell of a lot else took place that year from the union point of view. Mind you if they hadn't done what they did with the finances the possibility of any of the stuff that has followed is rather remote.

Anyway, that year finished and we all arrived back to be greeted by Brian,

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the library's come a long way.

inside. I'm not sure when it is supposed to be opened but it could be fun to come back to that.

At a national level, law students were getting screwed over exemptions, divorce became the law and UL got UCD's vote of confidence for being the prettiest campus in the country. Now where did I come up with that little fact I here some of you ask? Well, at that time, UCD were running a number of classical concerts in Belfield. However when they realised just how ugly their riot proof campus really is they decided to film their ad's right here in UL and then pass themselves off like that. Of course the UCD press office claimed that it was all a mistake. I'm not so sure. I think Eoghan O'Meara got it right when he called Belfield "The Dachau of Dublin" (An Focal, Week 1 Semester 2 1996).

That year also saw the introduction of the SoUL (Societies of UL) Festival. SoUL was intended to serve two purposes on campus. The first was to showcase the societies available to the students on

treated to a fireworks display, open air drinking, Abbaesque and Dr. Ed prancing around in a wedding dress. Probably one of the best nights I've ever had in this place. A word to the college, there was talk of making this event an annual one and calling it the Presidents Ball, good idea. Unlike some of the other things the college authorities have come up with. Probably the biggest monstrosities that have ever been built on this campus are those bleeding flagpoles. It's not that they are particularly ugly but the fact that the old gates were removed to make room for them when this was not necessary is regrettable. Ah well, c'est la vie.

During the next summer, the foundations for the Student Centre were laid and we all had the opportunity to watch the first student inspired building on campus come into existence. We also lost the Mud Patch, which turned into the site of Irelands first 50M pool with all the other facilities that come with it. Aeronautical students got their building, and Informatics & Electronics students

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year. What? Or what? The student centre only existed in the mind of future sabbatical candidates because the sabbats at the time had found out just how much money the Union really owed (about £150,000) and were trying to sort out that mess. To this end Gerry Barry was brought in as the union's first full-time General Manger. So not a whole hell of a lot else took place that year from the union point of view. Mind you if they hadn't done what they did with the finances the possibility of any of the stuff that has followed is rather remote.

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Duncan & Lorna. That year with the financial situation under control the union decided to get down to business early. This they did by organising the first General Meeting of the union in years to be quorate. Not only did this give them the confidence to go to the university and demand things for us, it made it the policy of the union to get what they were demanding. And what was it that they were looking for?

Well, the first thing that was needed was repeats for all. On Tuesday Week 7, Term 1 1995-96 a referendum was held. 3,700 students turned out to vote out of which 3,676 said YES to repeats. After another couple of weeks the college gave in and repeats were granted to all students. The second big item on the agenda that year was the Student Centre. We all know what happened there. That's right, we got this lovely building beside the Stables. And wasn't it worth the wait. The new library was started and a time capsule was placed somewhere

prettiest campus in the country. Now where did I come up with that little fact I here some of you ask? Well, at that time, UCD were running a number of classical concerts in Belfield. However when they realised just how ugly their riot proof campus really is they decided to film their ad's right here in UL and then pass themselves off like that. Of course the UCD press office claimed that it was all a mistake. I'm not so sure. I think Eoghan O'Meara got it right when he called Belfield "The Dachau of Dublin" (An Focal, Week 1 Semester 2 1996).

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In the year 1996-97 we pretty much watched the holes open up in the ground and then start to fill up with new buildings. The one significant thing to come from the year was the final RAG Week. As you may have noticed that particular week is now called Kollege Week. The reasons for this are that a small group of students caused a huge amount of trouble around the area and some of the neighbours threatened an injunction against the festival. To all purposes the week has not changed in any way except that now we make more money for charity. This being the case, why no let us call a spade a spade and have RAG Week back this year.

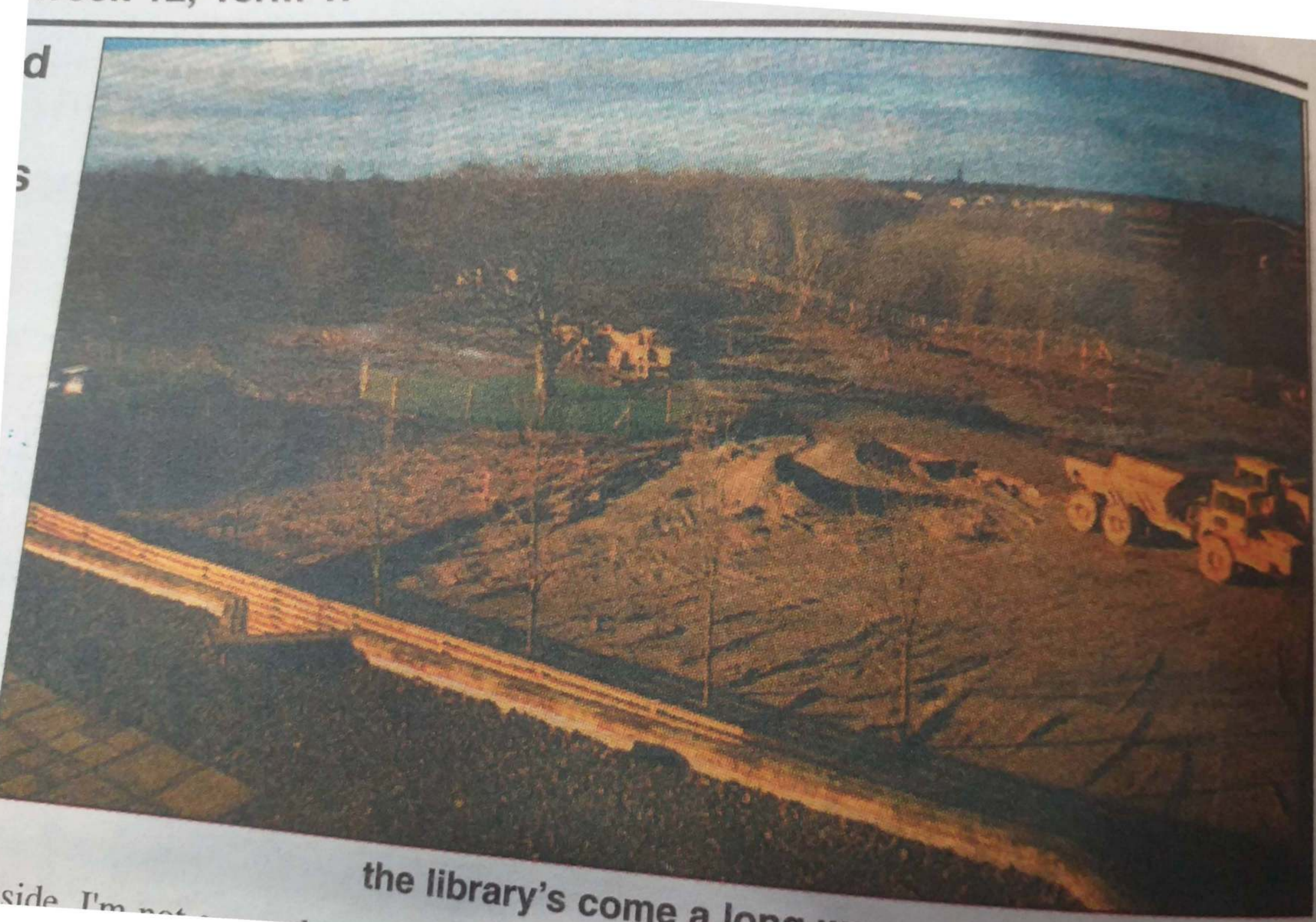
In 1997-98 UL celebrated it's 25th anniversary. This year also marked the retirement of Dr. Ed from UL. The man who was the driving force behind UL since it's inception was finally leaving. To mark this event, Ed invited all UL students to a party in the plaza on May 15th. About 4,500 turned up and were

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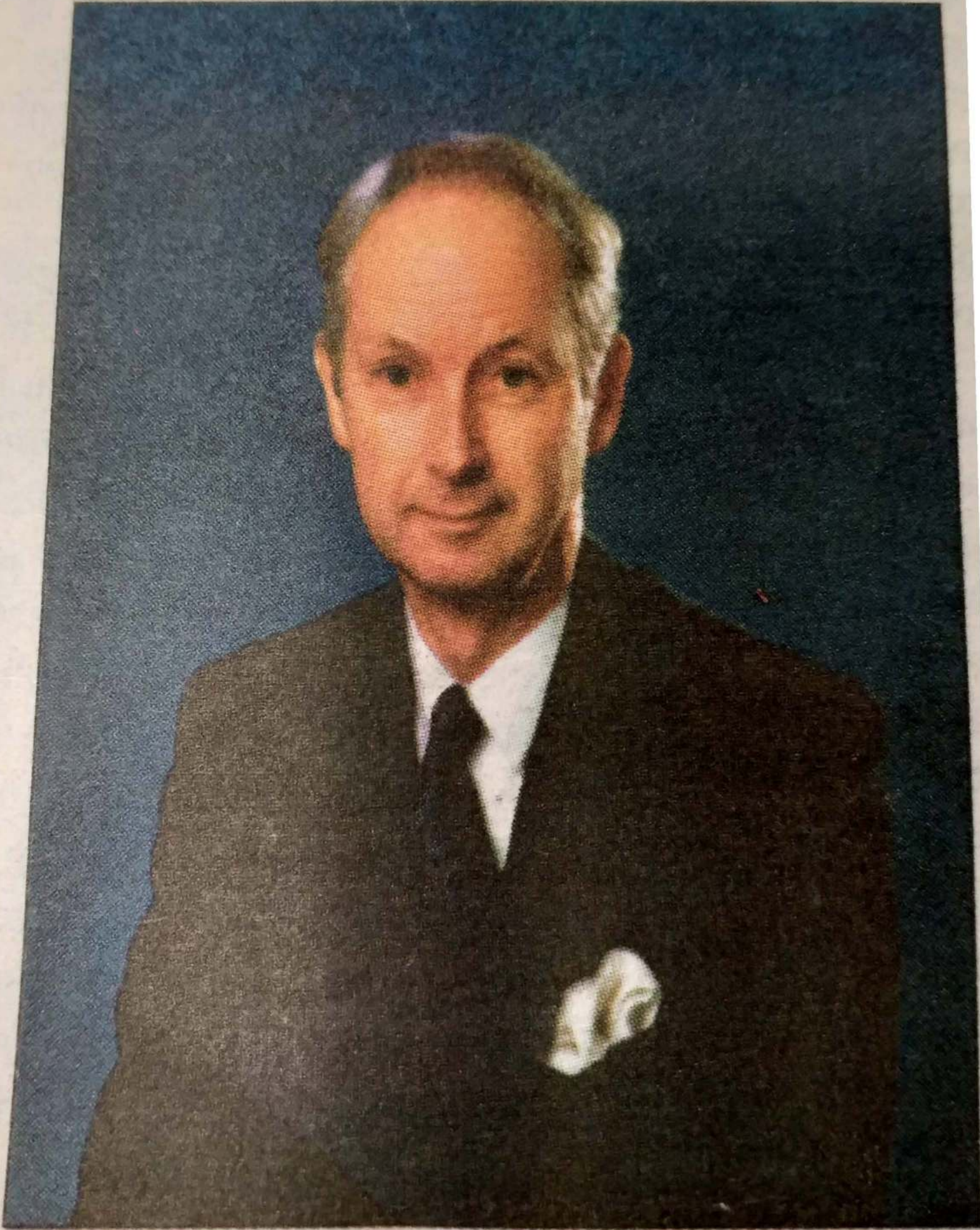
Right now I am wondering what the future holds for the good ship UL and all who sail in her. UL will completely shut down and lock up this year. The Bug seems to have them worried. This is something that has never happened in the history of the college. The post grads will get their own village and campus across the river. Vision 2020 will arrive in 20 years or so but what the hell is that? I'm sure we'll all find out at some time in the future. For now I'm just going to think ahead to January and wish you all good luck with the exams. With any luck the Bug will help us all out on that score. Happy Christmas.

Tim McAuliffe



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did you see him in a wedding dress

UI Debating Union Riding High

Two weekends ago, UL Debating Union sent two teams to the largest Debating Intervarsity Championships outside the World in Sydney.

Two teams donned the colours and made the journey over. They were Michael Hourigan and Keith Pigott in one team, with Claire Cox and Kate Ni Choiclain on the other team.

After two days intense competition between 88 teams from around the globe, countries represented included England Scotland, Wales, Holland, Greece, U.S., and Israel. The UL A team of Hourigan and Pigott qualified for the semifinals. It represented a major breakthrough for UL on the international debating scene. They were the only Irish team to make the last eight and both speakers were the highest ranked individual Irish speakers in the competition also.

The second team were no slouches either and whilst they finished midway in the rankings they finished ahead of a number of Irish teams including teams from Trinity and UCC.

Both teams will now be heading to Cork this weekend for the UCC Intervarsity and will be joined by at least two

more Limerick teams as we try to get our grubby paws on the £1500 prize-money that UCC have on offer. The best of Irish and International teams will be there all eyeing up the prize money but who knows with a little bit of luck someone might come back to UL a few pounds richer.

In January, UL Deb Union are sending two teams to the World Championships in Sydney. The lucky speakers are Carol Timmons, Fiona Clandillon, Claire McCarthy and Barry McLoughlin. Whilst they have been at pains to point out how tough a competition it is and that they will be doing at least nine debates over three days we have chosen to ignore them. We are choosing to point out that they are heading to Australia in the height of the Antipodean summer at a time when we are going to be freezing our respective butts off while studying for exams. But good luck to them and tune in to An Focal for a preview of Worlds in the next edition.

And for a finish good luck to all the UL teams who are taking part in the Irish Times over the next few weeks. The UL Debating Union meets on Wed. Nights at 7.30 in the Jean Monnet.

The Monsanto Debate Rages

Nancy Serrano Jnr., UL Environmental Society, responds to their suspension by the Clubs and Societies

Monsanto, a multinational bioresearch company, well known for their controversial research in genetically modified organisms (GMO) sponsored the International Society's Food Fair three weeks ago.

Monsanto have associations with the University of Limerick with relation to bioresearch. Because of the Food Fair sponsorship, the Environmental Society decided to have an information stand at the Food Fair on GMO's. Due to a fax sent to Monsanto from the Environmental Society requesting information, the Students' Union Executive has ratified a decision by the Clubs and Socs Council to suspended the Society.

The International Society Food Fair was put in jeopardy earlier this semester with the cancellation of SoUL Week when trouble arose over the Stables' license and Heineken pulled out as sponsors of the whole week. So when the opportunity presented itself to run their Food Fair with £1500 sponsorship from Monsanto, they took it. Some International Soc. members were not so sure about accepting the money from this company, but the majority voted in favour.

The International Society decided to inform the Environmental Society about this sponsorship, as they wanted to know if a boycott or open protest against Monsanto and GMO's could be avoided. The Environmental Society firstly responded to a member of the International Society, Alan Dineen, requesting information stating they would not boycott or protest at their event, and requesting they reconsider

UL, was that they mistook it to be from an official university staff member, namely Nancy Serrano Snr., in the Languages Dept. "Monsanto were puzzled", said their UL contact, that the University should be opposing them on GMO issues, as they sponsored part of the UL Science Fair some weeks previously, although the fax clearly stated that the Nancy Serrano in question was from the Environmental Society. When the International Soc. received the same fax and query from Monsanto, they immediately jumped to the conclusion that the Environmental Soc. would sabotage their event. Their response was to apologise to Monsanto about the fax, stating it had nothing to do with the International Society. It would seem Monsanto paid more attention to the fax cover sheet than the questions asked.

The evening before the Food Fair, some members from the Environmental Society spoke with Brian Connolly, from the International Society, and clarified the fax and the position that The Enviro. Soc. would not be protest or boycott their event. Brian agreed to let the GMO information stand go ahead. Monsanto has still to reply to the Environmental Society with any information. The night of the International Society Food Fair ran smoothly, with the Environmental Society information stand on GMO's and organic soup. No protest, no boycott! The International Society even extended an invitation to the Environmental Society to next year's Food Fair.

However, at the last Clubs' and Societies' Council Meeting the International Society decided to raise the issue of the Environmental Society's

rights and part of their constitutional duty 'to inform students, staff and the general public on protective environmental measures'.

The International Society/Council proceeded still after the Clubs and Socs Council meeting, to seek clarification and an apology for Monsanto from the Dean of Humanities for the fax cover, although Alan Powell from the International Soc. had already spoken with Nancy Serrano Jnr. from the Environmental Society regarding the fax, thus knowing that the Enviro. Soc. had sent it, not a staff member. It would seem that Monsanto have everyone bending over backwards to please them.

The suspension of the Environmental Society does not deal with the core issue raised by this controversy. The real issue is that the Students' Union is treading on dangerous new ground. Until now, no similar clash between societies has arisen, and the Union are making up the rules as they go along. Until this dilemma is addressed properly, any society could be reprimanded for disagreeing with another society! This immediately restricts societies from acting in accordance with their constitutions. But don't societies also have a right to secure their sponsorship? Of course! Some sound advice would be that a more professional attitude be adopted by societies, when large sums of money are in question and some type of written agreement is signed by both the society and sponsor, ensuring the sponsor that the event takes place and that the society and the Students' Union do not go into debt!

Another hot debating topic that arose was whether the Environmental

Teacher's Society? The History Society? Postgrads Association?, The Debating Union? just to name a few! Representing any group's opinions can be deemed political. Information and discussion can be deemed political!

The Clubs' and Societies' Council are in the regular habit of hanging this guillotine over any society whom it deems to have political opinions. The Students' Union's (SU) constitution says that political and religious groups cannot acquire a budget on an equal basis with other clubs and societies, (i.e. they receive a token £1 per annum!). The ULSU is one of the few SU's in Ireland that does not recognise political and religious groups on equal terms with other interest groups on campus. They themselves represent student's interests, and yet clearly state that they are apolitical! For my last 6 years in UL, I have watched and wondered why students take so little interest in the SU, who try to represent them and defend their interests. Students in UL have got to start giving a damn about things that affect them and others. The ULSU has got to instil a sense of responsibility into their students, get them active, get them interested, and give them a broader education than just their books!

To date, the ULSU has contributed to the apathy of its own students. By discriminating against groups who wish to hold political views, the SU can only breed apathy. It's time to stop encouraging students to hide under a blanket of indifference. ULSU have been scared that political parties would eat up their budget, but this does not have to be the case. Measures can be put in place to support all interests groups

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The International Society decided to inform the Environmental Society about this sponsorship, as they wanted to know if a boycott or open protest against Monsanto and GMO's could be avoided. The Environmental Society firstly responded to a member of the International Society, Alan Dineen, requesting information stating they would not boycott or protest at their event, and requesting they reconsider Monsanto's sponsorship and inform themselves about the bad track record of the company. Their reply was that the Environmental Society could have an information stand but that they would go ahead with Monsanto's sponsorship regardless. At this point, the Environmental Soc. approached Monsanto requesting information by fax, on some key GMO concerns, being frank with them, stating that there would be information leaflets at the food-fair giving their stance as well as the environmentalist's view with respect to GMO's, as everyone has a right to information.

There was great confusion over the cover-sheet of the fax, as it was sent from the Languages Dept. in UL, with an official, UL cover-sheet. The only reason for sending it from this dept. was that it was after 5pm and the Clubs and Socs office was closed, and the sender had access to this fax. The confusion it caused, which was expressed by Monsanto to a staff contact person in

apologise to Monsanto about the fax, stating it had nothing to do with the International Society. It would seem Monsanto paid more attention to the fax cover sheet than the questions asked. The evening before the Food Fair, some members from the Environmental Society spoke with Brian Connolly, from the International Society, and clarified the fax and the position that The Enviro. Soc. would not be protest or boycott their event. Brian agreed to let the GMO information stand go ahead. Monsanto has still to reply to the Environmental Society with any information. The night of the International Society Food Fair ran smoothly, with the Environmental Society information stand on GMO's and organic soup. No protest, no boycott! The International Society even extended an invitation to the Environmental Society to next year's Food Fair.

However, at the last Clubs' and Societies' Council Meeting the International Society decided to raise the issue of the Environmental Society's possible jeopardising of their Food Fair, as the money from Monsanto had, at that point, not been received. The Environmental Society were thus accused by the Council of back-stabbing the International Society, jeopardising their event and their future, blackening the name of all clubs and societies and being political for attacking multinationals, due to a fax which the Environmental Society sent to Monsanto. The Council recommended that the Environmental Society be suspended for 4 weeks next semester, be fined £750 if the Monsanto money didn't come through, and apologise to the International Society and the Council. On Wednesday Dec. 9th, the Student's Union Executive voted in favour of the suspension. Monsanto have in the mean time paid the International Society the promised amount. The Environmental Society firmly rejects all the accusations and find the suspension completely unjust as they see their request for information by fax perfectly within their

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Another hot debating topic that arose was whether the Environmental Society is a political organisation and should it be receiving a budget from Clubs and Societies. It is not the first time that this question has been asked. The Environmental Society, along with several UL and Mary I. societies, protested in Limerick City on Nov. 30th against the World Trade Organisation. The Environmental Society's reason for protesting was against anti-environmental measures that the WTO have condoned.

The Environmental Society is not affiliated with any political parties. However, there is no denying that politics is a part of everything. For everyone to respect the environment, laws must be implemented and enforced, thereby inevitably linking certain environmental issues to politics. What is worrying is how many other society's could be threatened with being tagged 'political' and their budgets cut, if they fall out of favour with the Council, solely for doing what they do! What of Amnesty International? The Student

ious groups on equal terms with other interest groups on campus. They themselves represent student's interests, and yet clearly state that they are apolitical! For my last 6 years in UL, I have watched and wondered why students take so little interest in the SU, who try to represent them and defend their interests. Students in UL have got to start giving a damn about things that affect them and others. The ULSU has got to instil a sense of responsibility into their students, get them active, get them interested, and give them a broader education than just their books!

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And on a final note, I would like to point out that the implications of the Environmental Society's suspension have consequences for all societies. It ties society's hands to operate freely under their own constitutions and leaves society's open to being reprimanded for standing up for what they believe in. If this issue is left unchallenged, it will set an unacceptable precedent for the future of all societies!