



Do you believe in Valentine's Day? See page 8 for some advice on how to deal with the big day.



Turn to page 11 to read about up-and-coming fashionistas Dakota and Elle Fanning.

Sabbatical Roles Removed at Week 2 EGM



UL students filtering into the Jean Monnet for the ULSU EGM last Wednesday

Aisling Hussey

THE face of the Students' Union is to be dramatically transformed with the abolition of two sabbatical positions. The role of Campaigns and Services Officer (CSO) and Communications Officer (CO) were both removed by motions narrowly passed at last Tuesday's EGM meeting.

These positions are currently held by Paddy Rockett and Kelly O'Brien respectively.

Although it is unclear as to what guise these roles will take in the future, it has been suggested that those on co-op, as well as students in the University,

would take on some of the duties these positions entail. In the case of CO, there would possibly be one co-op student in charge of An Focal, and another overseeing ULFM.

However, jobs such as liaising with local press would be shared out

between officers. President of the SU Derek Daly claims that it is necessary to abolish these offices for the sake of financial viability.

The fact that the Union is in debt was stressed throughout the EGM. Mr Daly also expressed fears that the Union may face serious threats in the futures if these cuts are not carried out now. General Manager of the SU Philip Mudge said that the only way to relieve the debt is to reduce personnel costs, saying that "drastic" action is needed for the survival of the Union.

Other measures to make the SU more financially include the closure of the Spar shops in Dromroe and Cappavilla. Many students present

at the EGM reacted angrily to the removal of sabbatical positions. Third year English and History student Darragh Roche said that undergraduate students would not be able to handle the responsibility that comes with being CO.

"It is not possible to take the lead as a co-op student," said Darragh, who is also Comment Editor for An Focal.

Third year student Tighearnan Noonan added that students would not be able for the workload.

"Students can't put their life on hold for the paper," he said. "No student is going to willingly take this on."

The transparency and accountability of the Union was also called into

question by some students, who said that the EGM was not adequately advertised and that the motions were not made public knowledge prior to the meeting.

However, if they so wish, students may now chair a motion to reintroduce both roles at the Students' Union AGM. This meeting will take place later on in the semester at week 8. Students who are planning on chairing a motion need at least 15 signatures to chair a motion.

News

Body of missing student found

Sharon Whelton

THE body of a missing UL student was discovered on Sunday, January 29 in Galway following searches throughout the weekend.

First year Computer and Engineering student, Tony Crowley from Charleville, was last seen in the early hours of Sunday, January 8 near O'Brien's Bridge in Galway.

It is believed that the young student had been socialising with family and friends in the city before his

disappearance. Gardai from Oranmore carried out thorough searches over the weekend and discovered the body at the shoreline at Tawin at approximately 12.30pm. Huge numbers aided in the search for the Cork student.

ULSU President, Derek Daly, expressed his deepest sympathies to all involved. "Tony's death is a tragedy. On behalf of the students at UL I extend my condolences to all who have been affected by this heartbreaking circumstance, particularly his family, girlfriend, friends and community in Charleville".



Limerick Local Heroes

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JOBS

RTÉ

UL lecturer helps Limerick's local heroes

Roisin Burke

AN RTÉ series has inspired a community initiative that hopes to improve and revive Limerick City.

Last year's RTÉ series on Drogheda 'Local Heroes - A Town Fights Back' inspired the citizens of Limerick to create a similar set up. The scheme hopes to give Limerick people a voice and a chance to see what the community can achieve.

Tony Frawley, Spokesperson for the movement said "Limerick local heroes was born out of a frustration amongst genuine Limerick people drawn from the arts, business, sporting & community sectors who believed their voices haven't been heard in developing a future vision for Limerick, particularly in terms of job creation."

The Program hopes to collect ideas from members of the public that may improve the city. It hopes to energise the community and possibly create new

jobs for people in the area. The idea is powered by local people in all sectors of society and they are all dedicating their time create a better society. Several staff and alumni of UL have gotten involved in the initiative. UL Lecturer Gabriela Avarm who has dedicated her time to the initiative said "If you wait for things to happen, you keep on waiting. If you want something, go for it."

She has been helping out by spreading flyers, advertising the initiative, around UL, the milk market and the city.

"This initiative is a chance to get something done instead of sitting around waiting for the government to act and allowing communities, individuals and businesses to come together and pool their resources and ideas. It is not a political thing and hopefully will be a lot more than an opportunity for local people to complain about the problems in their area", she added.

A town meeting took place on Monday the 30th of January at The Strand Hotel. Monday's meeting was recorded by two media companies, Red Paw Media and Animo TV Production.

University of Limerick receives thumbs up from Erasmus student

Rachael Power

UL has received praise from an American Erasmus student in an article for the Star Tribune, a Minnesota newspaper.

Marguerite Happe from Minnesota, who is a frequent contributor to the newspaper about her international experience in Ireland, said that she is "so in love with the University of Limerick and its scenic campus".

She details in her article how her and her friend explored the ruins of a castle, which she found while on a walk along the Shannon, and her amazement upon doing so. "There's not a lot of countries where you can

take an afternoon walk and find an ancient ruin on the side of the road, but Ireland is one of them," she said.

"Since my school in the States is relatively small, it's a treat to be able to constantly explore the massive Limerick campus, and I'm serious, it looks like there could be a leprechaun hiding behind every corner," she added. UL has been receiving good publicity lately for its successful Erasmus programme.

In 2011, 433 European students from 26 countries studied at UL as Erasmus students and a further 1523 International Students from outside Europe chose UL as their study abroad destination. Head of UL International Education Division, Josephine Page said "This increase is in line with the

University's strategic objective of promoting an international focus across key areas of our activity, in particular the embedding of international experience as a former element of academic programmes at UL"

Last year UL received a five star QS rating in an independent valuation of some of the world's leading universities. It has also recently been voted by a survey on coursehub.ie out of ten thousand students as the university in Ireland with the highest satisfaction rating, at 85%.

Marguerite's article "A Secret Castle is the Best Kind of Castle" can be read online at startribune.com

North Campus set for UL's fourth pub

Denise Calnan

THE University's fourth bar and fifteenth eaterie will open this semester as part of the recently-built multi-million euro sports complex, The Pavilion, on the North side of the campus. The building is expected to be fully-operational by Week One.

The bar and restaurant, also called The Pavilion, opens to a positive reaction from both staff and students, expecting it to enhance the atmosphere on the Clare side of the campus and offer more variety to the students living there.

Cappavilla Student Village Manager Michael Lenaghan agrees that the North Campus has been known to be the quieter side of campus but believes The Pavilion could become a popular spot for all students, not just the sporting niche; "Once it is a nice eating place and a good place to socialise it will easily become a popular place to go. It will definitely bring a good social atmosphere to this side of campus", he

said. "I am excited about the finished product of the North Campus. It will, above everything, enhance the quality of accomodation we offer on this side of the university," he added.

Students Union President Derek Daly agrees that he hopes the new bar and restaurant will offer more variety to students; "I hope it offers a place to socialise in the evenings for residents on the North Campus, particularly given the effect weather can have on crossing the Living Bridge," he said.

Derek Daly also confirmed that there is no concern as to the number of licensed bars on campus now; "Irrespective of how many bars there are, it is for the students to make them. Having the bar there without any buy in from management and students will condemn it to failure, but I am confident the management will work with students to make a success of the venue." The positive reaction to The Pavilion can be found within the residents of Cappavilla also, many mentioning the close proximity to the student village as a reason to socialise in the bar and restaurant. Kris O' Shea, a 4th year Law and European Studies student, said that he would definitely avail of the new facilities; "It would be

handier than walking across the Living Bridge for a bite to eat or a pint, but for me, it would depend on the price. The Stables isn't that cheap but if it was more expensive in The Pavilion, I would stick with the Stables."

Kris believes it depends on how they present the venue as to what kind of crowd they will attract; "It depends on the type of food they offer," he said, "If it was like the Sports Bar with dinners and protein shakes they could easily pull the sports crowd in. But if they had food and drink offers, they'd get the majority of the North Campus students and others going to eat and socialise there." Libby Mellotte, a 4th year Joints Honours student, said her and her housemates would definitely use a restaurant and bar facility like The Pavilion; "It is the walk home from the Stables that stops me going there to socialise more often!"

The bar and restaurant will compliment conferencing facilities at The Pavilion, the largest all-weather sports complex in Europe. Funding income will be raised from the operation of the facility and funding generated from campus-based commercial activities.

Would you like to write news for An Focal?

We'd love to hear from you.

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News

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All submissions to An Focal are greatly valued. If you have submitted an article which has not been published in this issue, it is very likely that your piece has been retained for publication in future issues. If you are concerned that your article has not been published, please say so.

2. Editing:

If you are unhappy with how your article appeared in An Focal, please discuss this with the Editor. A number of strict guidelines are followed in the production of An Focal, which means some articles may be altered to allow them to fit on the page and to improve readability.

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Kelly O'Brien, Editor

EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to a new era of An Focal. Unless your abode is beneath a mossy grove somewhere, I'm sure you will have heard tell of the changes soon to be implemented in An Focal, ULFM, and in the UL Students' Union in general.

Last Wednesday, 240 students turned up to the ULSU EGM to vote on the motions being put forward. Tensions ran high as UL students, for the first time in a long time, felt passionate enough to put hard questions to both SU Sabbats and SU staff. Philip Mudge,

General Manager, kicked things off with a presentation about Union finances. Some heated discussions followed and the general consensus can be summed up by two questions, "How did things get so bad?" and "Why are we only hearing about it now?"

When things finally rolled around to the motions being put forward, it became rapidly apparent that students were extremely divided over the decisions to be made with motions being put forward to defer the vote until the AGM in Week 8. This did not

pass, however, and students voted to abolish the positions of CO and CSO based on the dire financial situation of the Students' Union.

As a Union Rep, I stand by the decision of my team to put these hard motions forward to the student body. As an Editor, I understand the concerns of the sectional editors and the contributors and can reveal that I have indeed had the same concerns myself. I am able, however, to see both sides of the coin and I am convinced that, whichever outcome prevailed, both contain the exact same level of risk.

Change, in any way, shape, or form, is scary. "Better the devil you know..." and all that. For those of you who think that this is the end of An Focal, you are, to be blunt, quite wrong. To say it may be the end of An Focal as we know it?

Well, that may be true. But An Focal was never fixed in place, it was never a constant. Every year, every new CCO, PPO, CO, saw changes to the publication. Some of these changes were for the better, some for the worse, and some were more noticeable

than others. But the constant, in this scenario, is change itself.

Now that the course has been set, I will have more work than ever to juggle. I will be working with the ULFM Board and the An Focal sectional editors to try and come up with the best way forward for both initiatives and to try and safeguard the services for years to come.

No doubt my indispensable co-op student, Colm Fitzgerald, will be instrumental in laying out these procedures and I will also be looking for input from former CO Finn McDuffie.

From you, reader, I require your faith now more than ever. I will ensure the future of this paper. While I can assure you of very little else, I can assure you of that.

Kelly O'Brien
 Editor

Charity Week 2012

Keith Quinlan,
 ULSU Events Manager

Charity Week is Coming,
 are you ready?

Charity Week (known as RAG Week in other colleges) is happening Week 6 in UL this year, February 27th to March 1st. This year Charity Week will be raising funds for four great charities; Pieta House, The Brothers of Charity, TLC4CF, & the Midwest Rape Crisis Centre. During the course of the week there will be a whole host of activities during the day including the night time events, with the end goal of making as much money as possible for Charity.

This year An Garda Síochána will be operating a zero tolerance policy for any students who are littering or engaged in antisocial behaviour and will hand out fines immediately.

This in particular pertains to drinking in the estates so please don't do it. There are a lot of local residents with families who live in these areas so let's try having some respect for them. If you are fined, it is a lot of money to have to hand over

and could ruin your week. The most important thing about Charity Week is raising money for good causes, and the best way to do that is if the students get involved. Students around the countries have come up with some amazing ideas for tongue in cheek, clever ways of fundraising and there's no reason UL students shouldn't follow suit. If you want to dress up as condom for a day, blindfold yourself for 48 hours, chain yourself and some mates together, do a fun run, shave or dye your hair, or even spend a day on campus working as a porter. No idea is silly, in fact the sillier usually the better. If you wish to get involved with fundraising or have your own idea for a way you can fundraise personally, please drop me an email (events.su@ul.ie) for more information. Charity Week is only as good as you, the students, make it.

With Regards to the events happening this year, we don't want to spoil anything just yet but the Charity Week Lineup will be announced the start of Week 4.



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News

Quinn doesn't 'feel great' about breaking promise

Siofra Mannion

Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn T.D visited the University of Limerick today as part of the Issues in Irish Journalism Seminar and discussed the economic concerns facing Irish students.

Minister Quinn addressed student's concerns of increasing fees and explained that fees could go up to €3000 in the next two years.

He was confronted by Campaigns and Services Officer, Paddy Rockett, about breaking his party's promises to Irish students to not raise fees, causing mass student protests for the past two years.

Minister Quinn responded by stating that he did not 'feel great' about having to break this promise but in regards to the student protests, he said that 'the first phase of street politics is knowing when to come off the streets.'

However, Minister Quinn is seeking to ease the worries of cash-strapped

students by introducing a new Grant Holding Authority that will be 'like booking a Ryanair flight.' He explained that the scheme will be carried out online and it will take into account all aspects of the individual student's financial circumstances.

In Ireland, 65 per cent of young people take on the transition from second level to third level education. 41 per cent of these students avail of the grant system and do not pay registration fees.

Minister Quinn argued in the seminar that better cooperation and collaboration is needed between third level institutions such as Mary Immaculate College and University of Limerick to reduce the number of courses each institution offers.

By developing such links, the Government will be enabled to fund third level institutions without the need for self-assistance by the institutions themselves. He stated that 'there is a huge investment of taxpayers' money into third level education.'

Speaking about the future of Irish journalism, Minister Quinn insisted that students should retain their passion for curiosity and be interested in public affairs and 'be close to a politician but don't get into bed with them.'



Ruari Quinn spoke in UL last Thursday.

Clubs and societies working group ready for semester two

Jason Kennedy, News Editor

THE Clubs and Societies working group, which was founded last semester, is getting ready for a busy semester and is currently reviewing all of their activities from the previous semester. Working Group member Keith Young says that the group is making excellent progress and is nearly finished in their enquiries.

"I cannot as yet comment on what our full recommendations will be ahead of the final report.

We were very pleased however to see some changes coming forward in the new revised SU constitution which provides clubs and societies with some of the safeguards they were looking for along with adequate representation", said Mr Young.

By the time the paper is gone to print the working group will have completed their research into clubs and societies, which Mr Young says will be presented to the following meeting of Clubs and Societies council.

"I cannot speculate as to what will happen following this, as Clubs and Societies Council can either accept or reject our recommendations.

This has been down to a lot of communication between the SU and various student representatives and I would personally like to thank Aoife Kenny for her hard work and consideration ensuring clubs and societies views were sought and where possible implemented into the new constitution", noted Mr Young.

"All I can ask of the average student is to keep an eye on proceedings and if their respective clubs or societies call on them for any reason, to get involved and ensure that their C&S will continue to have adequate representation and financial security."

The clubs and societies working group was formed from concerns that groups on campus may not receive the two-thirds of students' capitation funds, which is the recommended amount to fund clubs and societies across Irish universities", he concluded.

Noonan honoured by Debating Society

Ann Styles

"YOU are lucky to be in College at the moment, you are sheltered from the economic storm." said Finance Minister, Michael Noonan at a recent ceremony to award him Honorary Lifetime Membership of the University of Limerick (UL).

On Thursday evening last, Minister Noonan addressed students from UL Debating Union who presented the award in recognition of his long and illustrious career in politics.

The Minister said he was annoyed at being misrepresented by journalists as his comment on emigration being a lifestyle choice was only partly quoted and therefore taken out of context. He said that for many, especially in the construction industry, it was not a choice but a necessity. Fielding questions from students, the Minister agreed that Ireland is in a "pretty precarious position" but claimed that Fine Gael had made a very strong start and whatever happens "We have assurances that our European partners will support us". On education cuts the Finance Minister said that the Government was committed to maintaining the pupil-teacher ratio in primary and secondary schools so the cuts had to come from somewhere.

Though urging students to stay in college and progress to a graduate program he said that doing so would mean working to put yourself through, doing it part-time or by thesis, just as people, including himself, had to in the past. When asked about cuts in the

police force Mr. Noonan commended the Gardaí in their work but added "policing the country isn't as onerous a task as it was in the 80's". Having begun his political career as a local councillor in 1974, the Minister was elected to the Dail in 1981 and has since held a number of ministerial roles within Fine Gael along with being party leader during the millennium. His current position, he said, is probably the most interesting job he has ever had and thanks to the three years he spent as chairperson for the public accounts committee he is well equipped for his role as Finance Minister. Referring to Fine Gael's rise to power early last year Mr. Noonan spoke of the "absolute chaos and disarray" of the country when they took over. He jokingly referred to the Green Party at the time as "lingering like an unwelcome guest". The Minister acknowledged that the recent budget had been painful for many people but that the 3.6 billion in cuts were a necessary step on the road to recovery. The real test of success, he said, was in Ireland's ability to return to the markets, something that can now be done a lot sooner than was previously forecast. After all "giving up is not an option." according to Mr. Noonan.



Finance Minister, Michael Noonan.



Comment

The expectations of award season

Eric Johansson

THE worst financial crisis since the 1930s is still sweeping over the world. Countries are going bankrupt, the EMU is crumbling and here in Ireland thousands of people are emigrating in pursuit of a more promising future. Some columnists and political thinkers have gone so far as to express the thought that this is the end of capitalism. Others focus on the fact that millions of people are living on the margins, in poverty, without hope.

With these facts in mind one cannot help but to feel that the self-righteous expenditure of the upcoming award season have a slight foul smell. Can the extravagance of Hollywood be justified when millions of people go without work, cash or future?

The answer is "yes". The famous professor of economics Michael Dahlén has written in his book Nextopia that

what brings the economy forward is not the actual product but the promises and expectations that the product has. The expectations give the products its value and creates a demand for the product. The first iPhone was as an example more valuable the day before it's release than it was the day after. This was due to the fact that the expectations were higher before people could get it than it was when they could. It is the same with the lifestyle of the stars. Seeing how Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara live their lives raises the expectations of what we want in our own lives.

The Academy Awards and the Golden Globe ceremonies are advertisement of the life extraordinaire. Think about it. In the upcoming weeks you will receive full disclosure of what George Clooney, Gerard Butler and Julia Roberts were wearing on the night

of the Oscars, what cologne they had and how they got fit for the show. The ceremonies will show us how to dress the upcoming year, how to style our hair and how to apply make-up.

In short the award season will create a demand on fashion that resembles the style of the mamas and papas of Hollywood. And where there is a demand, then by Adam Smith's invisible hand, there will also be a supply. The economy will move forward, if only just a little. Now, some might say that this is a false hope, that most of us will never be wearing Armani suits or expensive Prada shoes. But even if we will not become movie gods or rock stars and be able to dress accordingly, what harm can it have to aspire to live a better life?



The Academy Awards and the Golden Globe ceremonies are advertisement of the life extraordinaire.

We need to talk about suicide

Jason Kennedy

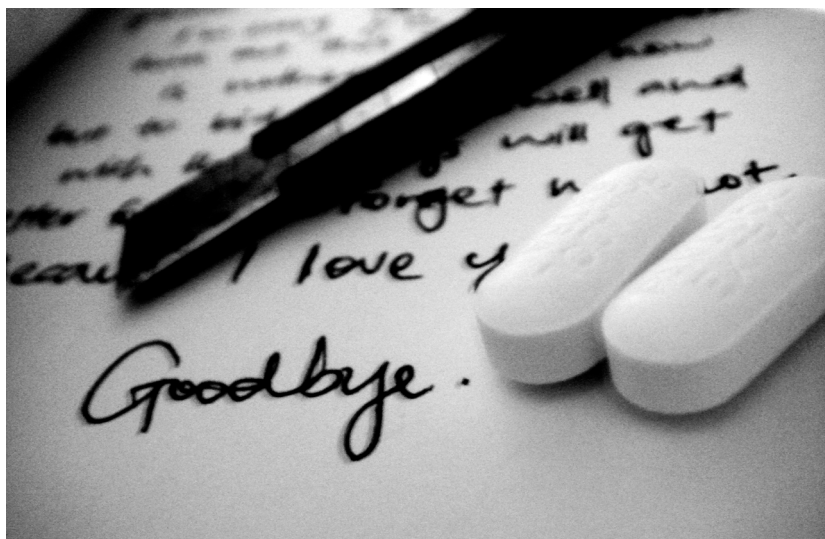
THE de-stigmatisation of Ireland's last big taboo couldn't have come at a worse time. This country is finally beginning to realise that to help prevent suicide that we need an open discussion on it, but our country's present financial state may hinder this discussion on a massive level.

Late last year, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Older People, Equality and Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch, told An Focal that the Government's €9 million, that was marked to help fund suicide prevention agencies, may be cut. This money was specially marked out in Fine Gael's Programme for Government, but the future doesn't look good for these funds. This will mean that agencies that help people with poor mental health and who are contemplating suicide will be compromised. One of the organisations that is due to receive some of the funding from the €9 million is Aware, a voluntary organisation formed in 1985 which aims to help people with depression. Aware CEO, Kevin Smith, said that the situation is highly unfortunate and advised other agencies to seek other sources of finance.

"We only ever receive a small grant from the Government. We've very lucky to have great fundraisers with us now who help to get the 85 per cent of funds that Aware needs. In reality, the services need to be delivered and all groups might need to find another way to get money. It's a pity that something that would save lives might be cut."

Unfortunately, it was the loss of a young life that highlighted the need for greater awareness to suicide and eliminated the 'if we don't talk about it, it will go away' approach.

Kate Fitzgerald was a young woman



Right now, Ireland has the 36th highest suicide rate in the world.

from Dublin whose very public suicide led to a discussion on the topic that was incredibly foreign in this country. Kate was a writer and PR consultant, who wrote a powerful anonymous letter to the Irish Times asking for a greater understanding of depression. By the time the article was published, Kate was dead. Following this, the paper decided to censor the letter after it became clear that Kate was the author and that she worked for Terry Prone's Communications Clinic. This outrageous act sparked a debate that kept going for weeks and was intensified by the suicide of Wales football team captain, Gary Speed in November. The topic became such a talking point that notorious windbag, Kevin Myers, decided to write a column about it in the Irish Independent. In his article, which was titled 'Suicide is self-murder and must remain taboo', Myers wrote: 'The Nottingham Forest-Leeds United match

on Wednesday began with a minute's applause to honour Gary Speed, who had taken his own life. So how does one now hail a true hero?'

Despite Mr Myers clear opposition to open dialog about suicide, it is clear that there a social movement towards discussing the issue which has undoubtedly affect every city and town in Ireland.

Right now, Ireland has the 36th highest suicide rate in the world. Not being afraid to talk about suicide, depression and poor mental health could counteract that. In one of his last interviews, the late mental health campaigner, John McCarthy told An Focal that only love and hope can overcome suicide.

"The only way you can really defeat suicide is with love and hope. I survived suicide because of love and hope. They need to dispense of all this talk about mental illness and take a positive approach for once."

UL's €80,000 birthday present is a missed opportunity

Darragh Roche, Comment Editor

THE University has shown its continuing ability for big spending during restrained financial times in the form of 40 "scholarships" of €2,000 each to be awarded to the next batch of first years as a celebration of the college's 40th anniversary.

This €80,000 will be gifted to new students who achieve the highest Leaving Cert points in 2012, regardless of their need, income or social status.

This mid-recession act of generosity might seem praiseworthy if it hadn't come at the same time as students are being forced out of education because they lack funds.

It is particularly galling for all those on ever decreasing grants (and no grant at all) that the sole criterion is Leaving Cert points. Students whose parents can afford grinds or private schools are far more likely to reach those magic numbers in June's exams, while better-off pupils from suburban, middle-class schools almost always outperform the disadvantaged.

Rather than invest this money in the critical support systems for the poorest students, which evidently aren't doing enough, UL has decided to throw good money away with no long-term benefit.

It would be far better to spend this money on making the decaying, abandoned Main Building less disgusting, or creating a library that actually stocks the books students need, or even making the Co-op Office less infuriating and laughable.

The worst part of this decision is the missed opportunity. UL could have used its anniversary to highlight the increasing difficulties of third-level students by investing this money in expanding its laudable support systems for those in need, whose numbers are clearly growing. UL has wasted a unique opportunity to draw attention to a national issue that has not been widely reported and to make a genuine difference to people's lives.

It is possible that at least some of the 40 recipients will genuinely need the money, but calling the prize a "scholarship" is risible. By any reasonable definition, a scholarship covers the costs of university education - all the costs. €2,000 barely covers the registration fee, let alone the cost of rent on campus (which the full maintenance grant doesn't cover, either). Living off campus might cost somewhat less, but students in need will spend this "scholarship" almost as soon as they get it. It will either go to campus accommodation, landlords or back to UL itself. Only those who don't need the money won't see it disappear overnight.

The University authorities should seriously reconsider this act of "celebration". There are no long-term benefits to the student body of this expense and very little benefit to the University, apart from a few cheap headlines in the local press. This is not something that should be allowed to pass us by without comment; it is a poor decision that benefits a few who may not even need it. A cynic would be forgiven for thinking UL has taken its inspiration from the royal yacht, but UL thought of this first.

Comment

Gender quotas are an insult to women and democracy

Aoife Coughlan

CONSIDER this: Political parties wanting a more masculine image of power and strength ignore and replace female election candidates with their male counterparts.

This scenario would undoubtedly be considered sexist and would generate uproar from feminist and equality quarters. Men pushing aside women candidates in a blasé attempt to create a more desirable image. Surely this could not happen? But this is the type of situation that is very likely to materialise if proposed Dáil Legislation goes ahead. The only difference with the hypothesis above and the reality is that it would be the women who were replacing the men, thus rendering it fully acceptable to many.

That was the opinion expressed at a conference organised by Kathleen Lynch, the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People. The proposed legislation could see the introduction of quotas to increase the number of women taking seats in Dáil Éireann. As progressive as we consider

ourselves to be, legislation such as this is unquestionably undemocratic. Any bid to give greater weight to any social grouping takes away the voters' right to vote indiscriminately. Surely this kind of thinking goes against equality.

The culture in Ireland is not what one would call a glass ceiling affair. Women excel in many areas, including politics. We have had a female Tánaiste, two female presidents, many politicians and other positions such as the State pathologist, filled by women. The fact that even a few are striking out and excel is proof that Ireland is not sexist or gender selective.

Women are in positions of power. The assumption is that because there are fewer women in these positions than men, they are being obstructed by an ethos or legislative control. This assumption is not justified. It comes down to the personal choice of women and relatively recent gender equality.

The Irish electorate and women are being insulted by the idea that we need legislation to increase female numbers.

I do not believe that there is anyone in the country who would vote for a candidate simply because they are male. That archaic notion is a slight on the intelligence of voters. Furthermore, it is an affront to women because it alludes to the need for a quota to see them successfully fill Dáil seats instead of allowing them to depend on their own merits.

Also, we must allow that for every seat taken in an effort to meet a quota means a seat is denied to a male. This could lead to people unsuited to a position pushing those who are out. It would also be in direct opposition to any argument that the quotas were to promote equality. A position where equality pushes out quality would ensue.

Positive discrimination can never be a solution to an equality problem and more to the point I believe that there is no problem of this kind to begin with. This kind of legislation will only promote rivalry instead of equality.



An empty Dáil chamber

Time to re-open the debate on abortion

Paul O' Sullivan

A RECENT report from the Guttmacher Institute has shown that the number of dangerous abortions worldwide has increased, especially in countries where the procedure is illegal. Ireland has long been a country with a strong Catholic ethos and a very firm conviction that abortion is, and always will be, wrong. But in light of these latest statistics, is it time to address this issue once again and re-open it to public debate? Referendums have been put to the Irish people on several occasions since the foundation of the Irish Free State, all of which echoed the anti-abortion sentiment of the people. However, the growing impact of secularization, coupled with the astonishing statistics provided by the Guttmacher Institute, may yet sway the Irish people.

Dr. Sharon Camp, president and CEO of the Guttmacher Institute, insists that placing legal restrictions on abortion does not stop it from happening. Instead, it forces people to pursue the procedure illegally. This clandestine method of abortion is highly unsafe and is known to cause serious harm to women. She recommends that abortion be given more significant legal status so that safe abortions can be carried out.

So will this view find any favour in Ireland considering it is one of the few countries in Europe that has not granted legal status to abortion? Will Irish citizens concede that abortion will occur with or without legal acceptance and strive to legalise it for safety reasons? It is difficult to say. It is likely that the ethical implications will forever hold a place in the Irish psyche given



The number of dangerous abortions worldwide has increased

the ascendancy of the Catholic faith in the country. However, these facts are difficult to ignore.

As it stands, Irish law states that it is illegal to seek a termination within the boundaries of the country. However, this law is riddled with ambiguities. In recent times severe pressure has fallen on Irish governments to clear up these ambiguities. Over the next number of years Ireland is likely to see a lot of attention focused on this issue.

It is difficult to even speculate on the future of abortion laws in Ireland. Public opinion appears to be shifting toward a consensus that it should be legalised. A survey published in the Irish Examiner around this time last year indicated that up to 60 per cent

of 18-35 year olds believed it should be legalised. The latest report from the Guttmacher Institute is likely to further solidify this viewpoint. Leaving aside all personal convictions on the matter, one can only ponder on the course of the future. The dwindling significance of religion in day to day life is bound to have a significant impact on public opinion.

Younger generations are experiencing a very different world to their ancestors and by the same token, have diverging views on controversial matters, including abortion. Only time will tell but this writer believes the issue will be more divisive than ever before.

We need much more than "ethical capitalism"

David Hartery

IS AN "ethical capitalism" desirable or possible? In response to global economic difficulty, particularly the continued emergence of allegations of corruption or failures of regulation, many have posited that an emergence of a new business culture and social mores would prevent a repeat of the recession that has blighted the last five years.

However, such analysis ignores the root causes of corruption and the lack regulatory oversight.

The idea that the excesses of capitalism can be curtailed by slightly altering the status quo feeds into the cultural hegemony which benefits those with most to gain from the continuation of a system that concentrates power in the hands of the few.

Capitalism is the constant drive for the creation of excess consumption. Through profit motivations and market "efficiency", capitalism in all forms seeks to minimise costs and maximise profits, necessarily leading to the alienation of labour as ordinary workers are excluded from the benefits of their own production and crises of capitalism when this push for more production hits a road block.

Since the measure of self-worth in capitalism is wealth or conspicuous consumption, during such a crisis this amounts to a dual attack on the individual's capability to actualise identity.

In order to deflect this assault, attempts must be made to increase self-worth. But self-worth being tied to consumption, this merely creates a vicious cycle of consumption and self-hatred. In order to protect the system that benefits them, the cultural

hegemony passes the blame to a scapegoat, creating outsider groups that are necessarily marginalised. The philosopher Slavoj Zizek explains how fascists claim to have a system of state controlled capitalism, one that will protect people's self-worth in a way that seems attractive.

The inevitable failure of this claim is then explained away by elites using the homophobia, anti-Semitism and racism inherent in that ideology.

How do we arrive at a system that vindicates the individual and provides an actual ethical framework by which to judge economic rights? By creating our own hegemony. The success of Occupy Wall Street and such movements is not in actually achieving policy change, but by changing our method of evaluating success. We need to shift from a system that values us as economic factors to one that enables all forms of self-identity.

Ethical capitalism is simply another attempt to keep people within a broken system, it is the point at which we break free of the vicious cycle of excess consumption that we can attempt to establish a truly ethical economic system.

FOCAN Sport

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Read about forgotten footballer Michael Johnson on page 30.



Liam Toghher questions the effectiveness of Liverpool Gaffer Kenny Dalglish on page 31.

Fagan's ban highlights major problems in Irish sport

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

MARTIN Fagan's career has been damaged beyond repair, his legacy ripped from the pages and discarded. Sharp perspective has now been added to the worrisome, lonely and tough lives that Irish athletes lead. Especially the ones that labour on the fringes.

Fagan has been sympathised with and condemned in equal measure. Depression and financial desperation have been rolled out as the mitigating factors which led to him purchasing a two week supply of Erythropoietin (EPO) off the internet and using it in the lead up to the Houston marathon, his last chance to secure a spot at the London Olympics.

Some argue that Fagan admitted guilt straight away. The irony of the situation was that dope testers coincidentally contacted him on the day he first injected himself with a dosage of performance enhancing drugs. Had they not, would Fagan have owned up or simply gone on to run the race, notch up his time, qualify for the

Olympics and take his government funding? We shall never know.

What is blatantly obvious when you look at the facts concerning Fagan's personal circumstances in the lead up to the incident that led to his two year ban is that he was struggling financially. Appearance money at races is vital to long distance runners and battling with injury in the run up to Houston, he was in danger of missing out.

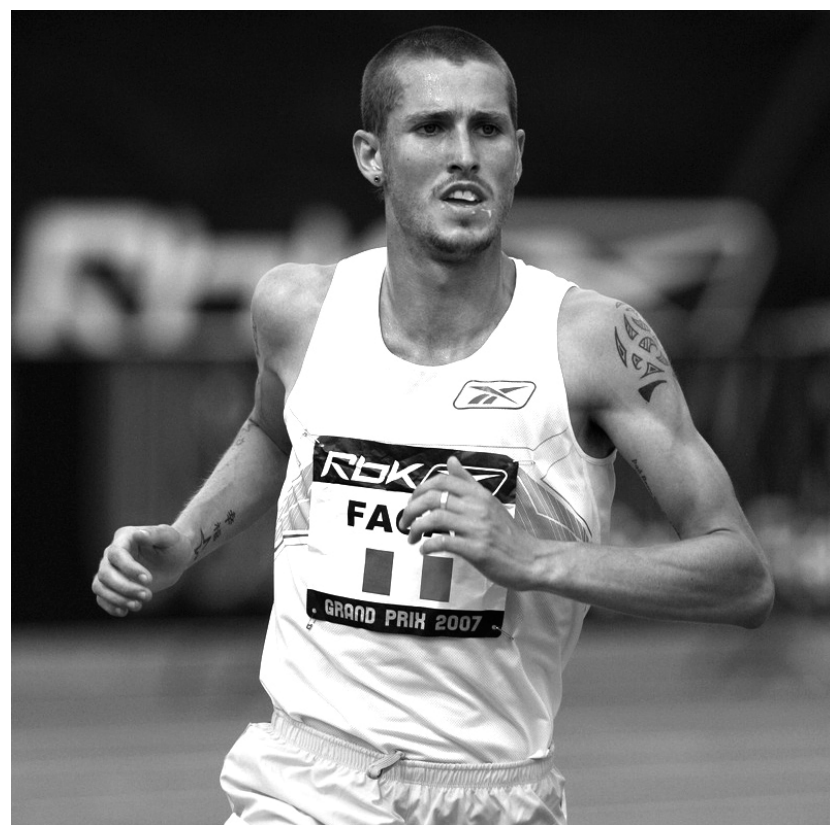
The largest chunk of income available to Fagan comes from Government funding. In order to qualify for that, he had to achieve top eight at the World Championships or the Olympics. Take that away and it would have been hard for Fagan to carry on competing.

Yes, what Fagan did was wrong, unforgivable and deserving of every bit of the ban that was handed down to him. However, the question must be asked; what led him to such desperate measures?

Top level sport is as much about mental endurance as it is about physical prowess. Financial worries on top of everything else an athlete must deal with can act as a precursor to depression.

Fagan was attacked by Eamon Sweeney in the Sunday Independent for daring to mention depression and financial concerns as reasons for his misdemeanour.

Fagan made a mistake and he will face his punishment. Criticising him for identifying the reasons for his troubles is counterproductive. It ignores two huge problems facing Irish sport, funding and more importantly, mental health.



Martin Fagan has been banned for two years.

'Shamateurism' or transparent professionalism?

Eoin Scanlon

THE question of whether our national pastime can still be regarded as an amateur Association has once again raised its ugly head, this time looking at the illegal payment to GAA managers. We have always loved to pride ourselves on how unique the GAA is and how the whole system, reaching into every corner of Irish society, is amateur and run by volunteers. While much of the association upholds that honour, there is also a rotten core with as much as €12 million paid out in illicit deals to managers. The term 'shamateurism' has been coined by many supporters who now seriously question article 1.10 of the GAA rulebook. This rule prohibits the payment of salaries or wages to employees of the association, and prescribes a penalty of a minimum

of 24 weeks suspension. It's an open secret that many managers, from club level right up to inter-county are paid for their time and commitment, not including the approved expenses they claim. It remains the catalyst against the amateur and volunteer ideology established throughout the Country; with one GAA analyst remarking on Croke Park's unease to tackle the problem by asking, 'What's that sitting in the corner of the room? No, it's not an elephant. It's a county manager receiving a brown paper bag.'

In his 29 page document, Director General Padraic Duffy admits the practise of illegally paying managers has 'generated cynicism, created envy, undermined the Association's volunteer spirit, and dishonoured its core value'.

The time, he feels, has come to finally confront this burning issue.

Duffy's report considers three options to cease the under-the-counter payments, with the last likely to prove the most contentious, namely that inter-county managers should be officially paid. Already a number of famous GAA faces have given their tuppence worth and it's clear there is a distinct lack of agreement. It may escalate into a civil war inside GAA circles as consensus seems unimaginable.

While some say managers deserve to be paid, seeing the role of inter-county boss as a full time job, more feel this will end any right for the GAA to call themselves amateur, and snowball into players wanting professional treatment.



The GAA is in the course of a big debate about payments.

Sport

Forgotten Footballer: Michael Johnson



Michael Johnson in happier days at Manchester City.

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

MANCHESTER City fans rave about their youth system, and with good cause.

They have produced some decent players. Trouble is, they seem to offload them as soon as they make the break into the first team and replace them with more expensive and more marketable big name players.

Kasper Schmeichel, Daniel Sturridge, Stephen Ireland, Lee Croft, Joey Barton, Shaun Wright-Phillips, Bradley Wright-Phillips and Glenn Whelan all graduated from City's academy and were then promptly shown the door. One lad they can't seem to get rid of though, is Michael Johnson.

A Leeds supporting Manchester born lad, Johnson made the move to City's academy in 2004 after a promising cameo at Everton.

He was part of a City youth team that reached the final of the FA Youth Cup in 2006 and also made his Premier League debut for the first team that season.

Johnson soon established himself as a cultured, passing, central-midfielder and comparisons to Steven Gerrard were made by the press.

Some even held him in such high regard that they tipped him for the England captaincy. Interest from Liverpool and Arsenal followed and both made concrete bids for the players

which were immediately turned down by City. Johnson went on to make 23 appearances for City in 2007-08, his breakthrough season, only hampered by an abdominal injury.

In the 2008-09 season, Johnson came into his own and found himself anchoring the midfield alongside Stephen Ireland and the Santos bound Brazilian Elano. However, after only three appearances his injury returned and kept him out for the rest of the season.

It was then Johnson's off the field habits came to the fore. A fondness for the Manchester night life, a poor attitude to training and a belief in the media hype surrounding him are said to have combined to halt the youngster's progress.

The following season, Johnson made his comeback only to be sent back to the treatment room with a serious knee injury after only two first team starts. He missed the entire 2010/11 season as Manchester City swelled their squad with expensive acquisitions and, at the beginning of the current campaign, he was farmed out on loan to Leicester City. Johnson has struggled to make an impact in the Championship and will find it hard to work his way back into contention at the Etihad Stadium when he returns to Manchester. At just 23, though, he has time on his side to rebuild his career.

Editorial

Robert McNamara, Sport Editor

IN an increasingly pan-optic and technology driven society, world football's governing body refuses to progress with the times. Vincent Kompany and Glen Johnson both committed the same crime, a dangerous two footed challenge, yet only one was punished. The lack of consistency by referees in football is bordering on comical.

Do poor refereeing decisions make football a more exciting game? Absolutely not. Again and again, teams win and lose points off the back of red cards, goals and penalties that are denied or rewarded incorrectly.

The amount of cameras at games means it only takes seconds for the viewers at home to see whether the ref has made the right call or not.

These cameras are available at all grounds, in all of Europe's top leagues. There is absolutely no excuse for FIFA and UEFA to continually dismiss it.

UEFA President Michel Platini claims video technology would ruin the popularity of the game "Video is not for football. Human (adjudication) is better," he said. "Football became popular thanks to its human values. If that becomes a commercial value, it

will lose all its popularity." It would be far more pertinent to experience correct decisions after a video ref had analysed the situation.

The excitement lies in the seconds that we wait for the decision to be made, the debates will rage on anyway, the credibility of the game will be improved and another dimension added to an already exciting sport.

The goal-line assistants that FIFA introduced have had little or no impact on the game and have failed to correct any decision of significance. Video technology would actually be more cost effective and all seeing.

Mario Balotelli stamped on Scott Parker's head during an important Premier League title clash in January but faced no immediate sanction. Balotelli went on to score the winning



penalty that got Manchester City the three points and huge boost in the title race. A video ref in contact with the game referee would have been able to notify the ref of the stamp and the Italian would not have been on the pitch to steal the points off Tottenham Hotspur.

Every other aspect of the game has evolved from the players themselves to the way the game is played and presented to the people who love to watch it. Video technology for penalty decisions, red cards and goals will neither slow the game down nor damage it. It may however, expose the people who run it to greater scrutiny, which is why we will never see it introduced.

The battle of Manchester will run until May

Robert McNamara, Sport Editor

6-1. It hurt him deeply. It wasn't a new occurrence, it had happened before, but never to this extent.

He had suffered defeats against the blue half of Manchester but none were as damning or as final as this one.

The stony faced pensioner approaching seventy had been upstaged by the young, exotic foreigner with better hair, a finer cut suit and deeper resources. End times for Sir Alex Ferguson and Manchester United the media cried. Not so. Crippling club debt, selfish owners in his own dwelling, and a deluge of Arab money being pumped into renovations at the neighbours across town, was never going to defeat the greatest manager in English football history. For more seasoned observers there was a sense of familiarity to these proceedings. Younger, more interesting and trendier managers had arrived from distant shores and won the day in the past. Few lasted more than a heartbeat in the history of football, before the old war horse prevailed and returned Manchester United to the summit.

A string of uneventful one-nil wins followed in reply to what was a watershed moment at Old Trafford. There have been more blips since. Champions League elimination and patchy league form led to the recall of Paul Scholes from retirement to anchor a workmanlike and uncreative midfield. United, though, are still in the hunt for three trophies and in the Premier

League battling a City team with no experience of 'squeaky bum' time.

Contract negotiations with talented youngsters like Paul Pogba and Ravel Morrison may secure the heart of the Manchester United team for the next generation. Add the young players already embedded in the first team like Chris Smalling, Phil Jones, the Da Silva twins and Danny Welbeck, and you have a potent mixture.

Financial fair play rules will come into force next season and Manchester City will be prevented from writing off debt through sponsorship deals with their owners businesses.

City may win the league this season but their current squad may be as good as it can get. Huge transfer fees and high wages will have to be curbed in order for them to meet UEFA's requirements. City face a stern test of their character in the second half of the season. If they are to lift their first Premier League crown, they will have to do so with a flawed but extremely experienced Manchester United team chasing them every step of the way.



Which of Manchester's teams will come out on top in the Premier League race?

Sport

Is King Kenny really Kop royalty?

Liam Togher

IT'S been just over a year now since 'King' Kenny Dalglish returned to the Liverpool dugout and the general consensus has been that the Scot has turned around the ailing club's fortunes after Roy Hodgson's ill-fated tenure. Dalglish has got the Reds playing positive, passing football in a manner reminiscent of his playing days at Anfield, where he is idolised by the fans. He has made his own mark on the squad, adding several players since last January and clearing out the not inconsiderable deadwood at the club.

But are Liverpool really a whole lot better off now than they were 12 months ago?

The Reds finished sixth in the league last season and, despite harbouring Champions League ambitions, are probably looking at consolidation rather than progress in 2011-12.

As of January they remain unbeaten at home, but of 11 games at Anfield they have won just four.

Of the seven draws, only Man Utd and Man City would be seen as opposition against whom a point would be acceptable. Sunderland, Norwich, Swansea, Blackburn and Stoke, with all due respect, should not be travelling to a side contending for the top four and coming away with a point.

Creating chances has not been a problem for Liverpool this season, but finishing has time and again let them down. Since Michael Owen departed

in 2004, they have tried a plethora of striking options but only one, Fernando Torres, was an unqualified success. As much as I admire Dirk Kuyt, he goes from being prolific one season to profligate the next. It hasn't worked out for Andy Carroll, who needs to find form over the next four months to save his Liverpool career, and even Luis Suarez has been culpable of glaring misses for all his ability.

Dalglish needs to find a reliable goal scorer to take Liverpool forward. He also needs to realise that being a devout fan of the club is different from being the manager. His conduct

in the Suarez racism episode has been unprofessional, even if managers often defend their players in public. Whatever about the players wearing those T-shirts, Dalglish in his role should not have done the same.

He has at least steadied the ship since taking charge in January 2011, but among Liverpool fans he has been pretty much exempt from criticism. Another season out of the Champions League will not do, King Kenny, or else your crown may be slipping.



Are Liverpool fans losing patience with Kenny Dalglish?

SPORTS QUIZ

Pat McGibbon

- Which soccer side had a hit with 'I'm forever blowing bubbles'?
- Larry Holmes is famous for which sport?
- Which chess piece can only move diagonally?
- What number shirt does David Beckham wear?
- How many hoops are there on a croquet pitch?
- Which famous sportsman said "When you are as great as I am, it's hard to be humble"?
- The Bill Shankly stand can be found at which football club's ground?
- China has won the Swaythling cup more times than any other country. In which sport is the Swaythling cup played for?
- In the game of Scrabble, how many letters does each player start with?
- Which word beginning with "C" is the name given to the electronic line judge at Wimbledon

- Answers
- West Ham United
 - Boxing
 - Bishop
 - 23
 - 6
 - Muhammad Ali
 - Preston North End
 - Table Tennis
 - 7
 - 9
 - Cyclops

Midas touch continues for O'Neill

Gary Whelan

WAS there ever really any doubting the man from Kilrea, Northern Ireland?

Just one month and seven games in, O'Neill has sparked a complete turnaround with five wins, one draw, one loss and a place in the top ten. And all with the same Sunderland side who were tipped for relegation by their own supporters just a few weeks ago.

This remarkable transformation should really come as no surprise to fans that have followed the career of the new man in charge on Wearside. In his first job at Wycombe Wanderers FC he was responsible for leading the team into the Football League for the first time in their history. Success continued throughout his climb up the managerial ranks up until his last post at Aston Villa where he brought a level of consistency in the top six that Villa fans would now crave.

It is no coincidence, bearing in mind he served an apprenticeship under the great Brian Clough, that people close to O'Neill speak about how the eccentricities of the former Forest manager have rubbed off on him. Luckily for Sunderland, so has some of his success. A certain Mr Bruce

must be on a golf course somewhere in Portugal pondering where exactly he went wrong. But what could O'Neill be doing that Bruce was not? Bruce who himself is a very personable man and renowned for having great man-management skills must have lost the dressing room for some reason.

"Training sessions have been shorter and sharper with more tempo," the midfielder David Vaughan says. "The gaffer's got everybody enjoying their football again. He's approachable, he's the same with everyone and he's someone you want to play for." Not the best testament of how things were before O'Neill arrived.

So what can Sunderland do for the rest of the season? With the team playing well, players such as Roman Pavlyuchenko being linked with a move it seems the Black Cats no longer look behind them. They have in a space of two months gone from relegation candidates to a club aspiring to reach the UEFA places and the boyhood Sunderland supporter from Northern Ireland is solely responsible.

The three-year contract he has signed at the same time Alex Ferguson stated he would continue as Manchester United also for three years may be a coincidence, but I would not rule out seeing O'Neill at Old Trafford or Anfield sooner rather than later.



Martin O'Neill has worked wonders for Sunderland since taking over.

Sports

Lack of Munster talent a myth



Conor Murray, the cream of Munster talent.

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

MUNSTER can look forward to April after an excellent group stage that saw them mix drama and frustration with entertainment. Home advantage in a tricky tie with Ulster has been secured for the Heineken Cup quarter-final by finishing at the summit of the top eight. Edinburgh face four-time Champions Toulouse at home, Leinster take on Cardiff Blues in Dublin, while Saracens face ASM Clermont Auvergne.

Tony McGahan and Munster can be very pleased with their qualification, considering they never really hit form until the pool six game when they turned it on against Northampton with a brilliant hat-trick of tries from wingman Simon Zebo. There is a raft of emerging stars in the Munster roster, despite the lack of Munster representation at Irish schools level. Currently there is a distinct lack of enthusiasm emanating from the media about Munster's future prospects and the Examiner recently published a feature on the lack of quality coming out of the province.

The Munster fitness team, led by Australian Bryce Cavanagh, are looking at the work of the 'Milan lab' of AC Milan where players are conditioned through science, technology, IT and psychology to play for a longer period than most soccer players could ever

dream of. The challenge is to mix the experience of Paul O'Connell, Ronan O'Gara and Donncha O'Callaghan with the potential of Zebo, Danny Barnes, Conor Murray and Luke O'Dea and create a third European Cup winning team for the province.

Zebo is the one everyone is raving about after his performance against Northampton, but there is also Ian Keatley and Paddy Butler to be integrated into the Heineken Cup set up in time.

In a recent Rabo-Direct Pro 12 game against Edinburgh at Thomond Park, 21 of the 23 players used by Munster were home schooled in the Munster 'A' side under the tutelage of Anthony Foley who has now moved up to train the first teams forwards.

Munster have been living in the shadow of Leinster since 2009 and this year, with the prospect of an all Irish final on the horizon, Munster will be looking to regain their crown as the most powerful province in Ireland.

Should Munster prevail against Ulster they will face the winner from the Edinburgh v Toulouse clash while Leinster will come up against either Saracens or Clermont in the semi-final if they overcome Cardiff.

New era in NHL player suspensions

Garry Irwin

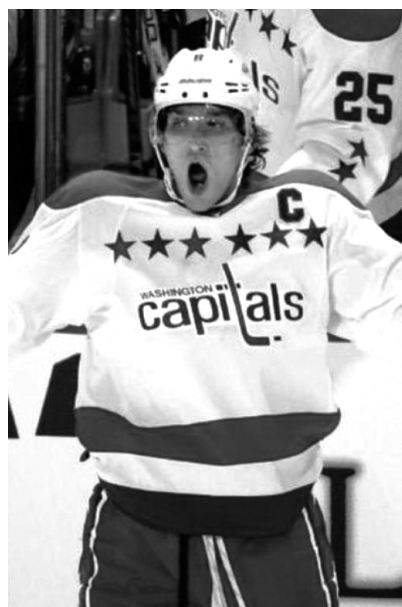
WITH the current 2011/12 Ice Hockey season in full swing, we've already been treated to some classic goals and classic games. Like all sports, it's had its share of upsets and teams going on unbeaten or losing streaks, before the cream rise to the top of the rankings in preparation for the post-season. The Eastern Conference is proving a tight one to call as all the teams are only separated by around 20 points, while looking at the West the gap from top to bottom is over 35 points.

What has changed this season is how the NHL deals with player safety. Brendan Shanahan, the newly installed Senior Vice-President over the Department of Player Safety and its chief disciplinarian, has introduced a new initiative whereby his department will release a video explaining why they have taken the decision to suspend someone. The video shows the incident that provoked the suspension, along an explanation of the rules that are being broken. The culprits' previous record in relation to player safety is also taken into account before the suspension is handed down. Plus a monetary hit is also taken by the player, for example, an 8 game suspension of the 82 game regular season would incur a loss of nearly 10% of that player's salary. And with the huge figures some players are paid, that can add up to a large amount of money.

Shanahan laid out these new, tough, measures only a few weeks into the job. During a pre-season game, Philadelphia Flyers forward Jody Shelley hit Maple Leafs player Darryl Boyce into the boards. He was suspended for the remainder of the pre-season and the first 5 games of the new season. (Search 'Shanahan Suspension' on YouTube to

see that hit along with the explanation of the suspension, plus the many other videos he has had to make since then.) And he is not above handing out tough treatment to some of hockey's star players either. Alex Ovechkin, the star man for the Washington Capitals, was recently handed a 3 game ban after an illegal hit on Penguins defenseman Zbynek Michalek, this hit was missed by the officials on the night. He pulled out of the NHL All-Star game soon after, claiming he didn't feel right playing while the league had suspended him.

Only time will tell if this new drive will increase player safety. But this era of swift and clear transparency will surely decrease player stupidity, and should be an example to other sports.



Alex Ovechkin was banned for three months.

Special Report: A passionate affair (part 2)



Is the LOI a better fan experience than the Premier League?

Andrew Cunneen

WHILE a high definition service is now offered, no picture is truly crystal clear unless you can feel the conditions. No lens can ever suffice once you feel the wind behind your back, giving your team that slight advantage in front of goal, the trepidation both you and the player feel together. In what is such a strong connection, certain areas will be argued, while often mistaken as foolishness, it only points to strong-willed people standing up and fighting their point due to this inexplicable passion they feel.

Perhaps marketing won't work for attracting more people to games, maybe it will. The 2010 Ford FAI Cup Final would suggest it can. Others will argue that perhaps it is all in the heads of those in attendance. On the surface, it's a football being kicked from one end of

a field to the other. To those involved, and those who manage to take it far more seriously, it's affectively a buzz; a drug which can give such a buzz, because of unrivalled passion. Passion needs to be developed, it cannot be instant. The only way to become passionate is to actually get out, and witness it for yourself, not listening to the reports slating this league. While this league may lack the glamour and the publicity of our English cousin, it certainly doesn't lack that die hard attitude from those who travel week in, week out to watch their side.

If someone asks you tomorrow, why do you support your local team? Don't answer. You can't explain it, no matter how hard you try, nobody can be convinced by words with matters such as this. Experience with football cannot

be bought. Point out those floodlights, and walk away. Why do a set of thirty Limerick fans travel to Ballybofey on a Friday evening in the pouring rain in sub-zero temperatures? It's all they know, and all they ever want to know.

Perhaps the most significant point of all is that people support this league because of the bar-stoolers. They see the levels of passion, then realise it's not a passion they can connect with. Being a minority is something to be proud of because, come a Friday evening, the television is switched off and the bus is taken to the ground. The tension builds, and the noise is electrifying. This is their league, and if you don't like it, I don't think those who do, will really mind that much.

Mo thuiscint ar bhéaloidias

Ciarán Darcy

Is féidir leat tuairimí an phobail faoin saol traidisiúnta a fheiceáil i gach gné den bhéaloidis. Is rud an-spéisiúil é seo, dar liom, mar is féidir linn foghlaim faoi nósanna mar an creideamh agus na slite beatha a bhí ann fadó agus tugann sé léargas iontach dúinn ar mheon na ndaoine sna blianta siar. Táim chun plé a dhéanamh ar cúpla scéal chun forbairt a dhéanamh ar an tuairim sin, ach ar dtús tabharfaidh mé mo mhíniú féin ar an mbéaloidis.

Is bailiúcháin de scéalta traidisiúnta ó chuile cheard den tír é an béaloideas, scéalta a scaipeadh ó bhéal sula raibh siad scríofa síos.

Chun tuiscint mhaith a fháil ar an mbéaloidias caithfidh tú féachaint ar na cineálacha scéalta difriúla atá ar fáil mar shampla scéalta iontais, scéalta draíochta, scéalta fantaisíochta nó finscéalta.

Tá na scéalta seo lán le miotaseolaíocht, draíocht siógach, taibhsí agus neacha osnádúrtha chomh maith le stair agus traidisiúin faoi na háiteanna agus na clanna a bhí ina gcónaí ann.

Ba seanchaí nó scéalaí a d'inseodh na scéalta seo don phobal. Bhailíodh muintir an cheantair i dteach amháin chun scéalta a chloisteáil nó uaireanta théadh an seanchaí ó theach go teach ag insint a chuid seanchais i gcomhar bia agus lóistín.

Taispeánann sé seo an t-éileamh a bhí ar an gcineál seo comhluadar ag an am sin. Dhéanfaidh cur síos sna scéalta seo ar ócáidí difriúla ar nós an Nollaig agus Lá 'le Bríde. Ní raibh an béaloideas uathúil don tír seo amháin, is rud idirnáisiúnta é agus tháinig an cuid is mó de scéalta béaloideas na hEorpa ón Ind (The Folktale, S. Thompson, lch 15). Tá dhá rann scéalaíochta ann, an stór dúchasach agus an stór idirnáisiúnta.

Ní fios cé hé údair na scéalta seo mar ní raibh siad scríofa. Ba páirt mhór den tsochaí a bhí ann mar nach raibh rudaí ar nós an teilifís ann, mar sin bhí an scéalaíocht ar cheann de na caithimh aimsire is mó a raibh tóir air thimpeall Éirinn agus na hEorpa.

Sa scéal 'Goid an Bhainne' feiceann muid na piseoga a bhí ag na daoine faoi na 'Daoine Maithe'. Ghoid siad a gcuid bainne uatha agus ón lá sin amach ní raibh siad in ann aon im a dhíol mar chuir na 'Daoine Maithe' mallacht orthu. Bhí díomá ar na feirmeoirí nuair nach raibh siad in ann aon airgid a fháil ar an im. "Níor

fhan greim im' ag Slatara bocht ach níl sé ábalta faic a dhéanamh faoi". Feiceann muid an tábhacht a bhí leis an bhfeirmeoireacht sa bpobal ag an am sin. Is sampla de scéal draíochta é seo agus tá stíl iontach scríbhneoireachta ag baint leis, tá sé simplí, níl sé leadránach.

Is gearscéal béaloideas a chuireann béim ar an gcreideamh agus ar chumhacht Dé é "An leanbh gan béal". Scéal é faoi beirt deirfiúr, duine acu bocht le creideamh láidir agus duine saibhir nach gcuireann an suim céanna sa gcreideamh agus a chuireann sí san airgead. Deirtear sa scéal seo gur cuireadh pionós ar an deirfiúr saibhir nuair a rugadh leanbh di nach raibh béal ar bith air.

Taispeánann an scéal seo an saint a bhí in Éirinn ag an am agus dár leis an seanchaí ní hé an saibhreas an rud is mó sa saol ach an creideamh. Cé go raibh airgead ag an deirfiúr saibhir ní raibh sí in ann aon chabhair a thabhairt don leanbh gan béal.

"Tá saibhreas agus ollmhaitheas agat, a dheirfiúr agus b'fhurasta duit rud a chuir i mbéal do linbh, ach féach níl aon bhéal air chun é thógáil uait". Tá sé scríofa ar bhealach díreach atá éasca le léamh, nach bhfuil focail ró-chasta ann.

Scéal eile a rinne mé staidéar air ná 'An Caitín Geara Glas'. Is sean leagan é den scéal Béarla 'Cinderealla' ach go bhfuil roinnt athruithe atá uathúil don leagan Gaeilge, mar shampla seachas an tsíog tá 'An Caitín'.

Chomh maith leis seo tá téamaí difriúil sa scéal seo, tá sé níos dorcha agus níl an gliondar céanna ann mar gur dó agus loisceadh beirt deirfiúracha i dtine.

Dar liomsa, is sampla é seo den saghas foréigin a bhí mar pháirt den sochaí ag an am, agus is féidir linn comparáid a dhéanamh idir an slí a chonaic an pobal foréigean fadó agus an tslí a fheictear anois é. Tá an finscéal seo scríofa i stíl dhíreach, tá

sé lán le sonraí ó thús go críoch, tá láidreacht na draíochta léirithe ann agus an tábhacht a bhí aige sa saol a bhí acu.

Sa scéal 'Im' faigheann muid léargas an-spéisiúil ar an saol laethúil a bhí ag na daoine fadó. Is saol an-difriúil é ón saol an lae inniu. Bhí an-bhéim curtha ar phiseoga agus ar dhraíocht sa bpobal.

Bhí an pobal an-dáiríre faoin gcreideamh agus faoina traidisiúin. Cuireadh béim mhór ar an talmhaíocht agus bhí an pobal bocht ag an am. Bhraith siad ar a gcuid comharsan i gcomhair iasacht móna le haghaidh na tine, rud nach diúltaíodh riamh. Bhí na daoine an-chineálta lena chéile agus cé go raibh siad bocht, thug siad cúnámh dá chéile go minic.

Is scéal simplí gairid é seo atá lán le eachtraí faoi dhearcadh an phobail ag an am.

I gcrích, d'fhoghlaim mé go leor ó na scéalta béaloideas faoin saol a bhí ann fadó, an dearcadh a bhí ag na daoine maidir le piseoga, an láidreacht a bhí ag an ósnadúrach agus na traidisiúin agus an tábhacht a bhain le cúrsaí talmhaíochta.

Tá an béaloideas an-tábhacht chun tuiscint a fháil ar an tslí a chaith daoine a saol agus an meoin a bhí acu faoin tsochaí ina raibh siad.

Is breá liom an béaloideas agus bhí an-sult ar fad agam ag déanamh an ábhar seo agus tá súil agam go mbeidh mé fós ag léamh scéalta béaloideas sna blianta atá amach romham.



Naomh Vailintín

Lá Vailintín

Tomás Mcmunn

Anois agus Lá Vailintín beagnach buailte orainn arís, ar smaoineadh tú riamh cén fáth go ndéantar ceiliúradh ar an lá sin? Cé hé Vailintín ar aon nós? Deirtear go raibh ar a laghad triúr Naomh a raibh Vailintín mar ainm orthu agus ba mairtírigh a bhí iontu ar fad nuair a bhásaigh siad. Ba sagart Rómánach a bhí sa gcéad ceann a mhair thart ar 270 AD, easpag as Terni san Iodáil a bhí sa dara ceann a bhásaigh sa chéad sin freisin agus níl mórán eolas ann faoi triú ceann ach gur san Afraic a bhí sé. Ach tá muid anseo in Éirinn ag rá gur anseo atá Naomh Vailintín curtha. De réir scéal amháin, tá sé curtha i Séipéal na Cairmilíteach i Sráid Whitefriar i mBaile Átha Cliath. Tá sé ráite go raibh Cairmilíteach dar ainm an tAth. John Spratt ann sa naoú céad déag. Thug sé cuairt ar an Róimh in 1835 agus de bharr a chuid scileanna mar soiscéalaí, thóg an Pápa Gregory XVI an cinneadh bronnantas a thabhairt don Séipéal a raibh an tAth. Spratt lonnaithe ann. Deirtear gur ordaigh sé go dtógfaí taisí Naomh Vailintín ó Reilig Naomh Hippolitus sa Róimh go

Baile Átha Cliath, rud a tharla in 1836. Mar atá a fhios againn ar fad, titeann Lá Vailintín ar an 14ú lá de Feabhra agus is ar an lá speisialta seo a thugann muid cártaí, bláthanna, seacláidí agus bronnantas don te a bhfuil grá againn dó nó di. Seo roinnt fíricí eile faoin lá grámhar seo. Ní fios cén fáth gurb é Vailintín a roghnaíodh mar Naomh an Ghrá ach ceaptar go bhfuil baint aige leis an bhféile págánach Rómánach Lupercalia. I rith an bhféile seo, roghnaigh fir agus mná óga a chéile mar pháirtithe. Cé gurb é an Rós an bláth is traidisiúnta a thabharfar amach ar an lá rómánsach seo, deirtear gurb é an Crócas, a bhláthainn i lár Feabhra, an bláth ar a ghlaítear Bláth Naomh Vailintín. Is am éigin sa naoú céad déag a thosaigh daoine an traidisiúin a bheith ag tabhairt bronnantas agus rudaí beaga dá chéile agus tá sé fásá go hollmhór anois ar fud an domhan. Deirtear go seoltar os cionn billiúin cárta Vailintín gach bliain sna Stáit Aontaithe amháin. (<http://homepage.eircom.net/~seanjmurphy/irhismys/valentine.htm>)

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Lifestyle



Tattoos are no longer just for muscley men who love their mother

What's hot in 2012

Roisin Curran, Beauty Columnist

I BET by now most of you have already forgotten the new you that lasted two weeks on her healthy diet, gym commitment and new style.

I know I have. But in the beauty world, 2012 is bolder and better, with a few makeup trends that are a lot easier than a diet.

Anyone catch the new reality favourite Desperate Scousewives? These girls running around Liverpool, glitter clad with their rollers still in, are responsible for the newest and funniest trend yet, the scouse brow. Thick, square and dark no matter what the hair colour, these girls are adding powerful frames to their faces. I'm not saying that we should all tattoo caterpillars onto our forehead because they do, but thicker and darker brows are bang on trend this season.

If you're too afraid to go bold with your eyebrows, then do it with your eyes. We've moved on from colour blocking to colour popping. Line your eyes with contrasting colours to stand out from the crowd. If you have blue eyes, go for orange eyeliner. For brown, try blue. For green, inject a bit of fiery red. I know that black is the makeup safe house, but for once step out of your comfort zone and see how many eyes are winking back at yours.

But the boldest of them all this year is here to stay for life. Yes, tattoos. Tattoos are no longer just for muscley men who love their mother; they have become decorative, expressive and meaningful for women. Even Topshop has gotten its own tattoo parlour for its fashion-forward customers. And for those who fear needles and commitment and, dare I say it, eventual sagging, there are transferable tattoos available that are just as fabulous. So go on, this year be bold, be brave, and flash your tat.

Is Love in the air?

Leanne Quinn

IT'S the day that all singletons dread and all couples anticipate with baited breath. Or is it? Is Valentine's Day really all it's cracked up to be nowadays?

Have the media taken advantage of the big occasion and made people feel the need to buy their loved ones the most ridiculously expensive gifts? Or does anybody really care?

Valentine's Day is that one day of the year where, if you do have that other half, you get all loved-up together, profess your undying love for each other and even celebrate with a romantic dinner or evening in splashing out on gifts, wine and dinner. Sometimes people get so overcome with all the love in the air that they find V-day the ideal time to propose. But if you don't have the ying to your yang, where does that leave you on V-day?

A bitter night in with all your single friends watching anything but romantic comedies or an excuse for a session in the hope of drowning your single sorrows? The fact is, some truly do see Valentines as the most romantic day of the year whereas others see it as a way of targeting consumers and ridding them of their hard-earned cash. So who's right? Well realistically,



V-Day: Commercial event or most romantic day of the year?

everybody is different. All that matters is that you and your partner are on the same page about it or you could find yourself wound up in single-town by the end of the day! There is no need to be sucked into the media whirlwind of Valentine's Day where the more you spend on your partner amounts to how much you love them. Money shouldn't and doesn't correlate with romance.

If you're single this Valentine's Day, it is not the end of the world. It only lasts for one day, so if you feel lonely and conscious of not having someone to wine and dine you for the day, organise a night in or out with your friends and share your love with them. There's no reason as to why you can't

enjoy the day too. If you are coupled up, simply enjoy the time dedicated to appreciating your loved-one and do something fun together. You don't have to spend an unsightly amount on flowers, chocolates, balloons, teddies etc. Do something different, be creative. Girls, sometimes all it takes is a slip of lingerie to get men to express just how much they love you.

And lads, a girl just wants to know how much she's loved, no matter how hard their exterior may be, so bite the bullet and let them in on how you see them through your eyes.

Neurosis: Know the facts

Ann Styles

NEUROSIS is a term that is widely used today to refer to someone with anxiety issues. Neurosis encompasses six anxiety disorders including panic attacks, social phobia and obsessive, compulsive disorder (OCD).

For you and I, being neurotic can simply mean being over-stressed and over-anxious but for many it is an illness that rules their lives. Any form of neurosis, say the experts, should be treated with care. The first step is recognition. Putting your proverbial head in the sand will not work. If ignored, it can get worse with anxiety symptoms and behaviors increasing if not treated. However, the treatments are myriad and different approaches work for different people so it may be a case of trial and error to begin with.

Freud got one thing right; talking helps. For many, just sharing the load and having someone listen to them and validate them is a vital tool in dealing with anxiety disorders. Counseling or psychotherapy can help those suffering a neurosis to examine the root cause or initial trigger for their illness, thus helping them to change or eradicate said triggers and understand their own psychological make-up that much better. For some, medication, in the form of anti-depressants or anti-anxiety pills is a necessary precursor.

The next step is often a therapy such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). This therapy seeks to address how people think. By replacing negative thoughts with positive ones, small changes can be affected in a person's internal dialogue. This can have a

profound impact in the long term. Self-deprecatory mantras can be eradicated with simple exercises that, with repetition, change an outlook from the glass half empty to a more positive and hopeful glass half full approach.

When it comes to mental health the most important thing to remember is: if you have a problem, talk to someone. Personal or professional, just giving voice to it can pave the way for

taking the necessary steps to tackle the problem. Everyone gets stressed and anxious from time to time.

When it begins to affect your ability to function normally is a sign that help is needed. Every college has a counselor and every local GP has a system for referral so help is never far away. Even talking with friends and family is therapy in itself.



When it comes to mental health the most important thing to remember is: if you have a problem, talk to someone.

Lifestyle

When words hurt

Sophie McDermott

VERBAL abuse is a subject that nobody gives much attention to. Words like idiot or tramp are words in our vocabulary that are used recklessly or off the tongue. When we use these words to friends or strangers, do we think of the person's feelings?

Believe it or not, verbal abuse of any sort is considered bullying, something that many of us wouldn't ever dream of doing. Even if it's to your best friend or your worst enemy, verbal abuse can leave invisible scars on the other person involved.

Verbal abuse isn't restricted to use of particular words; even our tone of voice may render us guilty of being abusive. When we give orders to other people or comment on certain behaviours, it could be seen as an attack on the other person which could result in damaging relationships forever. Verbal abuse could even be more detrimental to a person's well-being than any physical abuse.

While verbal abuse seems difficult to define but easy to commit, you can change your ways! How? It's pretty simple, whenever you feel annoyed or in an 'aggressive' mood, stay calm. There's no need for insults or verbal attacks. Breathe deeply, count to ten and suggest that the other persons' actions may have annoyed you.

This way, termed "non-violent communication" means that no one gets offended and your relationship remains the same. It's all about the

self-control. We all need to let off some steam now again, but only you can control the aftermath.

You don't need to take up yoga or convert to Buddhism to never verbally abuse anyone ever again. You just need to breathe, go for a walk or walk away to prevent any lasting damaging effects on your relationship. While this may seem easier said than done, it'll make you feel better to have walked away then to endure the guilt when you don't.

While verbal abuse may just be a slip of the tongue or a moment of stress, in some cases verbal abuse may lead to the extreme if it is not acknowledged early. There's plenty of help available for those being affected by verbal abuse. Don't suffer in silence.



When you should say it and when you should hold back...



GINGERGIRL'S FOOD UL LOVE...

Helen Keown, Food Columnist

ONE way to make vegetables a little more 'interesting' is to add a little spice. The paste of chilli, ginger and garlic is something of an old reliable and is one that I use as a base for many spice dishes.

Vegetable Madras (Serves 6)

- Sunflower oil
- 1 onion, roughly diced
- 1 red chilli (remove seeds if you don't want the curry too hot)
- 2 thumb sized pieces of ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 4 cloves of peeled garlic
- 1 tablespoon of madras curry
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric
- 1 teaspoon of black onion seeds
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced into 2cm
- 4 tablespoons of ground almonds
- A handful of sultanas
- ½ a cauliflower head, broken into florets
- 1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
- 200g frozen peas
- a handful of fresh coriander, roughly chopped

In a large saucepan, heat two tablespoons of sunflower oil and gently fry the onion for 10-15 minutes. Using a stick blender or processor blitz the chilli, garlic and ginger to a paste. Stir the paste into the onions along with the turmeric, onions seeds, and curry powder.

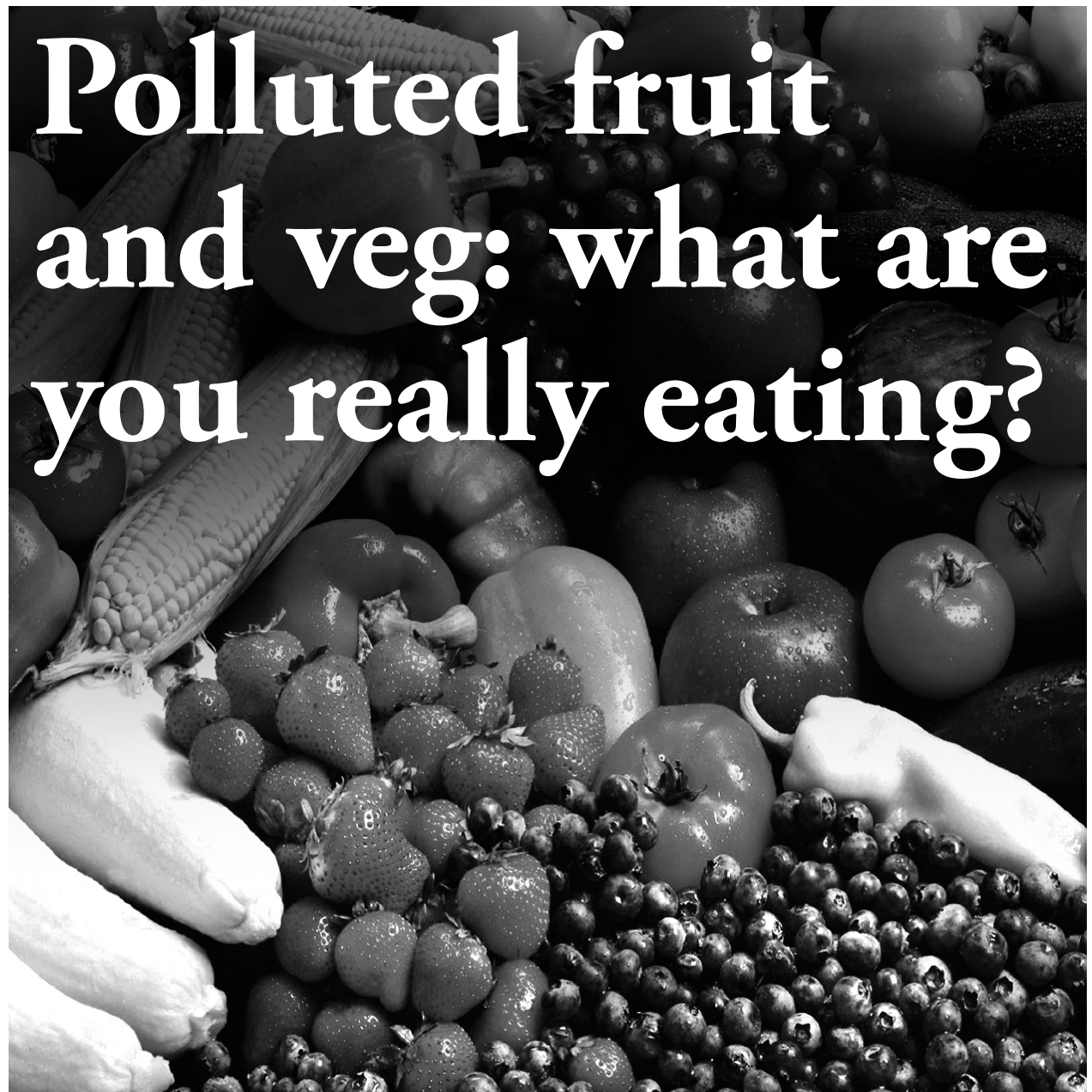
Cook for 5 minutes then add the sweet potato, almonds and season with a generous pinch of salt. Mix well so that everything is coated.

Turn the heat up to medium and add 500ml of water and the sultanas. Allow to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cauliflower florets, the peas and the coconut milk and simmer for a further 15 to 20 minutes with the lid on. Check that the potato and cauliflower are tender then turn off the heat. Stir in the coriander, check the seasoning and serve. I like to serve the curry with some rice, naan bread and some natural yoghurt.

Experiment a little, try using spinach, courgettes, butternut squash, peppers, green beans, aubergine... the list goes on! Helen's produce is available nationwide from independent food emporiums and at UL Farmer's Market where you can also purchase her range of breads and chocolate brownies. Helen also writes a weekly food column for the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Chronicle and is Spin Southwest's resident "foodie". Want some cooking advice and tips? Email helen@gingergirl.ie For a chance to win some delicious gingergirl produce and avail of special offers, follow gingergirl on Twitter ([gingergirlfood](https://twitter.com/gingergirlfood)) or on facebook ([gingergirl](https://www.facebook.com/gingergirl)).



Polluted fruit and veg: what are you really eating?



Do you really know what you're putting into your mouth?

Niamh Masterson

WE are always told that fruit and veg are the best things we can possibly eat.

Especially at this time of the year when programmes like "The Biggest Loser" and "Operation Transformation" are being plastered across our television screens and all we hear from doctors and dieticians is how important fruit and vegetables are. But can we trust all the fruit and veg in the shops to be good for us?

Between 2000 and 2009 the Environmental Working Group tested 53 of the most popular vegetables and the findings were astonishing, with the discovery of pesticides in many of them. As college students, I'm sure

we have all grabbed a quick snack and, for me, it's usually an apple. However, this study has revealed that in a test group of 700 apples, 98% of them had traces of pesticides. Apples, along with peaches, are the most highly affected with pesticides.

Other fruit favourites affected by pesticides include two of my personal favourites: grapes and strawberries! The grape's thin skin makes it easy for pesticides to penetrate and on one sample of grapes imported from the U.S.A 14 different pesticides were detected while 13 different types were detected in a sample of strawberries. Unfortunately, an Irish favourite, the potato, like all vegetables that grow underground, are more easily exposed to pesticides and with their thin skin it's

easy for the pesticides to become wide spread throughout the potato. Redcliffe Salaman wrote in his book *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* that Ireland is the "home of potato culture", but shouldn't we consider what we are really eating?

There are some solutions. Washing and peeling your fruit and veg can help reduce the percentage of pesticides in your food. However traces of pesticides will still exist.

The only way to ensure your fruit and veg are not polluted is by buying organic or locally produced goods. Might as well support the Irish and eat healthily all at the same time.

Fashion

Fashion advertising's celebrity invasion

Dearbhaile Houston

FROM Chanel to Calvin Klein, using celebrities as models is the advertising trend du jour for fashion houses. And it's one that seems to be working. Many successful ad campaigns have been helmed by actors, singers and other famous faces. Celebrities are picked in lieu of models because they are instantly recognisable and can grab attention regardless of what they look like or what they are wearing. They come with their own fame capital without the advertisers having to lift a finger. It's no surprise that the more well-known a celebrity is, the more exposure the designer and their clothes will get beyond the pages of Vogue or Women's Wear Daily. Using celebrities in advertising portrays a certain lifestyle: one of success and affluence and of course, good clothes that people will want to emulate. At least in theory, clothing is slightly more attainable to people than fame or success. Using non-models sometimes offers a break from the young, white and skinny conventions. Both Dolce

and Gabbana and Louis Vuitton have used people such as Madonna, Keith Richards or Catherine Deneuve in their campaigns. Given that the average model usually 'retires' at 25, it's good to see the baby-boomer generation not being left out just because they have a few wrinkles here and there (or in Richards' case, everywhere.)

It is a smart move on the advertiser's part. Male celebrities are being used extensively for fragrance campaigns. Just take a look at James Franco working it for Gucci and Matthew McConaughey for Dolce and Gabbana. Of course, advertisers are thinking along the lines that men will be more inclined to buy fragrance from an actor they know and possibly admire than from a nameless model.

However this comes with a caveat: feature the right celebrity, and at the right time. Miuccia Prada was met with confusion when she picked Lindsay Lohan to star in her ads for her side label, Miu Miu in 2007, just as Lohan's career began its downward

slide. When you hire a celebrity you also hire their well-publicised baggage too. The world of advertising is a mysterious place and there are a lot of other aspects that come into play when making a good campaign regardless of whose face it features. Take the recent ads for Chanel No.5 perfume. Yes, they all star famous actresses but what really works is the story-telling element and cinematography that almost makes them into short films. Using a celebrity cuts out a lot of the hard work of getting attention from the press and from consumers but comes with its own risks at the same time. In the end, most people have the common sense to know that it's what you're selling, not who sells it that matters. At the risk of sounding like your mother, you're not going to buy something that looks like a potato sack just because Blake Lively told you to, are you?



Keira Knightly, the celebrity face of Coco Mademoiselle

A night on the Red Carpet

Marie Enright

WHAT are the Golden Globes, other than another excuse to lavish glory on the rich and famous? Let me tell you, the Golden Globes are so much more than your average awards show. It is an opportunity for fashion houses to put their best foot forward and showcase their designs from upcoming collections.

It's just as fun to pick out your favourite looks as it is to wonder what some celebrities were thinking when they selected their attire for the evening. While fashion is supposed to be daring and bold, sometimes there really is a level of 'too far' in this particular industry. Need I remind you of Lady Gaga's meat dress?

However, this year I was not left disappointed as the fashion was nothing short of spectacular. This year there was the unusual style of 'Bridal Chic' that graced the red carpet. Celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Elle Macpherson and Jessica Biel wowed with their own take on the new bridal inspired style.

Elle Macpherson looked stunning in a Zac Posen corseted gown featuring layers of tulle underskirt which really made her stand out from the crowd. In a fitting sense, bride-to-be Jessica Biel wore a lace gown by Ellie Saab and completed the romantic look with Tiffany & Co. jewellery. The beautiful vintage-style gown featured a high neck and was split to the thigh giving the dress a feminine but bold

edge. One of the most interesting designs was worn by Lea Michele, who donned a stunning, embroidered silver dress by Marchesa. Marchesa has made major leaps in the fashion industry in the last two years, with celebrities fighting to wear the creations. This gown from the Spring/Summer 2012 collection was a far cry from her on-screen character's plain style and so many thought that this was quite a risky choice for the young actress. However, Lea pulled it off with a messy up-do to complete the look. The dress was paired with Jimmy Choo shoes and glittering Lorraine Schwartz jewellery complimented it perfectly. This was definitely the look of the night and cemented the actress in fashion's best dressed category.

The night was nothing short of a fashionista's dream with the constant parade of evening wear on the red carpet. We also saw the return of the classic black dress which could be seen on celebrities including Mila Kunis who looked beautiful in a black Christian Dior gown with a nude underlining.

The Golden Globes definitely did not disappoint in the fashion stakes and once again proved why it is one of the most anticipated events of the year. It is a night where fashion is the star of the show and who wouldn't want to be a part of that?

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Fashion

New kids on the block

Sarah O'Dwyer

THE FANNING sisters are fast becoming fashion icons, despite being no more than 17 and 13 respectively. Both have been in the spotlight since they were very young; with Dakota making her first big screen debut in 2001 at the tender age of seven.

As a child star Dakota appeared in films such as 'War of the Worlds' and 'Charlotte's Web', and more recently she ditched her innocent image playing the evil 'Jane' in 'The Twilight Saga: Eclipse'. Elle, having appeared on both the large and small screen as a child, made her name at nine and since then she has a résumé of nearly two dozen movies, including 'Super 8' and 'We Bought a Zoo', her most recent venture. Dakota and Elle's fashion status has skyrocketed in recent months, and came to height in recent weeks following their

appearance in W magazine. The sisters look stunning on the cover, glowing in similar gold frocks with lace detail. The sophistication and beauty in the photographs within the issue have the girls looking beautiful and elegant far beyond their years. The photographs appear in black and white, with the sisters posing while putting lipstick on each other, hugging and whispering secrets in one another's ears.

Dakota is the February 2012 cover girl for Elle UK, while younger sister Elle is the February 2012 cover girl for Teen Vogue. However, Dakota readily admits that her younger sister has far surpassed her in the fashion stakes. "She's the go-to fashion person in the family," Dakota confesses. "Elle knows every single model, every single collection and every single piece from every single collection. She has a real passion, and it's not at all in a materialistic way. She genuinely appreciates the workmanship and creativity." Elle was also named the new face of the Marc by Marc Jacobs

campaign and as well as all of this she still finds some spare time to sketch clothing designs of her own.

The August 2011 issue of US Vogue featured the Fanning sisters in the magazine's annual age portfolio. The sisters pose together and are interviewed about childhood, life in the spotlight and college, as well as of course fashion. Elle, the youngest of the women featured in the issue, poses alongside her sister, both styled in retro clothes and sporting shiny blonde curls.

The Fanning sisters have both made names for themselves in their own right in the movie industry, however, they are both fast becoming fashion icons across the globe. Not many 13 and 17 year olds can say they've appeared on Elle UK, Vogue and W magazine all within a year. 2011 was most certainly their year and we can only expect their stars will continue to rise in 2012.



Dakota and Elle Fanning appearing in US Vogue

The People's Princess Sex, drugs, and seduction plots

Jane O'Flaherty

ICONIC. Groundbreaking. Poignant. These are just some of the words that can describe Diana, Princess of Wales. From her difficult marriage to her tireless work to promote all kinds of worthy causes, she was bombarded by countless media storms.

However, it was not just her personal life and philanthropic efforts that grabbed headlines. During the 1980's and 1990's, Princess Diana dominated the fashion world, and shaped the styles that we have come to associate with these decades.

Diana's choice of clothes was not always impressive. In fact, when Diana began her relationship with Prince Charles, the royal family was so keen for her to avoid any wardrobe malfunctions that they hired tutors from Vogue to give her 'fashion lessons'.

Ultimately, Diana took some of their advice, but as time moved on she began to choose her own styles. She looked to the burgeoning New Romantic trend, and made it her own, wearing high collared ruffled blouses, floral skirts and ball gowns with puffed sleeves. She almost single-handedly brought about the return of occasion hats, which were previously considered dated. It seemed that 'Shy Di' was making a name for herself in the fashion world, wearing clothes by designers of her choice such as Versace and Chanel.

One of Diana's key fashion moments was her wedding in 1981. Drawing on New Romanticism once again, she chose a puffball meringue wedding dress, with huge puffed sleeves and a 25-foot train. The extravagant dress divided the critics, especially when it prevented the young princess-to-be from getting out of her carriage. However, the fact that it inspired several other flamboyant wedding gowns that year proved what



Diana, Princess of Wales, leading style icon in the 80s and 90s

a trendsetter she was. In the mid to late 1980's, Diana had moved on from fanciful New Romantic styles and had adopted a completely new look. With big hair, glitzy designer dresses and, of course, statement shoulder pads, she influenced the power-dressing craze that would characterize that era. By the 1990's, Diana was a luminary in the world of fashion.

The press persistently chased her for her latest choice of outfit. Both brand labels and high street shops imitated her look. In the later stages of her life, she opted for simple, fitted suits that emphasized her figure, becoming less

reliant on padded clothes. When we think of people who changed fashion, Diana does not stand out as the obvious choice. However, while her choice of clothes might not be considered daring or innovative today, she had a deep and lasting impact on how a generation of women dressed. Diana is a style icon because of her seemingly endless versatility. She knew what suited her, but she wasn't afraid to experiment with what she wore. All the while, she remained elegant and sophisticated, just as a 'people's princess' should.

Marguerite Happe

IN an industry where a job is solely based on your physical appearance, it comes as no surprise to many that such an industry is fraught with sexual scandal. In the past ten years primarily, the modeling world (comprised of photographers, models, and the agencies who book them) has come under scrutiny for numerable ethical discrepancies. It's a fairly common assumption that models and their managers are in a continuous relationship with drug addiction, and the large amounts of young, beautiful models searching for an 'in' makes the exchange of sex a commonplace occurrence.

The depth of this depravity was exposed in the scathing BBC documentary of 1999, in which successful Elite Model Agency owner Gerald Marie was filmed making plans to seduce very young models.

The documentary also shows the pimping of models in Milan and undercover footage of another executive, Xavier Moreau, as he expresses his racist viewpoints. And to wrap it all up, evidence followed that men hired to transport the models from location to location were also forcing drugs upon them (without the knowledge of the modeling agencies). Despite claims to follow that the documentary was rigged, a public statement from Elite chairman John Casablancas apologized for the horrid behavior of many of his staff. Casablancas, while not denying that he has had sexual relations with young girls, remains proud of the fact that he has not knowingly had sex with anyone under the age of sixteen.

In a statement by undercover journalist Donal McIntyre to BBC News Online, he explained that the documentary was in fact "a depressing and very sad portrayal of an industry which for all too long has refused to accept that just

because you put women's clothes on to young girls, it does not transform them into women". Unfortunately, Elite's luck stayed in that general direction for years to follow. In 2009, the chief executive of Elite World was charged with buying and transporting cocaine in Paris. Bertrand Hennet admitted to snorting up to two grams of cocaine per day, although no cocaine was found in his apartment during the search, thus he was released on bail.

While Elite may have been pinpointed in these specific cases, the same issues continue to be found in many modeling agencies throughout the world. Young models, willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve Gisele-like status, find themselves thrown into a world of drug abuse and inappropriate behavior. The only way for these problems to be solved is for the behaviour of the managing and executive directors to change, and that change can't come soon enough.



John Casablancas (left), chairman of Elite Model Agency

Student Speak

STUDENT SPEAK



Last week, ULFM presenters Kevin O'Brien and Jack Deacon took the An Focal camera out on the Courtyard to find out your views on internet piracy.

So guys, what are your views on SOPA and PIPA and internet piracy?

Ali Griffiths - *"I'm pro-piracy because creativity shouldn't have a price"*



Ellen O'Regan
- *"There's no privacy on the internet anyway"*



Martin Kelly - *"Can't really stop it, there's ways of getting around it. Storm in a teacup"*



Rebecca Maher
- *"Fairly ridiculous"*



Jason Franz - *"Can't control the internet"*



James Walsh - *Americans are hell-bent on taking away the last bit of freedom we have"*



Paul O'Byrne - *"SOPA is the Spanish for soap"*



Sean Dunne
- *"I'm a poor student, I need free music"*



Paul Costello
- *"Totally against it, no one had any say in it"*

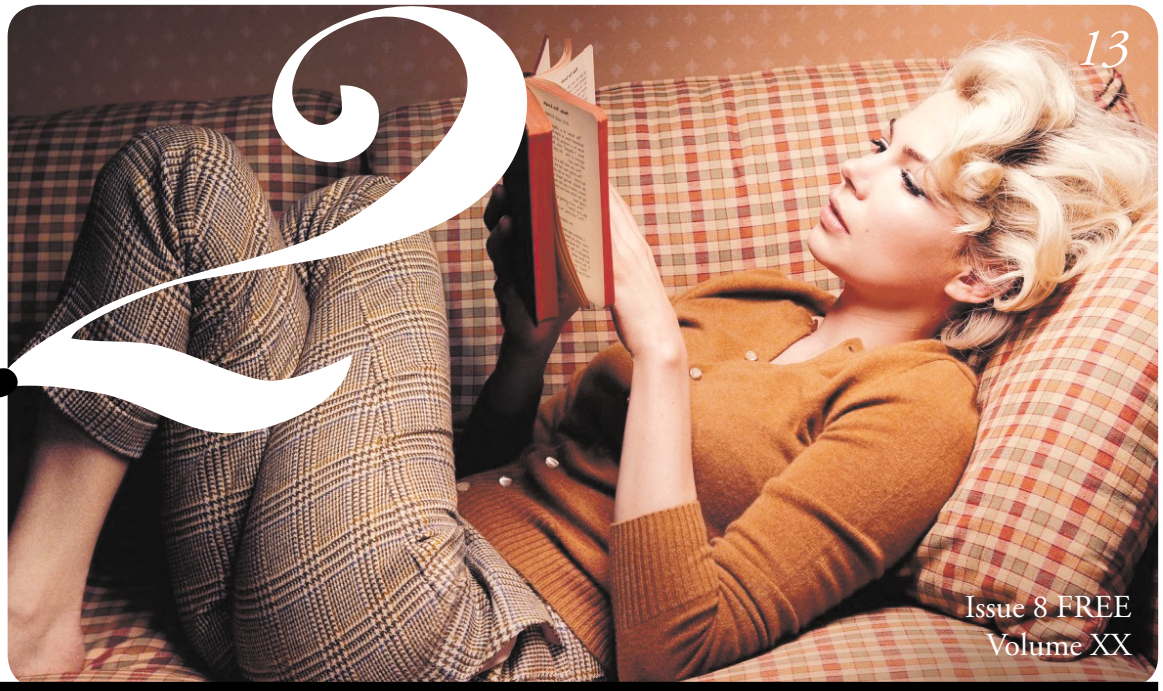


Mary Kirby - *"The next thing from the government to take our minds off everything"*

AN FOCAL

Michelle Williams picks up a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Marilyn Monroe. Turn to page 17 for a run-down on who won what at the recent awards ceremony.

7th February 2012



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Crafting the Conceptual

Josh Lee,
Arts and Entertainment Editor

ART. It's a fickle old trade. They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and nowhere is this truer than the world of art.

Since Marcel Duchamp scribbled his John Hancock on a newly-bought urinal and succeeded in having it displayed at the Society of Independent Artists, the world's perception of art had to be shifted. No longer is the craft the most important aspect of a work; the viewer is now as much a contributor to a piece as the original artist. And so there was conceptual art, or art where the gazer's interpretation of a piece is central to its 'value'.

But is the craft becoming lost in the sometimes pretentious, money-fuelled environment of nose-firmly-in-the-air art auctions and white-washed walls of fashionable art galleries? David Hockney, vanguard of kitsch in the British pop art movement of the 1960s, would seem to think so.

At his recent exhibition at London's Royal Academy, the recent Order of Merit appointee couldn't help but take a swipe at fellow countryman Damien Hirst. "All the works here were made by the artist himself, personally" declares the poster for his new show.

It is well-known Hirst employs assistants to aid him in creating his works, something which Hockney (and many other artists) have in common. However, Hirst admitted to relying entirely on others to create his many spot paintings, brashly admitting he "couldn't be fucking arsed doing it" himself. It's this type of attitude which has left Hockney dismayed. "It's a little insulting to craftsmen," he said in a recent interview. "I used to point out, at art school you can teach the craft; it's the poetry you can't teach. But now they try to teach the poetry and not the craft."

Perhaps Hirst is guilty of scooping out the craft and shrouding it in the conceptual. But the use of assistants most certainly isn't limited to Damien Hirst. Andy Warhol, ringleader of the 1960s pop art movement on the far side of the pond, also used favouring some mass-produced art.

Nor is it a phenomenon unique to contemporary art. It was commonplace for great Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo, da Vinci and Rembrandt to take apprentices under their wings.

While Hirst may laugh off Hockney's jabs, the art community will have a chance to decide for themselves as Hirst's £50m diamond and platinum skull also comes to London in April.



British Artist David Hockney

Arts & Ents



Since his first release in 1973, Waits has constantly been changing the way he approaches his unique music.

Waits, still as bad as ever

Aubrey O'Connell

TOM Waits. By no means a mainstream musician, more of a cult icon. Since his first release in 1973, Waits has constantly been changing the way he approaches his unique music.

He's ranged from romantic melody to mad-hatter hollering. In 'Bad as Me', his first offering in seven years, you'll find a mix of everything he has touched on in the past and then some.

The album bursts into life with "Chicago", and you'll find yourself on a train hurtling into the unknown. Amid honking horns and chugging beats, Wait's assures us that "things will be better in Chicago".

You've reached Chicago and he's dragged you to a suitably seedy bar. A bluesy bass runs through the air and the piano in the corner only serves to add to the atmosphere. "Raised Right Men" begins your night of debauchery. "Get Lost" is an upbeat '50s groove swings us away from the gruff and heavy tone so far.

On "Talking at the same time", Waits produces a velvet-like voice somewhat reminiscent of his very early work.

Melancholy materialises in "Pay Me" as we're met with the normally unseen

negative side to touring with your show. Waits reveals, "They pay me not to come home", as he reminisces on the ins-and-outs of the life of a stage performer.

Like a nervous suspect feeling he's revealed too much of a vulnerable side, Wait's quickly covers his tracks by bursting into life on the title track, horns and whining guitars making a welcome return. Self-assurance returns as he repeatedly exclaims "You're the same kind of bad as me!". And maybe we are, would we be listening otherwise?

If there's anyone out there who has ever had the quite reasonable desire to hear Waits try his hand at some hard rock or metal then "Hell Broke Luce" is probably as close as you're going to get. Waits shows a sense of political awareness, roaring orders over the din of chugging guitars ("Get me another body bag this body bags full!").

At this stage of a musician's career it is often just about churning out something to help top up the dwindling coffers. This definitely isn't the case here. With so many albums just looking to pad out a track list it is refreshing to see a record completely absent of filler. Sure, the Tom we see on stage is just a character, a product of a family man from California, but it's the carefree, devil-may-care attitude that refuses to be influenced that steals hearts.

Obviously the seven year gap in output means a lot of care and attention has gone into this record, yet he would have us think otherwise.

SOPA and PIPA: the hangover

Josh Lee,
Arts and Entertainment Editor

MET with momentous public backlash, SOPA and PIPA have retreated to the shelves of Capitol Hill. The Internet, led by Wikipedia's blackout and Google's more symbolic efforts, roared, and Washington listened. A landmark victory it seems. In the name of protecting copyrights, the Stop Online Privacy Act, and its sister, the Protect Intellectual Property Act, would have, for digital rights advocates the Electronic Frontier Foundation, "slow[ed] down job-creating tech innovations at home and create[d] devastating new tools for silencing legitimate speech all around the web".

The legislation was myopic and reckless. Far from throwing the baby out with the bathwater, Washington Post blogger Alexandria Petri sums it up as "bludgeoning the baby repeatedly with a sledgehammer and then throwing out the whole bathroom."

But SOPA and PIPA are not the root of the problem, they are merely its dangerous symptoms. At home in Ireland, the landmark 2010 ruling the Supreme Court that they could not grant EMI an injunction obliging UPC to introduce a 'three strikes and you're out' policy for illegal downloaders under the current Copyright Act, has now forced the government to introduce a new law aimed at bringing Irish copyright law into tandem with the EU. As a statutory instrument it doesn't require the approval of the Dáil, only a minister to sign it into law.

Minister of State for Research and Innovation Seán Sherlock says the law will "balance the rights of copyright holders and individual internet users". However, worryingly, governments are increasingly capitulating to the whims of publishers like EMI, at the risk of potentially harming the freedom of expression on the net.

That illegal file sharing (no; it is not thievery on the high seas) deprives artist of income there is no question. But it is certainly not the inflated figures the entertainment industry often bandies about. The Internet has backed publishers in a difficult spot. Their traditional means of income (printing books, pressing records) have become outmoded. Digital files cannot continue to be treated as if they were physical items. Adaptation is needed on the part of publishers and other industry players. Forcing the web to adapt and harming it in the process is not the answer.

A large online petition arose to oppose Minister Sherlock's legislation. At the time of writing, the wording is yet to be published and an informed debate on the law in the Oireachtas looks unlikely. The Internet is a fabulous resource and facilitator, and such disregard for the details is ominous.



Sean Sherlock (left) has drawn fierce criticism from some quarters for his legislation

Music Industry Failing: a wan speculation

Fintan Walsh

HAVING been heavily involved in the music industry, as both a strict critic in the UK music media and a companion to hundreds of musicians in more than two hundred major and indie record labels, I find that this notion of a music industry collapsing is uneducated guesswork.

The main problem the layman perceives is the flaw of illegal downloading. Are we so hidebound to the modern times? Did we not ever discuss the major impact that recording radio broadcasts via tape had on the music industry? And even though this act of immorality was unwatched by the regulators, it was an exploit only done by the semi-tech savvy, meaning a small fragment of the music culture was stirring this so-called "problem". Take into consideration the life-cycle of the tape and how ineffective it became during the emergence of the CD in the 1980's. Hence, this minority style of deviance was just a pale and obsolete danger to the industry, theorised by the labels that were afraid of emulous technology. Another influential disruption to hit the scene was the concept of 'burning' CDs. Was this not a source of physical

piracy? Yet, it was bypassed by the public. And when we speak of piracy, let's respond to the contemporary quibbles: the notorious file sharing websites. This is what makes the anger flow through me. Not that I think it is morally incorrect; I believe that this issue is over-sensationalised by the markets, especially when there are strenuous returns entering the pockets of every A&R and executive in this bewildering panorama of an industry.

For example, it is not, as such, the musicians losing out; they receive up to €500K in recoupable expenses and €150K in advances per contract.

Of course, they must pay this off by their incoming royalties, but they will never suffer debt – just the labels. Even so, this conception that the file sharing cult is damaging the face of the industry is entirely oversized and overestimated.

Ireland and Great Britain are the main punters of this free system, where only 35% of 18-45-year-olds are of this category, which is a tiny fragment of a total collective of sixty million citizens. In USA, Asia and Europe, the internet is ferociously monitored by

the mainstream industry, hindering any internet user from doing the dirt. This means, precisely, that out of around two billion people, only a minor fragment of sixty million is this "threat" to the industry. So, when we relate back to the paranoid labels, it is really a case of them stepping into a wet puddle and moving swiftly along. They have prevailing advantages which our predecessors didn't have – iTunes, for example.

For the first time, e-Commerce made record labels double in profits, by avoiding the middleman physical distributor as well as selling millions per day. Did this, in conjunction with file sharing, alter the prosperity of the CD and vinyl business?

Well, when you note that Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy' sold 480,000 copies within its first week, then we may come to our final conclusion. It is engraved in the bones of the industry that there is no technological force or deviance that can prevent the profitability of the music industry. It is an inept postulation.

Arts & Ents



Tommy tones down, but still delivers the laughs

Louise Harrison

TOMMY Tiernan's "Poot" on Wednesday December 14 in University Concert Hall was a hilarious and enjoyable show. He performed to a diverse audience ranging from students in their early twenties to people of retirement age. Having seen "Bovinity" in Vicar Street in 2008, this new show is a different style, a less frantic, calmer, happier looking Tommy with a philosophical element to the comedy. It didn't have that controversial or offensive edge which has become associated with Tommy's comedy over the years, though the warm up act received minimal laughs and afterwards one audience member commented that it was "unnecessarily vulgar and without wit". Tommy's sketches involved stories about his family, his pet dog,

God's creation of the universe, the Irish economy, his illness which he says borders neurosis and psychosis ("neurosis bad for me; psychosis bad for you"). It was a really enjoyable, comfortable laugh, which would appeal to a wider audience, unlike "Bovinity" when you were laughing at something that you knew you shouldn't. His talented storytelling technique while expressing himself using his whole body like a dancer or gymnast hasn't changed. Two props were placed on the stage at the beginning of the performance, a red balloon and a bubble machine and the audiences' curiosity was eventually satisfied when they were used in turn as part of a sketch and not just for aesthetics. Tommy joked that even though his tickets were the most expensive of the shows in the University of Limerick programme,

he would be selling and signing his DVD's after the show in the reception area. Not out of greed but a pure need to make a living. Ten minutes after the show Tommy arrived to a long queue of fans excitedly awaiting his arrival.

At the top of the queue was a severely disabled man in a wheelchair who also had a ventilator. Accompanied by three ladies who I presumed were family members. Tommy walked straight over and shook his fans hand and then listened intently and in a relaxed manner to the family who spoke to him with obvious excitement. All the time his fan stared up into Tommy's face smiling. It was a very touching scene as Tommy posed for a photograph to the delight of his fan and his family. As they walked away I heard one of the ladies say: "Well that was fantastic".

Dropping DRM: the way forward?

Josh Lee,
Arts and Entertainment Editor

THE consumer can't be trusted, and restricting their use of products they've paid for is the only way to combat their insolence. Or so digital rights management (DRM) tells us.

DRM is a technology that attempts to limit the ways in which you can use media (as well as software and hardware) you've purchased.

With their new iBook Author software, Apple's has taken a different spin on DRM, limiting their customers by way of an End User License

Agreement (EULA) that stipulates works created with iBook can only be sold through Apple (books to be given away for free are exempt) and they reserve a right to refuse to sell ebooks created with the software, with no obligation to compensate the author. Some examples of traditional methods of DRM on music, books and games include Valve's Steam software, Barnes & Noble's Nook e-book reader and, more infamously, Sony BGM's ill-fated 2005 implementation of DRM on some of their CDs, which installed a rootkit virus on PCs unbeknownst to their users. Needless to say, a flurry of lawsuits followed.

So it must come as a shock to DRM proponents when last December American comedian Louie C.K. racked up \$1m in just 12 days by selling a live video of his stand-up show "Live at the Beacon Theater".

Personally forking up the production cost and forgoing the usual marketing costs, Louie priced the digital download at \$5 and told customers to do whatever they want with the file (including copying it and sharing it) once they had downloaded it. In many ways, Louie C.K.'s maverick approach

mirrors the release of Radiohead's 2007 album 'In Rainbows', which was offered as a digital download at a user-determined price.

Reportedly, this liberating move was also a success, with the majority of customers opting to pay retail price, or thereabouts. The question must be asked then. If DRM is, apparently, restrictive for no positive reason (and the Electronic Frontier Foundation maintains there's no evidence to suggest it is) then why propagate the practice? Novelty may play a part in the both C.K.'s and Radiohead's success, but they're indications of the positives that can follow if the customer is treated with respect.



Digital media without the DRM: Louie C.K. demonstrates how it's done



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Film

Valentine's is almost upon us, whether we're ready or not

Keira Maher

SINCE the time of Shakespeare to the present day, romance dramas have been very popular with the audience. From "Romeo and Juliet" to "P.S I love you" not much has changed. But the best love films seem to fill our hearts with a deep desire to share that romantic idea of a soulful connection with that one special person. We all watch sloppy love films; although at the best of times do not wish to admit it. In truth, we need these films to make ourselves feel alive and assured that there's a love that conquers all.

There is no doubt that Casablanca is arguably Hollywood's best love film. This captive movie of wartime romance has won many awards and was directed by the successful Michael Curtiz. Henry Bogart, Ingrid Bergman and Paul Henreid play the main characters of this

heart-breaking love triangle. The story of political and romantic espionage is set against the backdrop of the wartime conflict between democracy and totalitarianism. A bittersweet love film, there is no wonder that it rates highly in the best movies year in and year out.

Casablanca, released in 1942, leads the way in the love drama and is often quoted as "The Best Romantic" film of all time. Many clips and reference have been made to the film, one of those being "When Harry met Sally". This rom-com directed by Rob Reiner defines most clearly just what fate is. When Harry meets Sally on a car journey to New York City who knew they would meet again. But five years on it is destined that they should in a New York City airport. Harry suggests that they should keep in contact but

Sally reminds him of their once thought out theory that men and women cannot stay friends without an attraction. They do meet again, however, and true love prevails.

Apart for the awfulness of Gerard Butler's accent, "P.S I Love you" is one of the greatest love stories in recent years. A film based on the book "P.S I Love you" By Celica Ahearn is up there with the greats. It is a story that shows that love lives on forever even beyond the grave. Whether you're watching an Audrey Hepburn classic, or a more recent attempt at telling the 'love story', there's nothing that will get you in the mood for valentines quite like a good movie!



There is no doubt that Casablanca is arguably Hollywood's best love film

The Sitter

Dhonnchadh Tiernan

MEET Noah, twenty-something, unemployed, unmotivated, expert cunnilinguist, and babysitter. The Sitter, aka the latest entry in the "Jonah Hill in a Pickle" genre of movie-making, is an expectedly sordid affair.

The pickle this time around is comprised of angry gay drug-dealers, drug-addicted gay children, pyromaniac Latin-American children, daddy issues and the most blatant racial stereotyping this side of the Friday Trilog.

Hill in a pickle films (henceforth known as HIPs) have been on a downward spiral for some time. HIPs, as a genre, began with the excellent Superbad, relegated itself with the mediocre Get Him to the Greek, suffered brief dementia in the form of Cyrus and has now given messy birth to the sprog that may kill it with The Sitter, a film more muddled than Meryl Streep's character in The Iron Lady.

The Sitter has many problems but as a comedy it's appropriate to start with the jokes, which aren't funny.

The feeling in the theatre as I sat to watch this exercise in amateurism was akin only to that of a poor stand-up gig when a comedian with no talent tells jokes only he would think are funny. I've been to that stand-up gig. Hell, I've performed that stand-up gig.

The writer should be made to sit through a few public screening of this so he'll think twice before his next excursion into comedy. Hill does his best with poor material and as such the humour highlights are his semi-improvisations, a fart joke and an 'expensive cocaine goes everywhere' gag, but giving credit for these is akin to heaping praise on a bad band for playing a Beatles song. The Sitter

takes the blueprints of the classic John Hughes 1980's teen comedies and spray-paints f-bombs all over the charming, witty parts. The kids in this film are not to blame but were it not for their presence this might pass as a parable for what happens to Seth from Superbad when he doesn't learn from the events of the film. Instead we are subjected to three miniature 'lessons' from Noah at different points to repair the chips on the children's shoulders,

one of which truly boggles the mind (really, preaching gay rights in THIS movie?). Apart from the above mentioned half-humours and a decent old-skool hip-hop soundtrack (see "Just a Friend" by Biz Markie, end credits), there's hardly anything worth remembering here, or even feasibly memorable at that. See the latest HIP or see it not, you'll feel much the same either way.



Need a Sitter?

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Another of those Jonah Hill in a pickle films

Netflix in Ireland

Anthony O' Brien

NETFLIX, the streaming TV and Film subscription service, has finally launched in Ireland this year.

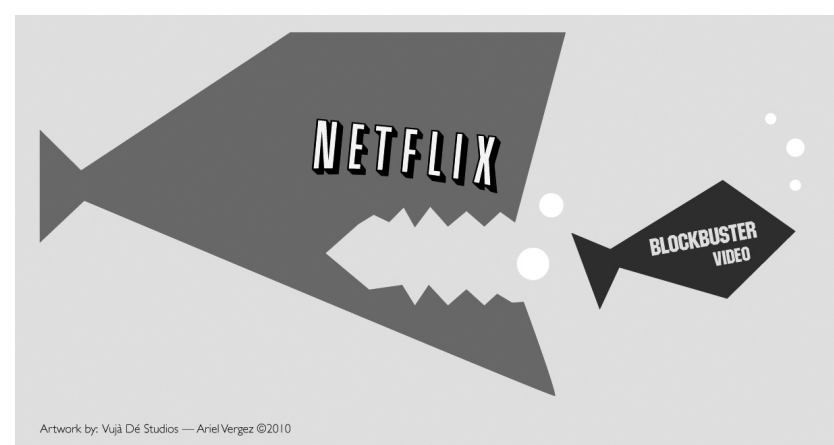
Having been hopeful for it to come here for some time, I'm pleased to report that while the catalogue doesn't have everything the US catalogue has yet, there's more than enough good stuff buried away to be worth the €7 a month fee, and the first month is a free trial if you aren't convinced.

Piracy is big in this country, no doubt about it. I'd be a hypocrite to denounce it, although for the longest time I tried to avoid it, as buying DVDs became too expensive and impractical. But I think this has an inexpensive convenience factor that you'll feel is worth it, and the service can only improve if it gets more subscribers.

New titles have been added since launch, but rather sporadically. Still, the content there should last you a few months. The menu design is very plain, and while the recommendations system

is good, it still misses some things you'd like to see: I'd recommend a thorough search. Performance wise, it's fantastic: streaming goes to very high quality on many titles, and adapts to inconsistent speeds as it plays without many buffer interruptions. You can access Netflix from your computer's internet browser, or on your iPhone or Android, or your Wii, with apps for PS3, Xbox 360 and 3DS coming out.

I heartily recommend giving Netflix a free month's tryout. To give some starting recommendations, I'd recommend Old Boy, Cinderella, Fargo and Sling Blade on the films front if you haven't seen them before. On the TV side Breaking Bad should be your first stop if you haven't seen it already, than try out Firefly, Jericho and Weeds. Comedy-wise, there's Drawn Together, the US Office, various Channel 4 shows and a selection of South Park episodes, just for starters. If you can tolerate watching a kids show, Avatar: The Last Airbender is considered a classic (and if you have a nostalgic longing for the Nickelodeon shows of your childhood, well, you'll be delighted.)



Artwork by: Vuja Dé Studios — Ariel Vergez ©2010

Film

Eastwood and DiCaprio bring history to life

"J. Edgar is based on the life of one of the most powerful, controversial and complex characters in American history."

James Bradshaw

TEARS were shed when Clint Eastwood announced that his acting days were over, but in this fascinating portrait of the former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, the octogenarian legend shows that he still has a major contribution to make to the world of cinema.

'J. Edgar' is based on the life of one of the most powerful, controversial and complex characters in American history; the man who led America's foremost criminal investigative organisations for almost five decades. A man whose over-zealous pursuit of domestic tranquillity led him to disregard the civil liberties of anyone deemed a threat or anyone who stood in his way. Ultimately, it chronicles a man who eagerly sought out the darkest secrets of his political masters while jealously guarding his own. Leonardo DiCaprio turns in a virtuoso performance that

scans Hoover's whole professional life, from his time working as a 24-year-old field agent in the aftermath of WW1 to his death aged 77 in 1972. Hoover was famous for his secretive nature and introverted personality, but this film provides a detailed account of Hoover the man, the challenges he faced and above all the people who shaped him, from his overbearing mother (Judi Dench), to his loyal secretary (Naomi Watts) and on to the person who was closer to J. Edgar than any man or woman, his long-time FBI colleague and confidante, Clyde Tolson (ably

played by rising star Armie Hammer).

The relationship between the two lifelong bachelors has been the subject of an enormous amount of speculation and controversy. Many have claimed that Hoover was a closet homosexual, though this has been angrily refuted by some of his supporters who see this as a calculated smear. Stranger still are the allegations of his alleged cross-dressing, a practice that didn't sit well with his public image as an ultra-conservative. Eastwood handles these aspects of Hoover's life with a subtlety sadly lacking from many of

his colleagues, and keeps the focus on Hoover, his struggles against organised crime, Communist infiltrators and the myriad of other potential threats to America that were the focus of Hoover's obsessive attention.

Sleek and stylish, but never shallow, 'J. Edgar' mixes the political intrigue of the mid-20th century with the personal repression and innermost turmoil of a truly remarkable character. It's well worth taking the time to watch.

A life, a death, and a collection of patterned shirts: Dearbhaile Houston reviews *The Descendants*

Dearbhaile Houston

THE *Descendants* has been garnering good reviews and even better award nominations since its release in America last November. George Clooney, taking a break from his usual roles plays Hawaiian business man Matt King, reeling from the news that his wife is in a coma after a boating accident. When she is taken off life support, Matt rounds up his two daughters and sets off to tell their family and friends what is about to happen. Looking at the trailers for *The Descendants*, you would think that it's a laid back indie-comedy featuring George Clooney and his collection of patterned shirts. But the film is a lot darker than that.

As the story progresses, we see the cracks in the family's life; of the pains and indiscretions caused by both sides. Matt is largely absent in his daughter's lives, calling himself the "back-up parent." His eldest, Alex, is in boarding school, a punishment for her teenage rebellion in drugs and alcohol. Her

younger sister, Scottie, is a smart-mouth ten year old. But they are all brought together when Matt finds out that Elizabeth was having an affair. Clooney portrays a man who is lost in a deluge of emotions that come with grief. It's a lovely and honest portrayal of loss, showing the anger and sadness and hope, but it is not a comedy. I spent more time snuffling into a kleenex than I did laughing. The seldom funny moments were not exactly side-splitters and mostly came from Alex's goofy friend Sid. It's not that they seemed misplaced in the film but they were a touch uncomfortable. Yet they added nicely to the realism, where emotional truth is never substituted for a laugh and the characters aren't talking like they have Diablo Cody or Aaron Sorkin living in their heads.

The naturalistic acting helps the film from becoming a schmaltz-fest. Shailene Woodley's Golden Globe nomination was well deserved and the

film brings in a strong supporting cast to carry it along. The side story to this family drama is Matt selling a large amount of inherited land along with his cousins. This ties in well with the rest of the story, bringing the affair plot line into full circle. It also reinforces the ideas of family and heritage that director Alexander Payne is trying to bring to the audiences attention. No matter what genre it fits into, *The Descendants* is a well made and enjoyable film and is sure to be lauded even more as the award season goes on.



The naturalistic acting helps the film from becoming a schmaltz-fest

Awards season has arrived!

John Markham

THE 69th Golden Globes was another run-of-the-mill awards ceremony and depending on your tolerance levels for the smugness of Ricky Gervais, predictable winners and Kelly Osbourne talking 'fashion', you may have been in for a long night.

The biggest winner on the night was Alexander Payne's *The Descendants*, which picked up two of the main drama awards, with 'Best Motion Picture - Drama' and 'Best Actor' for George Clooney, who beat Michael Fassbender's perhaps not-so-award friendly performance as a troubled sex-addict in Steve McQueen's *Shame*. Unsurprisingly, the excellent Meryl Streep won for her role as Margaret Thatcher in *The Iron Lady* while Martin Scorsese won 'Best Director' for his work on *Hugo*. Legendary Woody Allen took home 'Best Screenplay' for his writing on *Midnight in Paris*. Veteran 82 year-old Christopher Plummer won 'Best Supporting Actor' for his role in *Beginners*, while Octavia Spencer won 'Best Supporting Actress' for her role in race-drama *The Help*.

The other big winner on the night was Michel Hazanavicius's critically acclaimed black-and-white silent film *The Artist*, which also won multiple awards, including 'Best Film - Musical

or Comedy' and 'Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy' for Jean Dujardin, beating Brendan Gleeson's performance in *The Guard* on the way. For her performance as Marilyn Monroe in *My Week with Marilyn*, Michelle Williams won 'Best Actress in a Musical or Comedy'. Screen icon Morgan Freeman won a Lifetime Achievement Award and his acceptance speech was without doubt the most poignant and hilarious highlight of the show.

The biggest surprises of the night came in the television categories, with Showtime's *Homeland*, beating HBO heavyweights *Boardwalk Empire* and *Game of Thrones* to 'Best Television Drama', while in the 'Best Performance in a Television Series - Drama', provided another shock, with Kelsey Grammer's performance in little seen Starz show *Boss* beating fan favourites *Boardwalk Empire*'s Steve Buscemi and *Breaking Bad*'s Bryan Cranston performances to the award. In other television categories, the ever-popular *Modern Family* won 'Best Series: Music or Comedy' and the less said about Matt LeBlanc's win for 'Best Performance in a Television Series Comedy', the better. He was playing himself. Next is the big one, the Oscars, so watch this space!

Union

THE
PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN

Derek Daly,
President

Derek Daly, President

It's been a tough few weeks, really long. As I write this we're planning an Emergency General Meeting. The rationale will have been presented at the meeting, but a lot of other things have also happened. As I'm here to represent you, I don't feel it's in your best interests to be distracted by the actions of others which take my focus from ensuring ULSU is here for you in the long-run. You'll have seen the article on the front page in Week 1; you'll have discussed it with us at EGM. The focus now shifts to elections for the 2012/13 academic year. First up it's the 28 Department Councillors and the 28 Department reps. Nominations open Monday Week 4 and close Friday Week 4. Contact Róisín on roisin.monaghan@ul.ie for a job description and more info on how to apply. It is vitally important that students take an active interest in how the University runs. It is here primarily for your education, so get involved, and give it a go!

For more info on the Common Purpose Leadership Development Programme kindly sponsored by Ulster Bank (plug) email me on the address below.

Hope you're enjoying the start of semester!

As always I'm on SUPresident@ul.ie or on twitter @ah_lads

Slán

Derek Daly
President
061 202326 | 086 043 5300
supresident@ul.ie

WELFARE
WATCH

Tara Feeney,
Welfare Officer

Howdy Everyone,

Hope you are all doing well and surviving the first few weeks back! The last few weeks in the Union have been interesting to say the least but that's enough about that.

I am currently working on getting students feedback on the Alcohol Policy! The Alcohol Working group are eager to hear what students think of the current policy.

Hopefully by now you have got the survey. In my opinion the policy is outdated. It's time for a change! If you have an opinion on this please send them to Tara.Feeney@ul.ie.

Last and most importantly, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to the friends and family of Tony Crowley. I can't begin to imagine how difficult this time must be, if there is anything I can help with please let me know.

To the classmates and close friends of Tony, you are not alone. UL offers a wide range of support services including counselling and the chaplaincy.

Drop into me if you want more information or even if you just need someone to talk to. That's all for now, See you around campus,

Toodles,

Tara Feeney
DP/Welfare
061 202519 | 086 043 5301

ENLIVENING
EDUCATION

Aoife Kenny,
Education Officer

Hello everyone,

I would first like to express my deepest sympathy to the friends and family of Tony Crowley. It was a loss of a life so young and my thoughts are with you all. It's week 3 which means Ball Season is about to kick off with the KBS Ball on Thursday and the PSU Ball on Friday. If you haven't got a ticket yet, get yourself down to SU reception and hope there is still some left. Every year ball season promises to be good craic and after all, it's an excuse to get all dolled up for a night!

On the Education front, last week we had Class Rep Council on Tuesday and on Friday I sent the findings from the nursing reps working group that is contributing to the review of the nursing programme.

Also, I'm chairing the constitution working group, we had the second meeting last Thursday and it's shaping up well. If anyone wants to get involved in it call into the office or give me a shout.

Any problems call into me or drop me an email and remember, this semester can make or break the QCA, so whatever year you're in an extra hour study now will mean the world in Week 13.

Aoiffs

Aoife Kenny
VP/Education
061 203491 | 086 043 5302

CAMPAIGNS
BRIEF

Paddy Rockett,
Campaigns and Services Officer

Hi all,

At this stage you will have voted in the EGM. Well done to all those who turned up. In terms of what is happening this week. Today (tuesday) we have the international food fair in the Stables as part of our International week with the international society.

There are posters all over the campus with the week's listings. Make sure you get involved and meet a hell of a lot of new friends. Chances are in the future you might need a place to crash somewhere foreign. Next week is shag Week and the second of our Recession Sessions. This one being aptly named the 'Inter-course party' as we are shipping in students from Mary I to tear UL a new one and let ye mingle. Be sure to keep an eye out for the activity in the courtyard and grab yourself some free goodie packs. The UL sperm will be doing the rounds make sure you grab some free condoms. This week is also the business ball hope ye have a rocking time as it was a serious night last year lets hope it's the same again. We are gradually hitting towards road safety week and I must admit this is going to be one of my biggest campaigns which I'm looking forward to. I am also looking for volunteers to get involved in different (and somewhat mental) areas of road safety and student wellbeing week. Hope all is going well with yourselves.

Charity week is soon! YURT!

Paddy Rockett
VP/Campaigns and Services
061 213542 | 086 0435303
sucso@ul.ie

WORDS
FROM THE
PSU

Sarah Jane Hennelly,
PSU President

Hello everyone!

I hope I find you well and that you've settled back in nicely! Just a reminder that applications for Childcare Bursaries open from Week 2 of this semester until the Friday of Week 4. Application forms are available from SU Reception or my office. Also, there is a Financial Aid fund available from the PSU for Postgrad Students who are experiencing financial hardship. This is an interest free loan to be repaid by Graduation. If you would like to know any more information please send me an email or drop into my office.

PSU Presidential Elections will be taking place Week 5 of this semester! Nominations open Wednesday 8th February, close Wednesday Feb 15th and Election Day is Wednesday the 22nd of February! This is a full-time paid position with invaluable experience in Leadership, teamwork, representation and much, much more.

I could not recommend it more. If you would like any more information please send me an email at sarah.jane.hennelly@ul.ie. Nomination forms available from my office or SU Reception from the 8th.

Finally, don't forget the biggest night of the Postgrad social calendar: the PSU Swing Ball is on Friday Feb 10th, end of week 5 in Thomond Park stadium with live music from Funk Junkies. It will be some night, in Aid of our neighbours in Milford Hospice, let's get jivin'!

Sarah Jane Hennelly
PSU President
061 203473 | 086 043 5305

Cellar Door Literary Magazine discontinued

Colm Fitzgerald, Deputy Editor

CELLAR Door Magazine, which was founded by the incumbent Communications Officer Kelly O'Brien, has been discontinued.

The 32 page full colour publication was intended to provide a platform for students to have literary prose and poetry published.

Issue 1 was published in Week 8 of Semester 1, with a small reception held in the Millstream Common Room, with some writers reading excerpts of their work.

An application was made to the Ulster Bank enablement fund for future funding for the magazine, however this application was not furthered. Subsequently, the decision was made to discontinue the magazine as a result of lack of funds.

The enablement fund did however provide funding for ULFM.

The magazine was printed by Impression Print and Design Ltd, who also print An Focal, while it was designed by freelance graphic designer Cassandra Fanara, who provides graphic design services for An Focal.

The magazine was distributed to locations off campus where it was received with much acclaim.

ULSU Communications Officer, Kelly O'Brien said "Despite the financial situation I'm sorry to see it go".

External funding is still being sought after. If individuals have any information or suggestions on such they should contact sucso@ul.ie



The front cover of Cellar Door

The Pursuit of Happiness

Dr Declan Aherne, the head of the UL counselling service for the last 25 year, writes about how positive thinking can help us through difficult times.

If I hear one more news bite that says “it was a bad day on the stock exchange today” or “economic recovery took a set-back”, I’ll crack up. I mean how many bad days can the economy take? How much worse can it get – we’re still here, so let’s not despair.

Previous generations have survived holocausts and world wars: we will survive this period also, of that we can be certain. However, the doom and gloom has a knock on effect on our mental health. Waiting lists have grown at all our mental health services, including the student counselling services at our three third level colleges in Limerick. We may assume that we are in a crisis. Interestingly, when written in Chinese, the written word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters.

One represents danger, and the other opportunity. This article is intended as an encouragement to take this opportunity. There are a number of tasks we can do to move us into a healthier place.

1. Don’t confuse “need” with “want”.

It is unequivocal: money does not buy happiness. One of my earliest learning’s in psychology was Herzberg’s two factor theory which, in a nutshell, states that the lack of money brings dissatisfaction but the acquisition of money doesn’t bring happiness.

A basic income is essential for us all. The accumulations of millions is unnecessary and not something to be aspired to or idealised as the answer to or woes. Universities advertising that their graduates earn higher salaries than graduates or other universities are only contributing to the illusion.

We can be persuaded by commercial interests that we want more money and material possessions of all sorts.

‘Want’ is what the ego craves, in the belief that it is necessary for its survival. In ways, this is true.

But when we discover that building ego is not necessary for the survival of the self – the core of your being – we can suddenly begin to understand how we have been tricked or deceived. We have been tricked into confusing ‘need’

with ‘want’. It’s not the illusion will go away, but now we can see it for what it is.

2. Deal with our anger.

Is this a time for positivity, or are you still too angry? Or perhaps you are not angry enough yet to take action. If you are angry, don’t sit on it, do something constructive with it or it will fester.

Your anger is the energy you will require to bring about change, so don’t dismiss it or turn it in on yourself.

We need to acknowledge our anger and our sadness at our economic plight in appropriate measure and without wallowing in either. We need to pursue our entitlements, we do have demands to make of decision makers – and we need to communicate these clearly and effectively.

We need to show we have learnt something from past mistakes and take responsibility for our contribution, large or small, in creating this problem. But do not wait around for the government, the IMF and the EU to make you happy again. A word of caution, however, as anger can be a projection of our own shame. We all have somewhat complicit in this shambles. Let’s be accepting of our own collusion and move on.

3. Maintaining dignity, self-respect and self-worth.

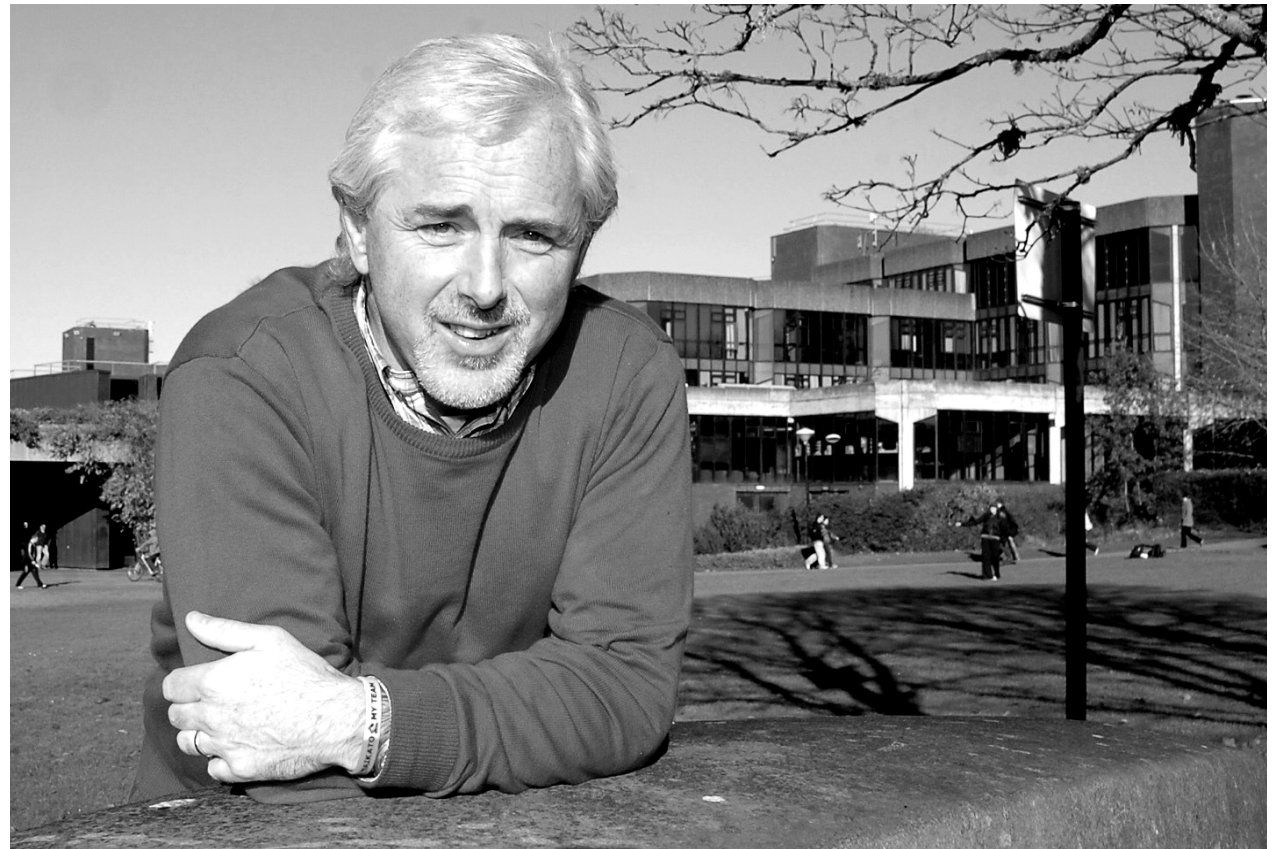
When things go wrong, our pride can be the first to suffer. Pride, however, is a servant of the ego and will always be vulnerable as long as we put ego at the head of the table. Your true self requires dignity and respect above pride and it is that we must ensure is protected in times of adversity.

That you can hold your head high and feel good who you are is what is important. You can only be responsible for what is within your own control. Only you can put your hand on your heart and remind yourself that you have done your best with the hand you have been dealt. Do not allow yourself to be defined by economic success but by values such as integrity, commitment and determination. We know that it is these factors rather than wealth that bring psychological well-being.

4. Be Inspired.

Be inspired by the stories of survivors who, despite adversity, even in the good times, have pulled through.

The common belief might be that the young students attending the University of Limerick have no worries, that they are privileged. On the contrary, on a daily basis I have been privileged to



Declan Aherne, head of the UL counselling service.

bear witness to the incredible resilience and determination shown by students in the face of adversity, to pursue their dream. Limerick is full of inspirational stories, ordinary people who have achieved amazing things against all the odds. I am referring to those with significant disabilities or lack of supports, who have been dealt a poor hand in life, but have made the most of it; people who have come against obstacles and overcome them. A 63-year-old man who recently chalked up his 200th marathon surely inspires us all on to greater things. These are the inspirational people that teach us that it is ok to dream the dream, and that determination and commitment, you can realise your ambitions. So the message is one of hope not hopelessness. Seek out these people in your own community; you probably pass them by every day.

5. Be Positive.

The election of your president is a moment for us to rejoice in and be positive about ourselves as a nation. Although he does not ignore issues of finance and industry he is not a person who puts wealth above social equality, dignity and respect.

We can celebrate that we have spoken; we have sent a clear statement of our values when we elect a person of this calibre to the highest position in the land. Politicians, please take note.

Positive psychology, the study of positive emotions and what makes people flourish, provides us with necessary tools to pick ourselves up off the ground and take charge of our lives again. We can make a new beginning. Research confirms that happiness can be increased in three basic ways: getting more pleasure out of life, becoming more engaged in what you do and finding ways to make your life feel more meaningful – none of which necessarily require any financial resource. Here are some of the typical challenges set out by positive psychologists in this regard.

When we enhance pleasure by...

- Savouring our experiences.
- Sharing with others in our lives and being absorbed in what we are doing.
- Starting a pleasure journal in which three good things (big or small) that happened during the day are written – self-congratulations for what we have accomplished.

We can enhance engagement by...

- Nurturing relationships.
- Identifying and using strengths.
- Investing heavily in our close relationships. We know that partnership is robustly

related to happiness. A key aspect to successful living is healthy and strong relationships.

We can find meaning by...

- Thanking a mentor: writing and presenting a letter of gratitude to someone you have never thanked.
- Learning to forgive a transgression.
- Weighing up your life and your priorities and values.
- Performing small acts of kindness.
- Finding a connection to a larger purpose – perhaps we have thrown the baby of spirituality with the bathwater of formal religion.
- Giving the gift of time by doing something that requires a fair amount of time and whose creation calls on your strength.

We need to be careful and balances in our approach to positivity. Positivity can only be useful once it is grounded in the reality of our lives.

This reality is reflected in the first Buddhist principle, which states that suffering is inevitable. Perhaps contentment, fulfilment and acceptance are more reflective of the state we aspire to. Continuous and uninterrupted happiness is not a possibility, and if it were it would be boring because we can only know happiness in comparison to its opposite.

Support Services

If you are UL student and are going through a difficult time, you are not alone. UL offers a wide range of supports services:

Tara Feeney is your Welfare Officer, drop into her during the week in the Students Union or send her a mail at tara.feeney@ul.ie.

She deals with any non-academic issues you may face throughout college.

The Counselling Service is available to students to assist them on their progress through University life, with all of its incumbent stresses and strains. UL Counselling run a drop in service from 11am to 12pm and 3pm to 4pm Monday to Friday during term time. All the staff are extremely helpful and are there for you.

The chaplaincy is another brilliant service at UL. They offer a non-judgemental listening ear and supportive presence to students and staff in times of rejoicing and in

times of need. They promote an open and caring ethos where diversity is respected for people of all faiths and none.

The Chaplaincy operates from its offices in the main building (where a waiting room is shared with Counselling) and a Chaplaincy Centre ‘Teach Fáilte’ (beside the bookshop)

If you don’t feel like you are feeling down but don’t feel the need to see someone, why not try MoodGym? (<http://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome>) MoodGYM is an innovative, interactive web program designed to prevent depression.

It consists of five modules, an interactive game, anxiety and depression assessments, downloadable relaxation audio, a workbook and feedback assessment.

Using flashed diagrams and online exercises, MoodGYM teaches the

principles of cognitive behaviour therapy – a proven treatment for depression. It also demonstrates the relationship between thoughts and emotions, and works through dealing with stress and relationship break-ups, as well as teaching relaxation and meditation techniques. If you want any more information on MoodGym please contact Tara.Feeney@ul.ie.

No matter how difficult things get, you are never alone. UL provides brilliant support services which are all working for you.

All you need to do is ask, remember a problem shared is a problem halved.



Tara Feeney, ULSU Welfare Officer

Success for UL DebU at Oxford and Trinity

David Hartery

The University of Limerick Debating Union celebrated success at two prestigious competitions recently, with Auditor Sarah Hardiman (2nd Year Law Plus) reaching the semi-finals of the Oxford Women's Open, as well as two teams from the society reaching the elimination stages of the Trinity Intersivity 2012.

The Oxford Women's Open was organised for the first time last year, to combat a perception of prejudice against female debaters internationally and to help encourage more women to continue to debate. Sarah was a member of one of two Irish teams to reach the semi-finals of the competition, which was attended and judged by some of the best female debaters in the world, including the Chief Adjudicators; Catherine Murphy from the College Historical Society of Trinity College Dublin and Jen Coyne of the Oxford Union, who are European Debating Championship and World Debating Championship finalists respectively.

The very next weekend was the Trinity Intersivity, where it was the turn of Stephen Egan (4th Year Law Plus) and Lorna Bogue (2nd Year Irish Music and Dance) to reach the semi-finals. Sadly, they were drawn against our other breaking team of David Hartery (4th Year Law Plus) and Michelle Coyle (3rd Year Law and Accounting) in the quarter-finals, where only one team prevailed. However, even making it to the knock-out stages of any intersivity is an achievement and for two Limerick teams to make it to such an advanced stage was unprecedented and fantastic. For Lorna and Michelle it was their first taste of intersivity success and hopefully they will be speaking in front of such large crowds again soon. It should also be noticed that on an individual front, Limerick also had great success, with Stephen Egan finishing 8th best speaker overall and David Hartery finishing 3rd.



Members of the Debating Union at the Trinity IV

Swimming Club Bulletin

- The UL Swimming Club is a competitive club only.
- There are limited places and these places will be determined on times.
- Training will be held in the University Arena.
- Training will start Monday Week 2 at 10pm
- Contact us on swimmingclubul@gmail.com

Onwards and Upwards for ULSC

Lauren Joslin, ULSC PRO

GIVEN the performance of ULSC in Schull, West Cork last weekend ULSC appears to be going from strength to strength. Once again at the top of both the Gold and Silver fleets, ULSC proved to be unstoppable.

Last weekend's event hosted by UL was a great success with universities from all over the country travelling to West Cork. Despite the lack of wind Saturday morning, racing still went ahead in the afternoon. UL1 and UL2 won all their races without defeat and such luck continued well into Sunday. UL2 sailed so well that they progressed into Golf Fleet, a fantastic achievement and a great position to be in, in the weeks leading up to the Inter-Varsity. UL1 already at the top of the Gold Fleet maintained their position by beating UCD1. The success of the event truly was a credit to the team. The organisation and effort of all involved

paid off and undoubtedly everyone involved had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. In particular, Captain of ULSC Cian Gallagher must be acknowledged and commended for all his hard work and dedication, without him the event could not have gone ahead. Similarly, Boat Captain Billy Clarke played a huge role in bringing the whole event together. On behalf of ULSC thank you to Billy and Cian! ULSC would like to thank all those who travelled to Schull and helped in any way with the event.

So what's next for ULSC? Well with the Inter-Varsitys looming the team will be taking to the water for some intense training over the coming weeks. One thing is for certain, ULSC have their sights set on maintaining their Varsity title for the fourth year in a row. Best of luck to the team and let's hope all the hard work pays off!

The UL Law Society

PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE ANNUAL LAW BALL
2012

"A NIGHT IN 1950'S HOLLYWOOD"

THE STRAND HOTEL LIMERICK
FEBRUARY 16TH
7 PM

DRESS CODE: BLACK TIE

TICKETS €45



Tyred but happy!



View from the top: looking back on a long day's cycling.

Daniel Kedney

Carlingford is a small coastal town in Co. Louth, overlooked from the south by Sleive Foy, and from across Carlingford lough by the Mourne Mountains.

The area is ideal for mountain biking, with mountaintop trails and forested single track all within 30 minutes' drive of the town.

The perfect location then, for Mountain Biking UL's November development trip. We travelled up on the Friday night, to ensure fresh legs for the long day ahead on Saturday. The route we were to take snaked through the Cooley Mountains to the

west of Carlingford. A cool bright day dawned, and we set off from high in the mountains around 11.30am.

A six hour spin saw us cover 26km of fast technical descents, mountain-top bogs, and punishing rocky climbs.

We reached the ridge of Sleive Foy overlooking Carlingford just as the sun began to set. The amazing views with the sunset, and a final adrenaline pumping downhill blast to

the hostel rounded off a brilliant day for everyone.

Tired legs on Sunday prompted a more relaxed spin, and we headed for the forested single track in Big Wood, near Newry.

Once again blessed with dry weather we wound our way through the forest trails for a good four hours with the excellent downhill sections and technical trails proving popular with

everyone. We arrived back in Limerick late on Sunday night, muscles aching and faces still splattered with mud, a fitting end to a great weekend on the trails!

Are you brave enough to be hypnotised?

Carol McCarthy and Avril Crosse, PRO's

Are you interested in a sweaty, built, chiseled man or a glistening, athletic woman?

Then come along to The Stables on Tuesday February 14 (Yes that is Valentine's Day) and come under the spell of the UL basketball players. The great hypnotist Barry Sinclair will be providing entertainment on the night. Tickets are €5 and include access to the show, participation (if you dare), guaranteed LOL's, banter and maybe even romance... if cupid can work his magic. Whether you are single, in a relationship or even if it's "complicated", a great night of entertainment will be had. So we'll see all ye love birds on February 14 in the Stables Bar. All funds raised are going towards supporting the UL Basketball Clubs Intersarsity tournaments that are being hosting from April 6 to April 9 in the University Arena. Please note this in your diaries as all support during this weekend would be appreciated. This is an event that you do not want to miss!



Barry Sinclair, hypnotist extraordinaire, comes to The Stables on Valentines Day

UL Traditional Music Society Presents

TRAD FEST

Week 4: 13th – 16th February

MONDAY 13th : Céilí Mór
7pm – 9pm
Adm. €2
Venue Pavillion Bar

Week 4: 13th – 16th February

TUESDAY 14th: Valentine's Gig
Mairtin O'Connor Band
Dolans Warehouse @ 8pm
Adm: €15/ €10 for students
BLACK TIE EVENT!

WEDNESDAY 15th: TRAD SESSION!!!!
Scholar's Bar @ 9:30
With Niall Keegan and Special Guests

Week 4: 13th – 16th February

THURSDAY 16th: TRAD DISCO!!
Hurler's @ 8:30 till late
Adm FREE!

*Advert**Postgrad student's union presents:*

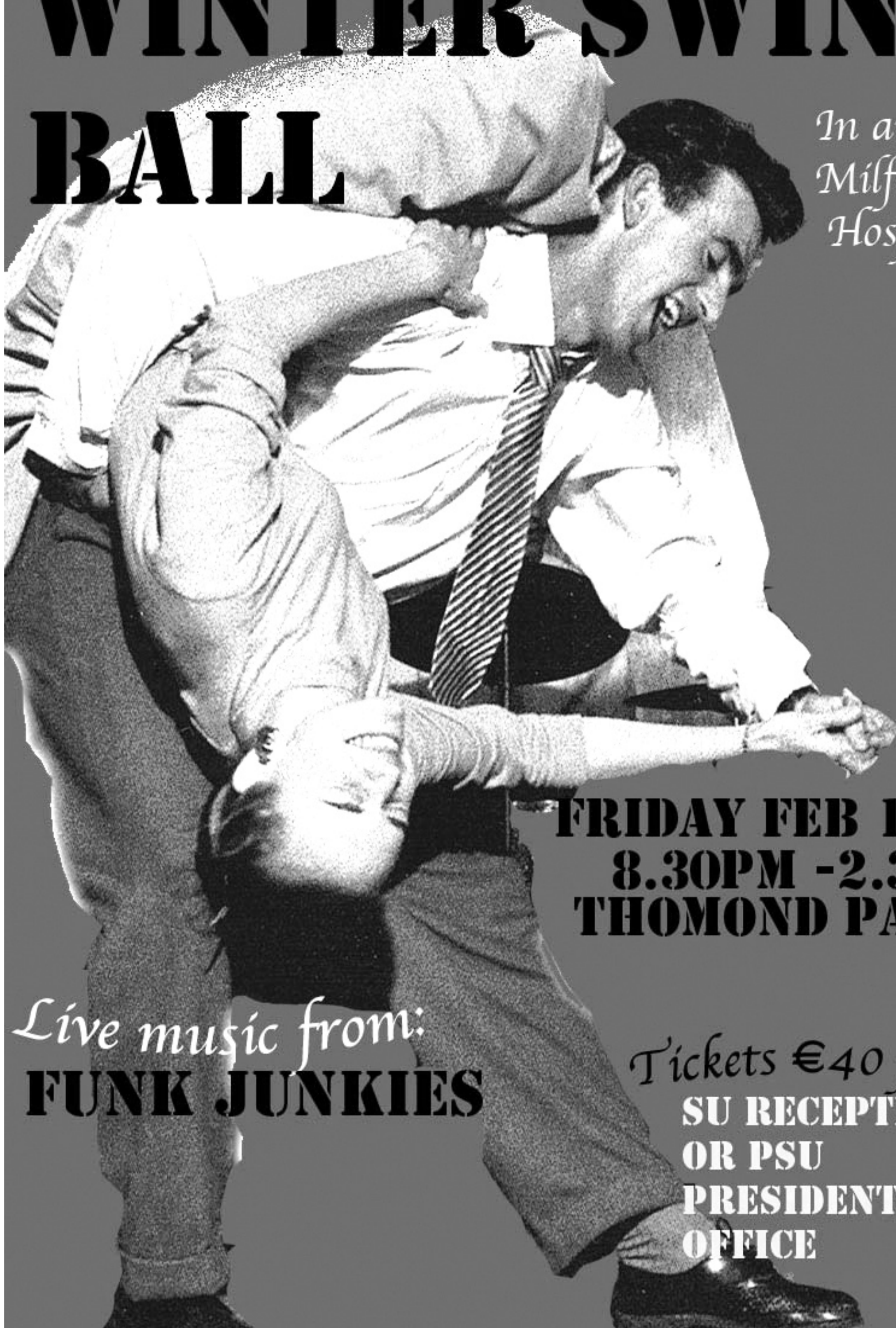
WINTER SWING BALL

*In aid of
Milford
Hospice*

**FRIDAY FEB 10TH
8.30PM - 2.30
THOMOND PARK**

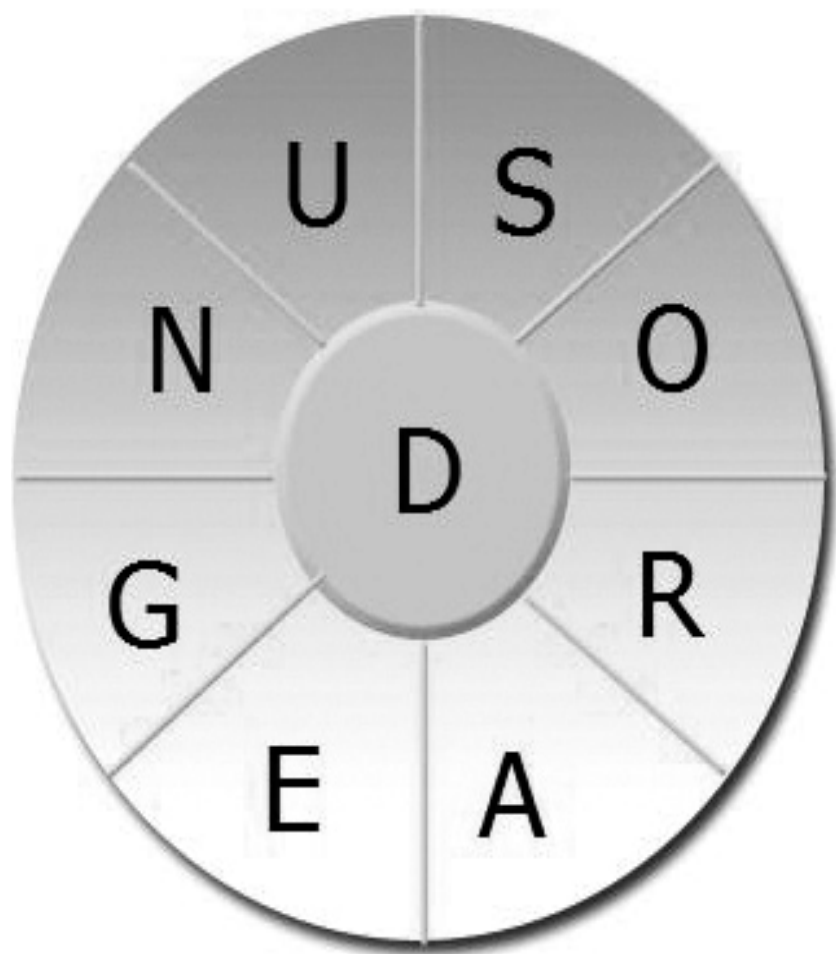
Live music from:
FUNK JUNKIES

Tickets €40 from:
**SU RECEPTION
OR PSU
PRESIDENTS
OFFICE**



Puzzles

WORDWHEEL



20 Words - Good
 30 Words - Very Good
 40 Words - Excellent

ARROWWORD

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|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|--|---------------|--------|
| Fibber | | Oversight | | Swindle | | Snakelike fish | Performer | | Lodge | | Stitch | |
| Verbal broadside | | | | | | Evergreen tree | | | | | Kit | |
| | | | | | | Periphery | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Landing place | | | | | | |
| Potato chip | | Dais | | | | | | | Novel | | | |
| | | Ice hut | | | | | | | Protect | | | |
| | | | | | | Part of the eye | | | | | Land measure | Motley |
| | | | | | | Fry briefly | | | | | | |
| Buddy | Aquatic birds | | | | | | Pointed | | | | | |
| | Recess | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Rounded bread | Polar region | | | | | | Writing fluid | |
| Tennis return | | | | | Figure of speech | Frozen water | Spooky | | | | | |
| Type of guitar | | | | | | | Cubicle | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | Give temporarily | | | | |
| The night before | Female relative | | | | | | | Part of a yacht | Used in making rope | | Saucy | |
| | Arab ruler | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Request | | Moose | | | Wildebeest | | Males | |
| | | | | | | Guided | | | | | | |
| Electronic message | | | | | | | Vegetable | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Skulked | Small island | | | | | | | Go in | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Flowing | | | | | |

EASY SUDOKU

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| 6 | 5 | | | 3 | 2 | | | 1 |
| | | | 4 | 9 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | 1 | | 6 |
| | | 6 | | | | | | 8 |

MEDIUM SUDOKU

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| 7 | | | 2 | 4 | | | | |
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| 1 | | | 4 | | 8 | | | 6 |
| 3 | | | | 1 | | | | |
| | 3 | | | 6 | | 8 | 4 | |
| | | | | 3 | 1 | | | 9 |
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Letters

Letter to the Editor: Setting the record straight over Margret Thatcher

Dear Madam Editor,

I rarely send letters into An Focal in relation to articles that I read in it, but I felt it was necessary to do so in light of your publication of Mr Roche's anti-Thatcher rant on the former UK Prime Minister Margret Thatcher (see Is Thatcher dead yet?). In his rant, Mr Roche claims that Margret Thatcher "destroyed British manufacturing" which is blatantly untrue. If Mr Roche bothered to do some research on the UK economy before Margret Thatcher assumed power in 1979, he would see that British manufacturing was on the decline due to high inflation (averaging 13% throughout the 70s), high wage demands by the unions (the miners demanded and got a 29% pay rise) and competition from other EEC countries, especially Germany. Margret Thatcher ended this decline by unshackling state owned industries, curbing union power and bringing down inflation to 4%. As for causing "huge unemployment" that is simply rubbish. Employment increased by 3 million, bringing the overall unemployment rate under the 2 million mark.

Mr Roche also asserts that Margret Thatcher was "almost universally despised at home and abroad". If that is the case how did she win 3 general elections in a row? Why was she greeted with open arms in the Unites States? How was she able to contribute to détente between the Soviets and the US? Furthermore, Mr Roche makes the ridiculous claim that "Thatcher has

become yesterday's woman". If that is the case, than why has every UK Prime Minister invited her to Number 10 since she left office and why have they tried to claim her political inheritance? Why, in a British Social Attitude report published in 2010, are the majority of people expressing Thatcherite views more than ever? After all, she is "yesterday's woman".

Mr Roche than goes on to state that Margret Thatcher made no contribution to British public life, again another rubbish claim. She curbed union power, reduced state involvement in the economy, allowed people living in council houses to buy their homes, created a nation of shareholders and restored the British fighting spirit by winning the Falkland's war. This is why she was voted the 16th (out of a 100) greatest Briton in a 2002 poll run by the BBC and why a third of British voters voted her the greatest Prime Minster since the Second World War. For someone who "lived controversially" that is one hell of an achievement.

I will finish this letter with a hope, a hope that the next time Mr Roche pens a piece on Margret Thatcher, he will present the readers of An Focal with an accurate account of Margret Thatcher and her legacy, rather than writing a left wing rant full of jaded rhetoric.

Yours etc,

David Moloney

RAGE COMIC OF THE FORTNIGHT

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| <p>No matter what happens during the day, no matter how bad things get...</p>  | <p>There's some thing I've come to realize...</p>  |
| <p>That there's nothing more satisfying than portaying someone you hate...</p>  | <p>...as this guy.</p>  |



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Travel



The iconic Piccadilly Circus.

London: *extravagant, exciting and elegant*

Emma Nolan

LONDON is one of the most exciting tourist destinations in the world. This famous and extravagant city is the backdrop to various films. Through these movies, the city is displayed to us magically, the camera capturing its diversity and the element of wonder that is so closely attached to it. London is known for having something for everyone. It is also a hugely cosmopolitan place, full of glamour and

elegance. It is the epitome of traditional hospitality and is a wonderful city to explore. The Cavendish hotel is in a convenient central location in the heart of London and provides the perfect accommodation for weekend breaks, private dinners, conferences, drinks and dinner dances. This luxurious hotel is within walking distance of the splendid Piccadilly Circus, which in itself is a magical experience for a first-time

visitor. The hotel has a wonderful team of staff which deliver a high standard of service efficiently.

The Cavendish is truly splendid with floor to ceiling windows; these allow natural light to dominate the space. The hotel was also a gold winner of the Visit London Outstanding Customer Service Award 2009. London has also got a huge range of options for sightseeing. I found that the most effective way to

see the city was by viewing it from the river. Why not try the adrenaline fuelled Thames RIB experience, which is absolutely exhilarating.

It is also an educational tour, enabling you to see all of London's historic and exciting sites from the Thames River. This hour long trip is full of fun and excitement, with a fast and breath-taking ride afterwards. In my experience, it's well worth it.

This iconic city caters for all and must be credited for its fantastic range of attractions that such a vast range of people are passionate about. It is also one of the most popular cities worldwide for weekend trips. It is perfect for those who need to escape the day to day routine of hectic working life.

SHOOT THE KBS

BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH, 2012

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2nd Prize - €500



The Kemmy Business School challenges you to create a viral video to promote undergraduate and postgraduate study at the School. Submissions should capture the distinctive student experience in UL and the KBS. Videos will be judged on originality, quality, entertainment value, and information delivered. Entry forms and competition rules available from the KBS Postgraduate Studies Office (S207).

Study Abroad, Manhattan style

Brige Newman

I have arrived. The ordeal of leaving Ireland has been placated by the incredible people here, and I haven't even met any Americans yet!

Getting here was traumatic to say the least. In my eagerness to get to the airport at seven in the morning my father and I drove to Dublin the night before our flight.

In the morning, both of us, tired and edgy, got up and drove to Terminal 2. So naturally what would happen? You guessed it, we got lost.

Oh no, heaven forbid we should listen to the SatNav or ask directions (yes I suggested it at 6.30 am), instead we drove around with my blood pressure slowly going through the roof.

Finally we got to the airport and I checked in my bags, I also had to get a special tag to allow me to bring my oversized hand luggage onto the plane. Thank god for nice airhostesses. And then there was the small matter of border control. The well oiled machine of US customs in Dublin airport

was way better than I had imagined. People were practically flying through the queues. When I got up there my documents had to be checked and rechecked, terrifying to say the least.

Thankfully all was sorted out, and how early was I for my flight?

A measly three hours. I said I was eager. What followed was an amazing week in Manhattan seeing a Cirque du Soleil type show, Traces, visiting the sites, walking in Central park and drinking Cosmos with dinner.

I have never been more excited. Now I have moved into my dorm room and I've been getting to know all the other International students, and I have

somehow integrated myself into the Southern Hemisphere group, which I have to say I am fine with. Classes start in a few days but first I'm heading to Boston for a weekend of frolicking with some Aussies, and then the seriousness begins. All my classes are picked, I get on with my Japanese roommate and I have to say the whole arrangement is none too shabby.

It almost seems a shame to go to class but that is going to be an entirely new adventure. Oh, and it's snowing. Two weeks in and already epic, fingers crossed I can keep it going.



A birds-eye view of central Manhattan

Erasmus in Spain

Alana Walsh

RETURNING to Spain post-Christmas really felt like an extension of the holidays. Obviously it was necessary to socialise and catch up with everyone about their time back at home while begrudgingly attending classes during the day. Only fair to allow myself a re-settling in period of course, to make up for lost time with tapas and to stop and take in the undisputable beauty of Granada once more.

The hugely popular El Clásico (Barcelona vs. Real Madrid) game was shown on a huge screen last Wednesday in a nightclub here and I took a risk and wore my Barca jersey. The place was filled with about ninety five percent Real fans and I only spotted four other Barca fans with enough guts to wear the jersey out. My gamble paid off as Barca won and a barman even gave me free drinks for having the jersey on, result! Last week I ventured with ten amigos to Sierra Nevada for a day of skiing.

A short 45 minute bus journey from the city and suddenly we were surrounded by snow and walking around what felt like a winter wonderland. I had never been on a ski slope before in my life so was quite nervous, an apt feeling as I was soon to discover I was not a natural. No matter how hard I tried not to, I seemed to pick up incredible speed every time I descended a slope which left me with no option but to hurl myself to the ground at the end of it. Surprisingly, I did not bruise too badly and my attempt at skiing was really

fun, plus my hilarious efforts provided much entertainment for friends that had chosen to be spectators. Apparently if they had managed to record my efforts I would be a YouTube sensation. I think I'll take the hint and observe rather than participate on the next trip!

The holiday feeling is now wearing off, exams are looming and Erasmus is

coming to a close in a few short weeks. Sak Noel's new song, "Paso (The Nini Anthem)" sums most Erasmus students' feelings up perfectly, "I don't want to study, I just want to party". Realistically I know I have to go back to UL but somehow I cannot bring myself to book that departure flight home yet, it makes it all too final.



Sierra Nevada, a Winter wonderland. Image: Áine McCarthy

A Grad Down Under

Sinead Keane

THERE are times living abroad when one needs just a little reminder of home. A song on the radio, an accent on the street, or even a chocolate bar from home; it's the little things that can pull at your heartstrings as homesickness rolls in.

There are things we long for, things we crave to see that makes us think of our hometown. We are surrounded by a different culture and lifestyle 24 hours a day, and then suddenly one little thing jolts us as we reminisce on our native turf.

That little thing that I encountered was not quite as romantic as I would have hoped. Sitting down one evening after work with the telly remote and Vegemite toast, I was all ready for some good old Aussie trash TV.

Flicking through the channels, I realised that this may be difficult to achieve; every show I saw was nothing less than trash TV gold. Biggest Loser, My Strange Addiction, Wife Swap Australia. I couldn't choose.

Aussie TV is the epiphany of terrible visual entertainment. For a country that never went into recession, boasts the best surf coast in the world, and is brimming with cultural diversity, you would think that Australian television would be that little bit intelligent. But when the most watched show of the year is Australian X Factor, one quickly finds that that theory is more than a little inaccurate.

Crowds flock home to be on the couch in time for Home and Away; and the Australian version of Middy (that cackling women's chat show on TV3) is an ever popular choice for

mid-morning tea-breaks. This year, we have three different versions of the Biggest Loser. Enough said. So I am flicking though, trying to decide between a show about a woman who sleeps with her hairdryer or a repeat of Touched by an Angel, and it appears like a flash of lightning, Coronation Street. I have never, ever seen it; in fact I am severely anti -terrible-English-soaps, but the sight of those badly dressed Londoners put warmth in my heart and a smile on my face. It may not be Irish (in fact at home it would offend me!) but that familiar accent and those familiar faces were just the thing I needed to remind myself that even my dearly missed Ireland has its own share of extremely crap telly.



The oddest things remind us of home: Coronation Street's well-known setting for many a scandalous evening.

Interview

Christy Moore, Tommy Tiernan, and everything in between

Colm Fitzgerald, Deputy Editor

An Focal caught up with UCH Marketing Manager Emma Foote to find out more about the recent nomination of UCH for the IMRO Live Music Venue of the Year Award, and to learn more about working at the UCH.

“I joined University Concert Hall as Senior Marketing Executive in November 2004 and became Marketing Manager in 2007 so I’ve been here for over seven years now. I was working and living in Dublin at the time but was at the stage where I wanted to move back home to Limerick”.

The University Concert Hall has been synonymous with everything from concerts to comedy and such events in the Midwest since its inception in 1993. When the 1000 seat venue is not hosting business and marketing lectures, it hosts Christy Moore, Tommy Tiernan and everything in between.

Emma recalls the highlights to date.

“Back in 2006 we welcomed our one millionth visitor and that was very exciting! It coincided with the launch of the Friends of UCH scheme and we ran a campaign informing the public that we were getting close to the millionth customer and that whoever bought the one millionth ticket was going to become a Friend for Life AND receive two free tickets for every show for 12 years. An unbelievable prize”

“2008 brought Billy Connolly for 3 nights and that was incredible!

The day he went on sale, all three shows sold out in record time. He hadn’t toured in Ireland for years so people were clamoring for tickets”

“In September of that year we also welcomed The Gate production of Waiting for Godot to Limerick as part of its Irish tour.

Director of the Gate, Michael Colgan, came to Limerick on the night of the show and engaged in a public interview which we held in the Hunt Museum as it all coincided with Culture Night in the city, so that was definitely one of the highlights” More recently, the UCH Carols For All event has become an annual highlight.

“Last December was the third Carols For All and it was really wonderful to see the same families coming back and knowing that UCH is now part of their Christmas tradition!” added Emma.

The venue has recently been nominated for the IMRO (Irish Music Recording Organisation) Live Venue of the Year Award, Emma explains.

“The IMRO awards recognize venues which deliver the highest standards of live music entertainment. It’s an honour to be one of just five nominated in the Munster region. All the management and staff of UCH are really delighted.”

“This time next year UCH will be in its 20th year, so it would be a fantastic early start to those celebrations to win the award next month and we really hope people will log on www.surveymonkey.com/s/venueawards and vote for us!” she adds.

Emma enjoys the varied elements of the role she holds. Having worked originally as a Front of House usher whilst studying for her BA at Mary I. Having graduated from Mary I, she graduated from a Dublin University with a Postgrad Diploma in Public Relations.

“Part of that course was a work experience module and for that I was lucky enough to be taken on by the Gate Theatre. When my work experience stint was over they asked me to stay on as assistant to the Director of Marketing, and I was there for over three years until the move back to Limerick”.

Being a Senior Marketing Executive is a multifaceted undertaking. Dealing with members of the public, artists, managers, music presenters and a host of other bodies falls under her daily routine.

“My main responsibilities are to promote University Concert Hall as an entity in itself to both the general public and to the promoters and artists responsible for bringing the various events here, and then to oversee the promotion, advertising and marketing of the individual shows, concerts etc. once they are on sale”.

“People in this industry, both professional and voluntary, are so enthusiastic for what they do that that it creates a great energy”.



“Being a Senior Marketing Executive is a multifaceted undertaking.”

Emma Foote of the UCH