

AN focal

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK STUDENTS' UNION

Aontas Na Mac Léinn



Week 1, Sem 2

Edition 8

February 16th, 2004

Price: Free as a bird!



UL Rugby Team are victorious for the third time in a row in Annual Colours Match Vs LIT. Article on p21

Photograph courtesy of Eoin Stephenson

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Tough Decisions taken by ULSU

The last few months have been filled with upheaval and confusion as far as ULSU is concerned. Bleak news followed by even bleaker news meant that hard decisions had to be taken and deep cuts had to be made.

At the EGM in December of semester one, a plan was presented and agreed to curtail Union spending in order to reverse the deficit of €80,000 which had occurred for the year 2002/2003. All services and costs were cut back significantly, and SUDPT, the students' union Job Placement Company ceased operation. In addition to this, Pat Carroll & Co were engaged as Financial Consultants for both the Students' Union and ULSU Services (the Shop) to assist in straightening out the financial circumstances of both organisations and in order to ensure that a problems of this magnitude didn't happen again.

This 'straightening out' involved the production of management accounts for the six months up to December 2003 and a Cash Flow projection of all Union income and expenditure from January until March 2004. This projection set alarm bells ringing at Student Union Executive level, because it showed that

by March 2004, the Union account would be overdrawn to the tune of €60,000, with no further major funds coming in until October 2004. Wages and services would be a further drain on finances between March and October. As the projection took into account cuts, which had been announced at the EGM it was clear that more drastic measures needed to be taken.

As all feasible cuts had been made in non-wage areas, the only place left to rein in Union spending was in the Pay Budget. ULSU Executive undertook a review of staff roles, responsibilities and salaries. The four Sabbatical officers, the Class Reps Development Officer, and the Clubs & Societies Development Officer were considered to be essential to the Unions core activities and as such the Executive focused on the business & service divisions of the Union for their INITIAL review. The major change agreed was the amalgamation of the roles of General Manager & Financial Controller into one position. Regrettably this resulted in Mr. Stan Blennerhasset, Union General Manager and Mr. Dermot Hartigan Union Financial Controller who have both given long years of service to

the Union, being made redundant. The executive also agreed to close the Union Print Shop at the end of this semester. This will result in a further redundancy - that of Print Shop Manager. The officers of the Union would like to wish Mr. Blennerhasset & Mr. Hartigan all the best for their future endeavors. A full presentation on restructuring within the Student' Union, on the current state of Union Finances and further recommendations for change will be made to the Class Reps Council of Tuesday 24th February 2004 at 6pm. Please turn to Page 5 for more.

Attention Mature Students

Are you in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance?

Has your summer allowance been cut? Was a PostGrad in your plans?

If so, please contact David Garrahy, the Welfare Officer, in relation to developments in the fight against cutbacks. Email: suwelfare@ul.ie

News

Garda Age Card On Campus

Going out for the evening? Here's your checklist.

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| House Keys - | Check |
| Money - | Check |
| Phone - | Check |
| Emergency Condom - | Check |
| UL ID Card | Check |
| Clubs Sticker - | Check |
| Garda Age Card - | Check |



If you are aged between 18 and 21, you must carry an official form of identification. Recent legislation means that to gain entry to a licensed premises, you must present a valid a Drivers License, Passport or Garda Age Card at the door. While most students will be in possession of at least one of the above,

many people do not know that they need to show them at the door of the Stables, Scholars or Arena Club to gain entry.

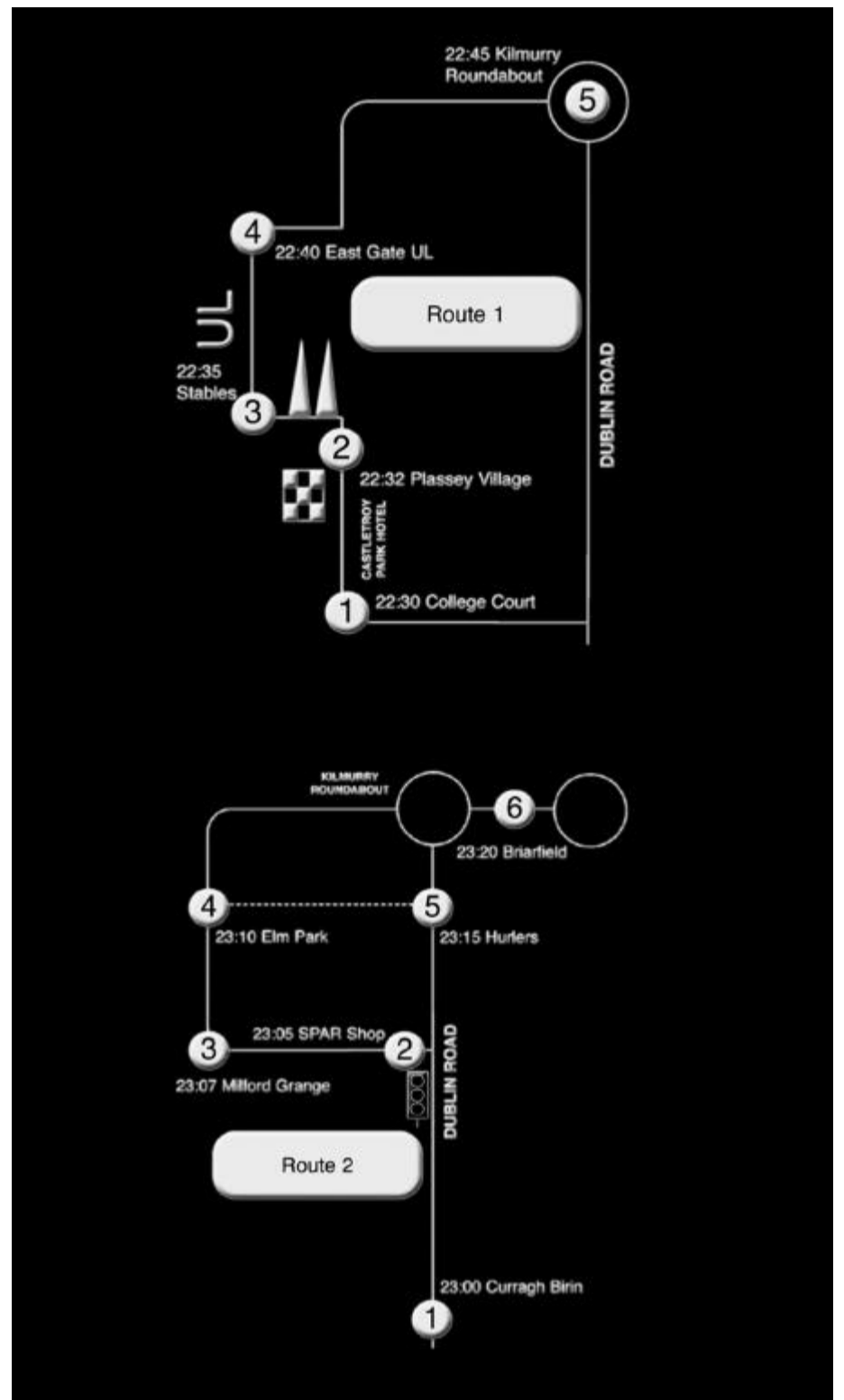
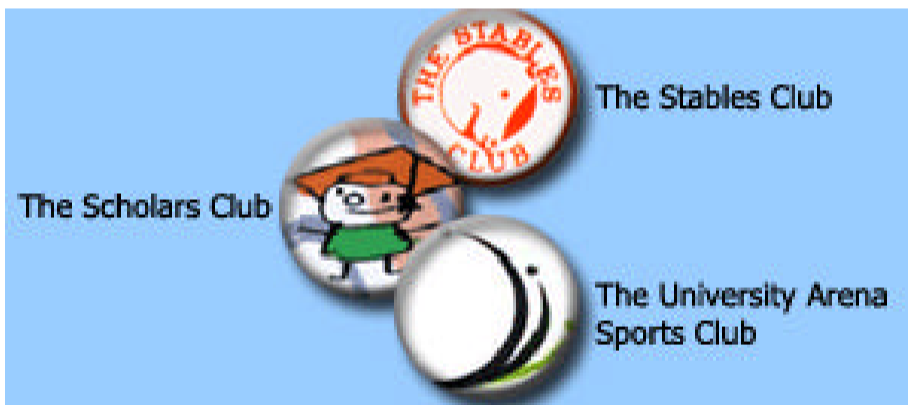
If you don't have any of the above, the Community Garda will be in the Students' Union between 12pm and 2pm on Tuesday 24th and again on Thursday 26th of February to allow you to apply on campus.

In order to apply, you will need

1. A valid form of Photo ID (your UL ID card will suffice)
2. Your birth certificate (this is essential, so get it posted to you)
3. Application fee of €6
4. A passport-sized photograph

Age cards will not be available immediately, but will be posted to you as soon as they are ready.

If you have not already applied for membership of the clubs, please do so at www.clubs.ul.ie. Applications take two weeks to be processed for legal reasons, so please be patient. If you are already a member and have not yet collected your membership sticker, please do so at the students' union reception. There is a four-yearly membership fee of €1.30 to cover subscriptions to all clubs. If you do not have a membership sticker, you will not be allowed into the clubs.



Club Licences Granted On a Technicality

It took Judge Tom O'Donnell just twenty minutes to reach a verdict in the recent objection against the renewal of Club licences of the Stables & Scholars Clubs held in Limerick District Court on the 19th of December last. This was the 4th year in succession that a case had been taken by College Court Residents Association (CCRA) against the annual applications from the Clubs to have their licences renewed. No such objections have been lodged against the Sports Arena Club.

The hearing began with solicitors for the Clubs Gearóid McGann from the firm Sweeney Mc Gann making a request to give a preliminary statement. The CCRA also requested the opportunity to do the same thing. The CCRA did not have any legal representation in Court and conducted their own appeal. Judge O'Donnell granted both requests.

Mr. McGann began by stating that he thought that the grounds for the appeal were a little shaky given that the Circuit Court had granted the licences to the clubs the previous April, the Students had departed from Castletroy in May and the appeal had been submitted to the

court in August. He asked what had happened during the month of May to warrant the appeal? He asked why there had been no complaints to the Gardaí during this time if there was cause for objection? He further stated that the Circuit Court had instructed all parties to discuss grievances with the Clubs at the University Residents Forum and as such thought that the objection was out of place given that there had been no grievances raised at the Residents Forum with the Clubs at all. Finally he stated that the date the objection had been lodged with the Clerk of the Court was prior to the lodgement of the application for renewal of licence from the Clubs and as such the objection was invalid as the CCRA had objected to something which they had not yet seen and which actually did not exist. In her preliminary statement, the CCRA representative stated that the application from the Clubs was incorrect as there was not a statement included in the application from the owners of the premises, Plassey Campus Centre, stating that they were satisfied with the business conducted inside the premises. Judge O'Donnell

then adjourned for a period of ten minutes to consider the preliminary statements from both sides. On resumption Judge O'Donnell said that having examined the matter he had no choice but to strike out the objections as they had been submitted prior to the applications being received. He then established that the Gardaí and Fire Officer had no problems with the clubs before summarily granting licences to both clubs.

So ends this saga for this academic year. If the Students' Union apply for extensions for Kollege Week these arguments may be revisited. One couldn't help but feel sitting in court that the main objective of the College Court Residents Association was to get a senior representative of the University in the witness box to ask them if they stood over issues such as having Clubs on Campus in the first place, such as the levels of alcohol consumption around Castletroy and such as the nocturnal behaviour of students in the housing estates around the college. Representatives of the CCRA have been known to state that the University has

completely washed its hands of responsibility for student drinking over twenty years and are looking at some way of addressing this. Against this the University say that the Alcohol Policy which was adopted a number of years ago is working to encourage alternatives to alcohol consumption among students. They also say that the University Discipline Committee does not look very favourably on instances of students bringing the name of the College into disrepute in Castletroy. They would probably say that the Clubs give life to the Campus in the evenings and as private members clubs are a controlled environment for social congregation of clubs, societies and students & staff after a days study.

There is no reason to believe that there will not be objections to the applications for renewal of licence again next September. In the mean time perhaps it is time for the Students' Union and University to re engage with the appellants to find an out of court settlement? Perhaps this will happen at the much vaunted Residents Forum? Who knows? Stay tuned!

News

Free Bus Service for Students

Nowadays, the average UL student, living in the Castletroy area or Limerick City, has even less of an excuse for walking home alone. There are not one, but two free bus services being run in conjunction with ULSU

The first is the ever-reliable Nitelink bus, which leaves the Stables Archway every half hour from 7pm to 11pm. It serves the estates in the Castletroy area, even as far as Annacotty, if requested. It will even pick you up if you ring the driver's

number, 087-2205509.

The second bus runs from 11pm til 4am, and will bring you to Castletroy or into the city. This bus is sponsored by Trinity Rooms nightclub, but of course, you don't have to go to the nightclub if you're getting the bus! On page 2, you'll find a route map for the Trinity Rooms NightBus, which will be able to drop you home, no matter how late you've been studying in the Vax.

Please remember your own personal

safety and don't walk home alone!

If you have any comments, good or bad, to make about either bus service, please email sucommunication@ul.ie



this wednesday & every wednesday

ulsu presents

TRINITY ROOMS

SPANK!

launch night wed. feb 18th

A MASSIVE WEDNESDAY NIGHT PARTY @TRINITY ROOMS
TWO ROOMS OF DANCEFLOOR ACTION
KEITH IN THE MAIN ROOM, TINA T IN THE QUARTER CLUB
free admission before midnight
every wednesday €5 after
FREE BUSES FROM ALL OVER CASTLETROY & O'DWYER'S PUB. SEE MAP ON FLYER FOR DETAILS.

An Focal is going Interactive!

My Lecturer eats Cats...

The stoner Baby is coming to eat us all. *Aheh*

I woke up this morning in a ditch with no pants on. Damn

all you need to do is text your crazy ramblings to this number:

086 - 8641193

and they'll appear in the next issue!

So go on, save it now and text us!

News

Class Reps Honoured at Plassey Function



Eoin Ó Broin, Gemma Nolan and Dr. Roger Downer in the White House

Alan Higgins

The Students' Union and the University honoured past Class Reps for their service to the students of UL on Wednesday the 10th of December in Plassey House. In attendance were past members of the Class Representative Council, members of Executive, Students' Union and University staff and the University President Dr. Roger Downer.

Representatives received Certificates of Recognition for their contribution to the development of Student Union policy and for representing the views of students to the University. Speaking at the function Dr. Downer emphasised the importance of the Students' Union and of the Class Rep Council in expressing the

views of Students. He also noted the central position that students have in the University.

The SU President Eoin O'Broin also explained the importance of recognising those who have sat on the Class Rep Council and expressed his desire that this recognition should be expanded further. Eoin also highlighted the role members of Council have as liaising officers between the various faculty staff and the students and called on a more active policy to be initiated by the faculties and the university to promote class reps recruitment and awareness. Gemma Nolan, the Class Rep Development Officer, confirmed this point by saying that it facilitates better professional relationships between lectures and students. Eoin also congratulated the hard work of those who have contributed

to the development of Class Reps - especially the work done by Gemma. Elaine Kiely, Student Affairs Officer said, "I think that this initiative is very worth while and it is important that Class Reps are recognised for helping their fellow undergraduates and postgraduates to make both their academic and social experiences positive ones."

Gemma Nolan, who is always eager to have more students getting involved in the Class Rep Council, said, "We want more people to get involved so that there is better representation from across the University. Class Reps Council is there to tell the Students' Union what students want. It is beneficial for students to

has a representative you can contact Gemma at: gemma.nolan@ul.ie or drop into her office which is located upstairs in the Students' Union.

Everyone may attend Class Rep Council which will take place every second week this semester from week 2 - location yet to be announced.



Certificate of Recognition

participate in the Council because through teamwork one develops the kind of communication and social skills that will enable one to get fully involved in college life. The way forward has to be the development of a strong Council, to ensure the maintenance of a strong Students' Union."

If you are interested in becoming a Class Rep or would like to find out if your class

Are you a...

Writer?
Critic?
Socialite?
Photographer?
Cartoonist?
Pisstaker?
Ranter?
Commentator?
Agony Aunt?
Astrologer?
GrammarNazi?

Join the Communications Team

Meeting:
Wednesday
Week 1
6pm
Canteen (B-Block)

How Much is your Rubbish Costing You?

It's an expensive job, being a student. All those bills to pay, books to buy and phones to top up. It's a busy one too, and sometimes students don't have time to shop around for the best deals out there. So we in An Focal have decided to show you what the local waste management companies are offering. The main companies which service the Castletroy area are Limerick Waste Recycling, Ipodec, Clean Ireland and Mr. Binman. While some landlords organise Bin Collection for their tenants and include the price in the rent, others leave it up to the tenants themselves.

It is important that you have a bin, and

that you keep up with the payments and leave it out for collection. This is both for your own health and safety and for the mental health of your neighbours. Try to leave your bin out on the morning of collection if possible, and bring it back in as soon as you can, to prevent it being knocked over or stolen.

Read on and check out how the companies match up against each other as regards price, convenience and service.

Remember that you can buy your stickers on a monthly basis from the Students' Union, if you bin with Limerick Waste Recycling.

J-1 STUDENTS

Summer 2004

Employment in Boston

On Campus Interviews

Wednesday, February 18, 2004, 11am - 5pm

Student's Union Building
Gentle Giant Moving Co. is looking for strong, fit, athletic type people to work as movers. The work is hard, the job is fun, the money can be very good. If you like physical work and will support our commitment to excellence we would like to meet you. No appointment necessary. Contact the Student's Union Office for room location.

www.gentlegiant.com

| Company Name | Payment | Pay By Weight | Collection | Recycling |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Limerick Waste Recycling | €30 per month payable at Students' Union (€360 per year) | No | Recycling and General Waste on alternate weeks | Cardboard Newspaper Cans, Tins, Tetra Pak, Plastic Bottles |
| Ipodec (part of the Onyx Corporation) | €145 per 6months €285 per year. | No | Weekly | Cardboard Newspaper Cans, Tins, Tetra Pak, Plastic Bottles |
| Clean Ireland | €160 per 6months €320 per year | No | Recycling and General Waste on Alternate Weeks (glass monthly) | Cardboard Newspaper Cans, Tins, Tetra Pak, Plastic Bottles, Glass |
| Mr. Binman | €160 per six months (possible extra charge) | Yes Extra weight billed per kilogramme over 400kg | Weekly | Cardboard Newspaper Cans, Tins, Tetra Pak, Plastic Bottles, Glass |

State of the Union

State of the Union - An Overview

On January 1st 2004 the following were the Students' Unions commitments for its campaigning, representation and provision of service functions. Over the Christmas period the €80,000 losses incurred by the Union for the year 2002/2003 were further compounded by outstanding debts, reduced overdraft limits and cash flow projections showing an overdraft in excess of €60,000 by March 2004 at which time the Union will have no further significant income streams until the first half of 2004/2005 capitation monies come due in October 2004. This drastic situation led the Students' Union Executive to agree the following measures:

- 1) The amalgamation of the current role of General Manager and Financial Controller and recruitment of a suitably qualified person to do this job.
- 2) The closure of the Printshop/Graphics Department at the end of the current semester.
- 3) A review of the roles, necessity and remuneration of current full time and part time staff

Regrettably, the practicalities of this decision necessitate the roles of General Manager, Financial Controller and PrintShop Manager being made redundant. These redundancies will be implemented on a staggered basis to limit impact on cash flow. These measures will amount to a saving of approximately €50,000 between now and the end of October 2004. In addition to this the Union will be seeking to increase the level of service provided by making student-friendly deals on:

- Opti Bags and Bins
- Student Travel Cards
- Tea & Coffee in Common Room
- Pay Phone in Union building
- Colour Printing
- Games - Air Hockey, Fussball
- Stationery Suppliers

Six monthly accounts for the Union for the period July to December 2003 will be presented at Class Reps Council on Tuesday Week 2 at 6pm. Please come along to see progress with the fiscal problems the Union has experienced over the past number of months. On this page, you will find a list of Union suppliers, details of Union Contracts (including the cost/credit to the Union, shown as the number of figures), an overview of Union-related companies and an article from An Focal in 1995, showing that this is not a new story.

| Staff of the Union |
|--|
| FULL TIME STAFF |
| General Manager |
| Accountant |
| Accounts Assistant |
| Print Shop Manager |
| Receptionist |
| Class Reps Development Officer & Secretariat |
| Clubs & Societies Development Officer |
| CONTRACT STAFF |
| Entertainments Manager |
| PART TIME STAFF |
| Reception Assistant & Book Shop Manager |
| Secretarial Assistants |
| Casual Labour |
| Ents Crew |
| IT Technician |
| SABBATICAL OFFICERS |
| President |
| Deputy President/Welfare |
| Vice President/Education |
| Vice President/CCO. |

| ULSU Services |
|--|
| The Union sabbatical Officers who are the current directors of ULSU Services Ltd. (Student Centre Shop and Dromroe Village Shop) have been engaged in restructuring within this company to increase profitability, value for money and standard of service on offer. We hope you will notice! In theory the services company is the pot of gold for the Union and should be providing the Union with a six figure sum return annually. This has never happened in the past but we have taken measures in the last few weeks to ensure that this happens from now on. The forum for student input into the running of the shops are at the Shop Annual General Meeting. We hope to have this in the next few weeks. |

| SUDPT |
|---|
| The Students' Union felt that it could no longer support the costs of running SUDPT (Students' Union Job Placement Company). The company, wholly owned by ULSU, is still in existence, but it no longer employs any staff or conducts any business. |

| CONTRACTS | PURPOSE | €FIGS | DURATION |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Allied Irish Finance | Purchase Lease Photocopiers | 5 | 01/06 |
| Bus Éireann | Sale of Bus Tickets | 3 | Multi Annual |
| Coyle Hamilton | Public Lib. Insurance | 4 | Multi Annual |
| Don Reddan | Accident Insurance Policy | 5 | Multi Annual |
| Gerard J. Meehan | Solicitors | 4 | Multi Annual |
| Gestetner | Service of Photocopiers | 4 | Multi Annual |
| ITD | Post, Network, Phones | 5 | Multi Annual |
| John Sullivan | Supply of Pool Tables | 5 | 02/05 |
| Leader Print | Printing of An Focal | 5 | Multi Annual |
| Nokia Repair Centre | Mobile Phone Repairs | 4 | Multi Annual |
| O2 | Mobile Phones | 4 | Multi Annual |
| Pat Carroll & Co. | Financial Auditors | 4 | 03/04 |
| Trinity Rooms | Student Central/Spunk! | 0 | 03/04 |
| BANKERS | AIB UL Campus | | |
| AFFILIATIONS | | | |
| LASU - Limerick Association of Students' Unions | | 0 | Multi Annual |
| FUSU - Forum of University Students' Unions | | 0 | Multi Annual |

State of the Union

(taken directly from An Focal, 9th March, 1995)

The recurring theme of last Monday night's Class Reps' Council was the ominous phrase repeated by grim-faces president, Matt Hamilton "Our cost structure is totally unsustainable." And with that he began to outline the initiative drawn up by the general manager and Exec to try and put the Union's finances in order. As anyone who was present at the EGM on Wednesday 22nd last would have discovered, the mismanagement of previous administrations, the reckless spending and minimal forward planning have left the union and its ancillary services in the throes of a crisis. As and from Monday 27th, a rationalisation plan is being drawn up by both the president and the General Manager, Gerry Barry. Some of these changes are as follows:

The immediate curtailment of Ents discos to Wednesday and Thursday nights. The Ents bus service is now also being terminated. The literal "shutting down" of all Ents transport and supervisory services is a direct result of the huge loss being incurred by the Union in providing these loss-making services and harsh as the pill is to swallow, the reality of the situation demands that, as Matthew stated, "a zero cost based must be achieved to save the future viability of the Union."

If these targets are not met, then Ents shall be further reduced or will be closed down altogether. The enormous sums involved in providing transport and crew to under-subscribed and failing discos has necessitated this measure.

The scale of the rationalisation plan is put into perspective when the two redundancies are taken into account. The Ents assistant, Dave Culliton and Mary Hynes of SU Graphics can no longer be afforded and as such are being laid off in a desperate attempt to stem the haemorrhage of funds which the last number of administrations have initiated.

All departments in ULSU are now required, in so far as they can, to cover their own costs. An Focal will be published every two weeks and is to try and achieve a position where it too can cover its own costs.

As it stands, there is no money left to the Union to allow any leeway in its decision. Until the Union and Company are able to make sufficient inroads into their debts, these belt-tightening exercises will continue for the foreseeable future.

A number of points were raised both at the EGM and Class Reps Council. Such glaring abuses in the previous system became apparent when it was revealed that the previous administrator was

flown back and forth to Birmingham on several occasions at the Union's expense. Even more incredible was the fact that most departments in the Union didn't know where, what or who were making losses as there was little or no accountability for cheque signing, for accounting purposes or for controls on spending. The draft reports from the accountants for June '94 only became available two weeks before the EGM! And even at this point the present Union were unsure as to where all the money had been going.

Another issue raise was that by removing the services of the Ents crew, that the student population would now be at the mercies of an irate bouncer who would most probably use force first and ask questions later rather than the mannered and effective method of the now defunct crew. This is a very serious point and it will only be a matter of time before some student is seriously injured at one of these gigs. And without the experience of crew in recognising troublemakers, relations between the University and the venture will quickly sour.

One point of huge import is the issue of how students are going to be able to return to Castletroy late at night seeing as there are approximately 250 taxis in the city of Limerick. Apart from the additional expense to students, it was also felt that the prospect of standing around for two or three hours in Limerick city would not be looked forward to in wild anticipation.

Concerning the continuance of SU Graphics, it was argued that the Union was wasting its money in providing a service which by rights the University authorities should be giving. The only area where the Union was making gains was the shop.

Perhaps the introduction of the proposed £4,500 accounting package will reap benefits for the rationalisation plan. One person however quoted a £79 package which would likewise perform the same operation. It was interesting to not that Stokes Kennedy Crowley, who perform the auditing for the Union should recommend such a package.

Whatever about computer packages, last week Ents lost a further £1,000! - even a 33% increase in ticket prices will not cover its outlays.

SO serious is the situation that Matthew stated that we was prepared to resign if the decision to implement his plan was overturned by class reps. The state of the Union is by no means certain. Indeed, without some sign of success in the near future, there may be no Union at all.

| SUPPLIERS | PRODUCT |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Catalysis Consulting | Exec Training |
| Claren Security | Ents Crew Training |
| Condells | Stationery |
| Davis Print | Election Ballot Papers |
| Dial a Bag | Fresher Packs |
| Curtain Executive Travel | Ents Gigs Buses |
| Gestetner | Photocopying Paper |
| Infineer Ltd. | Photocopying Cards |
| Lettertec Ltd. | ULSU Headed Paper |
| Sage Ireland | Accounts Staff Training |
| South Court Hotel | Formal Balls |
| Textile Print | Ents Crew Jackets |

Features & Opinion

Neither a Lollipop nor a T-shirt in Sight

Mikey Stafford interviews Cathal Crowe, Con Colbert Cumann Chairman and Fianna Fail local election candidate for southeast Clare. A man with strong views on the media, Sinn Fein and student politics.

Cathal is a classmate of mine; thus I worried about my capability to wear the porkpie of objectivity during this interview, thankfully the Fianna Fail Con Colbert Cumann Chairman took that decision out of my hands. As soon as the red light of the dictaphone illuminated, the harps illuminated in Cathal's eyes. When I asked him about his candidacy in Southeast Clare in the upcoming local elections, he seemed visibly enthused. "This is when we start to function as a proper Cumann, as we are engaging within the senior ranks of the party, we've become a force within the party by daring to put a candidate forward. We've long been a force on campus."

The Con Colbert Cumann was founded in 1994 and currently has almost 300 members. What does Cathal see as their function on campus? "College politics is not about whom has the best t-shirts or the best lollipops during recruitment week, it's about who can get out there and a lot of the work is done outside the gates of this campus, in Castletroy and the City. That's why we don't see Ogra Fianna Fail here on Campus as an idle talkshop, we mightn't do sleep-outs but we take things hands-on, we go out and campaign, we write letters, we lobby on issues as the junior wing of the Government party of Ireland we have an effective voice."

Cathal proffered the polling day of the last election being moved from midweek to Friday as an example of what a strong Ogra lobby can achieve, but would a strong lobby not have been able to achieve a Saturday vote? "We felt a Friday vote was the best compromise, within politics you have to be realistic and pragmatic, rather than go from a midweek vote to a weekend vote, we felt

that a Friday vote was a realistic compromise. That's what we ended up achieving in the end."

The Cumann has several members sitting on Fianna Fail bodies at National level, "Nicola Coady and Ciaran Fox sit on the National Youth Committee. I am the External Liaison Coordinator with duties for Northern Ireland and the EU. While Michael Quirke is the third level coordinator for FF."

I asked Cathal about the relationship which exists between the youth wing and the senior party. "We are the youth wing of the main government party, we are not the opposition wing. We do feel we have some ability to effect the outcome of matters." Does this mean that the youth wing is obliged to toe the line? "Ogra Fianna Fail has never been afraid to challenge it's senior colleagues, 2 years ago at the Ardfeis we tabled a motion that the Government consider alternatives to the Abbotstown project in relation to the national stadium. We are forward thinking and are not afraid to challenge where necessary, but at the same time we do see ourselves as a backup and as friends and colleagues of the senior party. Where at all possible we work with our local representatives to highlight issues of importance."

Cathal believes the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat coalition is performing as strongly as ever, "In the overall picture the government is faring quite well, we went into the elections on a high, we were popular. Since we've gone into the office, the opposition have been very frail. They have not been able to put any decent argument up as to why they should be the alternative government for Ireland. The only real opposition that exists in Ireland at the moment is the media, by being staunchly opposed to FF at the moment the media is not fulfilling its requirements of being unbiased." He cites the example of FG recruitment forms being included in the under leaf of the Clare Champion. He



Cathal Crowe

believes an "unjust twist" is being put on his and other FF candidates' articles and press releases in the aforementioned paper and others throughout the country.

He holds the media at least partly responsible for Fianna Fail's poor showing in the polls in recent times. "Sure, you'll always have some people who are happy, you always have some people who are unhappy and you'll always have people who no matter what you say, you can't please them, because their minds are dead set and the media has them influenced to dislike Fianna Fail."

Last week a large proportion of the Seanad walked out in disgust at what they saw as the forcing through of the Immigration Bill, what would Cathal say to people who saw this as the action of a party who see themselves as indestructible? "I have to laugh at this one because Fianna Fail are the Joe Soaps of Irish politics, within our party we have everyone, from those who have worked on factory floors, teachers, gardai, people who have worked in every profession. Our policy is all encompassing and can span many things. We are destructible, everyone is destructible. We feel strong, yet being strong and working from that platform is another thing, we do work from that platform and now more than ever in an

election year we need to be conscious of our vulnerability."

So with Fianna Fail popularity at an almost historic low what are the party's aims for the elections in June? "We hope to retain as many as we have, we hope to build on what we have. In my own instance, I hope I can gain a seat for the party in the locality but at the end of the day it is local politics and every seat is a seat and you have to fight for what you can get."

Sinn Fein are being muted as the big winners in June, Cathal has strong views on the party's right to participation in Irish politics. "Sinn Fein have called for a neutrality as regards the Nice Treaty several times in the Dail, but they are nothing short of hypocrites when it comes to their own sense of neutrality. Sinn Fein in my eyes have never put the gun out of Irish politics and as long as they keep the gun in Irish politics they're not welcome in the democratic chambers of Dail Eireann."

With his talk of shopping centres, church gates, bar stools and doorsteps, Cathal has the air of a veteran campaigner and he has confidence in his party's capabilities. So much so that he encourages the naysayers to put their money where their mouths are. "I think the students of UL could be more engaged in politics, I am not saying come out and vote for me next summer. But I would encourage them, if they don't like me, if they don't like my party, go out and vote against us, but don't criticise us when we're in office and you have not done anything to change what's going on. We believe in putting out a clear message and it's up to people then to decide what's best but I trust at the end of the day they will always come back to Fianna Fail, I hope so."

Postgraduate Study Fair 18 February, 2004

You might be considering postgraduate study for a variety of reasons:

- To improve your job prospects by acquiring new skills
- To become more specialised in a particular subject
- To prepare for an academic career in a university

Whatever your interest is in considering further study, now's the time to find out what's really involved. To help you explore the various possibilities, the Cooperative Education & Careers Division is organising a Postgraduate Study Fair on Wednesday, 18th February. The fair will take place in EGO 10 (the Examination Hall) in the main building. Opening hours will be from 12.00. until 3.00 p.m. This event will be open to all

students and graduates who are interested in finding out about postgraduate study opportunities in Ireland.

What's it all about?

The Postgraduate Study Fair is somewhat similar to the Careers Fair which was held in October. The objective is to provide students with relevant and up to date information on the range of postgraduate study opportunities available in Ireland. As one in four graduates continues on into some form of postgraduate study, this event provides an ideal opportunity to research all the options. Specialist staff from all the Irish Universities, a number of the Institutes of Technology, Research Centres and other institutions will be

available to answer questions on a range of issues including: selection procedures, application process, financial support, course content, employment prospects, etc. It will be a very informal atmosphere with plenty of opportunities for individual discussions with the experts.

What colleges will attend?

We expect to have about 30 exhibition stands covering the main postgraduate study and research opportunities in Ireland. UL will be very well represented as each College will have an individual stand with information on research and taught postgraduate study options. The Admissions Office will also be represented. A Guide to the event will be available on the day.

How to prepare for the Fair

- Call in to the Careers Resource Area in the Coop & Careers Office and check out the sources of information on postgraduate study in Ireland and abroad.
- Check the Postgraduate Study section of the Careers website at: <http://www.ul.ie/careers/careers/stugrad/postgrad.shtml>.
- Make note of the courses that interest you and prepare a checklist of questions in advance of the fair.
- On the day, collect a Guide to the Fair and decide which stands you want to visit.
- Call to the UL Careers stand if you have any general questions or if you want some advice on the day

In Memoriam

Jacinta O'Brien

Jacinta O'Brien was a woman who loved life and lived it to the full. Her friends, of whom she had many, fondly remember her huge generosity and extravagant sense of humour. She had an incredible capacity for remembering and keeping in touch, on both a personal and professional level, with the many people who came into her life.

Jacinta died suddenly and peacefully on Tuesday February 3rd at the age of 45. She will be sadly missed by her heartbroken husband Gerard Lyons, her sons Seán, Fergus and Jack, her loving parents Jack and Lil O'Brien, her sister Anna, brother-in-law Pdraig, their children Emma, Ruairi and Aoife, her brother Colm, sister-in-law Celine, the Lyons family and her many friends. All who knew Jacinta are shocked and deeply saddened by her untimely death.

Originally from the Lough, Cork, Jacinta lived in Castleconnell, where she started her family, and then Corbally before moving four years ago with her husband Ger to Ger's hometown of Ennis. A lecturer at the Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences (PESS) in the University of Limerick, she had, from an early age, an avid fascination with all kinds of sport. As captain she led the 1976 St Aloysius camogie team to victory in the All-Ireland senior colleges championship before travelling to Limerick to study physical education later that year. She also excelled at tennis and enjoyed success in both the South of Ireland and Limerick Open championships in the mid-1990s.

Jacinta graduated from Thomond College of Education (now UL) in 1980 with a First Class Honours degree and was joint recipient with Pat Duffy of the college's Oliver trophy for excellence. She began her teaching career at Christ the King Secondary School in Douglas, Cork, where she taught PE and Irish. She then went on to study for a Masters degree in education at Springfield College, Massachusetts before returning to Limerick to teach physical education at Villiers.

Jacinta was appointed sports and recreation officer at NIHE (now also UL) in the mid-1980s. She subsequently joined the teaching staff of the PESS, where she excelled as a teacher and researcher and was loved and respected by her students. Besides her involvement with the PESS, Jacinta served on the first board of the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC), was an honorary tutor of students taking the National Certificate in Exercise and Fitness (NCEF) and an external examiner for the Health and Leisure Studies course at the Tralee Institute of Technology. Physical Education professionals at every level of the Irish academic system will miss the professionalism, passion, commitment and vision Jacinta brought to all her work.

Renowned for her expertise in the area of sports psychology, Jacinta was due to submit her completed PhD research to Loughborough University later this year. Her doctoral work was the culmination of her investigation into the promotion of positive female body image through PE (dance) as well as through social, personal and health education. In an advisory capacity Jacinta also worked with women in the private sector on the subject of body image and was a lecturer on the Women's Studies course in UCC.

On a personal level Jacinta had many inter-disciplinary connections within UL - not least through her family. Her son Seán is a student of European studies and her husband Ger is a lecturer in the Electronics Department.

An avid lover of Irish language and culture, Jacinta enjoyed speaking Irish, was a regular contributor to Radio na Gaeltachta and was a keen set dancer. Her spirit dances on for all who knew her.

Ní imithe uainn atá si ach imithe romhainn.

Michael Murray

One could write thousands of words and still be nowhere near fully capturing the essence of the life that was led by Michael Murray. An enormously generous and kind-hearted man, who always had time for others, Michael was blessed with caret-gold charisma and unsurpassable quick wit. His extraordinary intelligence, that had throughout his life enabled him to adapt at lightening speed to whatever topic might have arisen in conversation, proved in the end to be the rock which he clung to in the face of a cruel and torturous illness. The world, which had been made infinitely richer by his existence, has now been made much emptier by his passing.

The huge turnout of peers at his funeral service was testament to the man's all-encompassing appeal and a fitting tribute to a life where actions always spoke louder than words. Despite being cruelly cheated out of a long life, Michael succeeded in touching more people's emotions during his short time on earth than many people do in a lifetime.

We, his friends, despite our loss, will always be eternally grateful that we were fortunate to have known him in the first place.

Despite being blessed with many abilities, he will always be best remembered first and foremost as a friend and companion who was perennially there to listen and offer advice and guidance with whatever problems vexed us. His putting of other people's issues before his own was the rule and not the exception with our friend and that is why we are proud to refer to him as one. Only since his passing have we realised what we are missing, as life without him has been very, very difficult. Yet we have taken comfort from the resilience and determination he displayed in his last few days and the knowledge that he would not have liked us to grieve excessively for him. He would have wanted us instead to go out and follow our dreams as he did when he searched for and found Sue, the kind of girl that he had been dreaming of his whole life.

Since he has passed we have been musing amongst ourselves as to how we all can best remember him and remember him we shall for being forgotten is a fate that will never befall our dear friend Michael Murray.

From his friends past and present in the University of Limerick.

Donald Earlie

She said I sold my soul today,
I heard yours had broken free and flown away
Kinda caught me by surprise
"That was one man that wore no disguise".
So is every spirit stole
Or do they merge above to form a whole?

Goodbye Donald Earlie, so quick of you to part
When your life was just beginning - new job and a new start.
Friends fading further - all this you could see
Bet when the lads carried the coffin
You were proud as you could be.

'Cause now we're all around you until we meet again
Instead of forgetting "the good old days",
We'll hold on to them as men.
You've done so much for so many,
We'll miss your smile and jeer,
Climb the seasons 4X4 to find
The trust you held so dear.

Arbeit Macht Frei

Auschwitz, Birkenau and Terezin

Visit Terezin, a concentration camp one hour north of Prague, and you will be left feeling nothing but numbness. Visit Auschwitz and Birkenau, the largest of the concentration camps, and you will be overwhelmed and possibly brought to your knees by the sheer scale and the precise organization with which the Holocaust was carried out. Here Anne Sheridan writes an account of her visit to these three camps.



Auschwitz was the central concentration/extermination camp of Jews and other 'undesirable' minorities, such as gypsies, during the Holocaust. Here, out of one-and-a-half million people out of approximately six million perished. Berlin, Brno, Brussels, Budapest, Greece, Hamburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Lyon, Minsk, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Riga, Terezin, Trieste, Verona and Warsaw were only a sliver of its connecting tangents.

As people stepped off the railway platform at Auschwitz they were divided into two groups - those fit to work (who would live, until they could work no more or died trying) and those who were deemed to be eligible for the gas chamber immediately.

Families were separated. Those really on their way to the chambers were informed instead that they were being taken for a bath. Dummy showers were fixed to the ceiling. Two thousand victims were crammed at once into a chamber that covered an area of only 210 square meters. The door was locked and Cyklon B was poured into the chamber. After twenty minutes the chamber was opened and corpses were stripped of their gold teeth, earrings, rings, hair and then transported to a crematory. Victims' personal belongings were destroyed.

It has now been revealed that the total amount of hair gathered from women murdered in the gas chambers weighed approximately 1,950 kilograms. The hair was sold by the SS as raw material

for the German textile industry. Traces of hydrogen cyanide, the basic poisonous component of Cyklon B, have actually been found in the examined hair. (Source: Institute of Forensic Expertise, Cracow Member of the General Commission of the investigation of Nazi crimes in Poland).

Those who momentarily escaped the chambers lived on less than 1,000 calories a day. Their only compelling thought was to find food, to evade sickness as the hospital was known as the waiting room to the gas chamber, to survive as long as possible and ultimately - to live.

After the liberation of Auschwitz, only 46 orphaned children/infants remained. The lucky ones - you might say. Many mothers were shot whilst holding their new-born babies. Now adults, they could visit Auschwitz as tourists and never know that they were born here. Or that their real parents - their biological parents - were exterminated here.

As we walked together but apart, the only sounds to be heard in the deafening silence were of wispy leaves rustling under the delicate footsteps of tourists. To disturb the nature of Auschwitz, even walking on leaves, felt like a further violation and insult on the deathbed of nearly two million Jews.

Respect naturally was showed. Even children, aged 10 and younger, on a four-and-a-half hour tour, behaved exceptionally. Nobody, except the tour guide spoke, and even she was quiet and hesitant in her words. Everyone was numbed to the bone. Faces hung



down, as if in shameful guilt or as if they belonged to the persecutors. Or even the persecuted.

The tour ended at the site where the crematoriums and gas chambers were bombed by dynamite on the 20th January 1945 to destroy evidence that such atrocities against mankind did

indeed take place.

The ruins of the site looked war-torn - bricks and metal wire all tangled and meshed together. Our tour guide even pointed to tiny fragments of human bones barely visible on the ground. Even more chilling and horrific was the sight of children's shoes, babies' garments and hundreds of empty containers of Cyclone B.

The group frayed. Friends wandered off. People found it hard to unite in their speechlessness, preferring to be on their own, trying to take it all in. An impossible task.

But I stayed by the ruins. The destruction. The cold air. The beauty of this barren landscape. The trees. The tall barbed wire fences. The children. Wanting to cry. But barely



managing to breathe. Completely mesmerized and immersed in that one site. For some reason I didn't want to leave.

I picked up a piece of a brick that was once part of a gas chamber and a downtrodden wet leaf, and carefully wrapped them in a sheet of A4 paper. Why - I really do not know. I didn't even know if it was allowed or even if it was just in bad taste. But something compelled me to do it and after a few minutes of reflection, what felt like days on end, I saw others musing over



the same idea. And acting on it.

I hated myself for doing it. I hated having to crush the leaves underneath me with the weight of my step. Every time I reached for my camera, I paused and shuddered. Then I proceeded to take the picture.

Eerie, numb, speechlessness, paralyzed - none of these words capture the feeling of being there. These words haven't been invented yet and I doubt they ever will. It is something you feel tremendously and not something you can accurately describe. What has happened is too insane.

I wondered how they would feel, those who died here, viewing the millions of people who come to visit these camps each year. Glad that respect was being paid to them? That what happened was being acknowledged? Or would they have felt prostituted, hunted down, as each lens zoomed in to focus on their tragedy?

The leaf and fragment of the brick I have kept for myself. The photographs are for you. For remembrance and acknowledgement. For it is the very least or perhaps the very most anyone can give.

"The one who does not remember history is bound to live through it again". - George Santayana, 1863-1952.



The Class Representative System

How does it work?

So the exams of last semester are over, it's the dawn of a new year and a new semester and thus the madness begins again! I hope you are all well rested after the break and ready for what I am sure will be an interesting second term. If you are new to the university Fáilte, I hope you are settling in well. To recap quickly on some of the events of last semester, I would like to emphasise the positive role the ULSU Class Representatives played within Students' Union and across University life. Last semester the Class Representatives took part in an Administration Weekend in Galway at the end of Week 4 where they received training and instruction for their roles for the year. All who participated enjoyed the training seminar immensely, learned something and met some new people. Another highlight from last semester was of course the presentation of the Class Representatives Certificates of Recognition to the Class Reps from the previous year. The presentation took place on Wednesday 10th of December 2003 in Plassey House. A reception was held after the Certificates were presented by Dr. Rodger Downer President of the University of Limerick and our own ULSU President Mr. Eoin Ó Broin. Dr Downer's presence at such an event demonstrates that the Class Representative body is receiving the recognition it deserves not just from the Students' Union but the University also. Dr Downer's speech expressed the need for the links between the Students Union and the University to be built upon so students and lecturers alike can get the most and the best out of college life. The parchments bear the University of Limerick seal and crest, the ULSU crest, Dr Downer's signature and also the signature of Mr. Eoin Ó Broin. The weight of significance behind the presentation of these certificates goes hand in hand with a huge expectation of hard work and dedication from the Class Representatives for a very often-thankless role. The Class Reps must fulfil certain criteria before qualifying to be in receipt of such an honour which has a certain prestige attached to it now, as this is a joint award from both the ULSU and the University of Limerick.

What Does Class Reps Council Do?

The Class Representative Council

determines Students' Union policy and is subject only to the student body itself. There are standing committees of Council, which deal with the workload of the Class Reps Council. The Class Representative Council is the third most powerful body of the Students' Union after Referenda and Union General Meetings.

The Class Rep Council consists of all Class Reps and members of the SU Executive Council. The Council meetings are held every two weeks starting in Week 2. The majority of the work done by the Class Reps involves dealing with class issues, and going to the meetings, where it is their responsibility to speak on behalf of their class in any debates or discussions that take place, and vote on the proposals.

If you are interested in becoming a Class Rep then call into the SU and ask for a form at reception or come upstairs to my office in Room 117 beside the C.C.O.'s office. I am here to ensure the maintenance of your Class Rep system, help you all to get as much out of the Students' Union as possible and to offer you support in dealing with the problems your class will encounter in the course of the year ahead. Each class is entitled to elect a representative to highlight their views or problems to the Students' Union. It is this liaison between the Class Reps' and the Students' Union that allows the Class Rep system to work effectively.

The most important thing to remember about the Class Representative system and how it works is that your participation is vital. If you do not participate then the system will inevitably break down. The Officers of the Students' Union are here to be told by you, the students, what exactly it is you want done. By becoming a Class Rep you effectively become "The Class Voice" as you are responsible for the communication of information between your class and the Students' Union. The Class Rep represents his/her class, makes representation to the Students' Union and also to the lecturers and academia.

So if you are interested in participating contact Gemma Nolan the Class Representative Development Officer in the Students' Union upstairs in Room 117 or via email at gemma.nolan@ul.ie. Mobile No: (086) 3840025

How to Quit Smoking

As we are all aware the forthcoming national ban on smoking in the workplace will take effect within the next month. Although UL has had a Smoke Free Working Environment Policy, in operation since 1997, the new legislation will mean that UL will have to make amendments to its current policy and remove all designated smoking areas from within the campus environment.

If you, like 70% of the smoking population, want to use this opportunity to kick the habit then these ten tips will be of use to you:

Top Ten Tips for Successful Quitting

Prepare to quit smoking

Write down your reasons for stopping and keep them close at hand. Weigh up the pros and cons.

Make a date to stop smoking

Some smokers cut down gradually with a plan for a quit date. However, most people who successfully quit smoking do so by stopping altogether and not by gradually cutting down. Pick your day to stop smoking and stick to it.

Support

Seek the support of family or friends.

Change your routine and plan ahead

Smoking is often linked to certain times and situations such as the first smoke in the morning, drinking coffee or alcohol. These are called your "triggers". Replace triggers with new activities that you don't associate with smoking. For example, switch to tea for a while.

Exercise regularly

Regular exercise contributes to good health, helps to manage your weight and can also improve the body's ability to meet the demands and stresses of daily living.

Think positive

You may find you experience withdrawal symptoms once you stop smoking. These are very positive signs that your body is recovering from the effects of tobacco. Coughing, irritability and sleep disturbance are some common symptoms. Don't worry, they're all perfectly normal and should disappear within a few weeks.

Learn to deal with cravings

Cravings can occur frequently during the first few days after stopping. A craving increases in intensity over a period of 3-5 minutes and then begins to subside.

Tips for cravings - the 4 Ds

Delay at least 3 minutes and the urge will pass.

Drink a glass of water or fruit juice.

Distract yourself. Move away from the situation.

Deep breathe. Breathe slowly and deeply.

Start saving money

Put away the amount of money you would normally spend on tobacco. Work out how much you spend on cigarettes per week, month and year. Then watch your savings grow.

Watch what you eat

If you're worried about gaining weight, be extra careful with your diet. Avoid snacking on chocolate bars and biscuits, try some fruit or chew sugar free gum instead.

Take one day at a time

Remember that every day without a cigarette is good news for your health, your family and your pocket.

Source: Irish Cancer Society

Remember you can also phone the QuitLine: 1850 201 203 (Run by the Dept. of Health & Children in partnership with the Irish Cancer Society)



Features & Opinion

Won't Somebody Please Think of the Children!

There is a very sinister and real threat to children today. However, you won't find this menace sporting a pair of dodgy eyebrows and hanging around playgrounds tempting vulnerable little kiddies with lollipops. No, this is a less obvious menace - it comes in the shape of a big purple and green dinosaur called Barney!

You may say to me, "Ah sure what harm could Barney do, isn't he so cute and cuddly?". Precisely my point! He is too cute and cuddly! Everyday, kids in Ireland and across the world are being manipulated by prehistoric creatures singing about brushing their teeth when those same children could be watching educational programs like Questions and Answers or if that's a little advanced - The Simpsons and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. (In the case of Buffy the lesson is simple - always give women what they want!)

When they look back in thirty years time as cynical, bad-minded wrecks of human beings with dead-end jobs, divorce papers to sign and aggravating chilblains they will wonder why they wasted their youth watching such nonsense instead of something that would have prepared them for the fulfilling lives they could have led.

Young kids today are being fed a television diet of sunshine and lollipops in a capitalistic world of crack cocaine which marches to the tune of kill or be killed! Children reared on such a diet naturally progress into young adults with a positive world view which is ruthlessly shattered when they realise that their ex-boyfriend or girlfriend was so disappointed with their relationship that after the break-up they converted to homosexuality. Employment-wise, they learn that "yes I can earn lots of money and buy a fancy car!" - until the firm lays everyone off, because they realise people

will work for fifty cents an hour in Nicaragua!"

At least in the good old days, children, rather than being given a whippee-skippy-do vision of life, were merely shown a slightly sugar coated variation of reality. Rainbow, for example, showed us that if we were not careful, by the time we were middle aged, we would all be sharing a poxy little flat with an irritating pink Hippo, a very un-grisly bear and a miscellaneous creature that looked kind of like a bun-burger complete with arms, legs and a zip as the filling.

Alternatively, if you were Irish you could have grown up to be unemployed, with no chance of having a sexual or loving relationship and forever travel around the country with an old woman, a crow and a dog with a circle around his eye for some reason. However Bosco - even though at times it might seem to have been an earlier version of Barney - at least gave some sense of reality. You knew that behind that simplistic red-cheeked wash-cloth was a fully grown woman lamenting that she spent the majority of her working days with her hand stuck up the anus of a bit of material. Then of course you had the presenters who, behind their fake smiles, must have been secretly saying "When is this fecking show going to be over, I'm gagging for a pint and a fag?!" The best thing about Bosco were the strangely entertaining cartoons - a mixture of plasticine animation and cardboard cut-outs - that looked like something out of an LSD trip.

Where is the realism in Barney? Leaving aside for the minute the fact that it does not bode well for our children's futures to have them believe that two dinosaurs still exist, live in America and speak fluent English - the show turns their mind into mush!

If a parent asks their children to wash their face and hands, they expect them to

just go into the bathroom and do it rather than burst into a verse of "This is the way we wash ourselves, wash ourselves, wash ourselves..." while smiling like someone after having a threesome with Jennifer Lopez and Kelly Brook. Just look at how happy those kids are - it's impossible. No-one smiles that much - not even Hugh Hefner! You just know deep down that these children are bound to end up as alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, murder suspects - or all four! If one casts their mind back to Diff'rent Strokes they would be forgiven for



thinking "what happy lives they must lead". Hence it puts things into perspective when you realise that the 'success story' of that series was Gary Coleman - the four-foot-something washed-up actor with financial and health problems. Strange to call him the success story, you might say, but he is doing better than a convict (Willis) and someone who died of a drug overdose (Kimberley). Behind that purple

dinosaur suit there has to be a man who wakes up saying to himself "Not those punk-ass kids again, what load of shite am I going to have to sing about today?"

We could blame ourselves, but rather, like everything else wrong in life I think we should blame the U.S administration. Consider this fictional yet highly likely piece of dialogue between the President and his chief adviser.

Chief Adviser: Sir, operation purple dinosaur has been successfully completed!

President: What exactly is operation purple dinosaur?

Chief Adviser: Well Mr President, basically we created a children's TV character so happy and frivolous that it will make our country's children too stupid to be able to question government policy!

President: A nation of stupid children, wonderful!

Chief Adviser: And one of them is bound to have a daddy rich enough to become president someday.

President: (a la Monty Burns) Excellent! Just one question?

Chief Adviser: What's that Mr. President?

President: What does frivolous mean?

So now you know the awful truth - a generation of zombies is being bred in an attempt to copper-fasten the political status-quo and general crappiness of the world. Therefore, my advice to parents is to seriously restrict your child/children's television viewing, until such a time as they invent a program about Deborah - the alcoholic alsatian, Padraig - the political-prisoner panda or Peter - the manic-depressive ostrich. Reality TV this isn't.

National Student Raceday Party

At Limerick Racecourse On
Thursday 26 February 2004

entertainment all provided for an
entry fee of just €10.

Following last year's success, the National Student Raceday takes place again this year at Greenmount Racecourse in Limerick on Thursday 26 February. The highlight of the day will be the University Challenge Race with each visiting University competing against each other.

Package includes:
Admission to the racecourse
Subsidised Bus Transport
Racecard
Supermac's Meal
Tote Mystery Bet
Entry to a Nite Club

So how does it work? In this University Challenge Race, each of the visiting universities will be allocated a horse and the winning university will receive a prize. The fabulous facilities at Ireland's newest racecourse make Limerick the perfect venue, with numerous bars, great viewing facilities and live

Last year over 2,000 students availed of this package attended from areas like Dundalk, Athlone and Dublin with many planning to return this year. All enjoyed the experience, and there were even a few successful gamblers who left with bulging pockets!

Being a seasoned race-goer, I was



surprised at the number of first-timer racegoers last year, and for those of you who have never been to the races, it is great fun, and there is a fantastic feeling when a horse you have picked out is galloping up the straight, and you can't help but get caught up in the moment of shouting for your horse to get its head in front at the winning post.

This year is promising to be bigger and better with many more students showing interest in the event. Subsidised bus transport is being provided for any students wishing to travel to the races. So don't miss out on the opportunity to get involved in what is going to be a great day out, see you there.

***V*iew**

An Focals Arts and ents Pages

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Music View

FRANZ FERDINAND
FRANZ FERDINAND

Released February 13th

It's only February and already we have a contender for album of the year - the eponymous debut album from the much-lauded, fantastically-monikered Glaswegian quartet Franz Ferdinand, whose second single, Take Me Out, recently crashed into the UK top three. The album itself is a cross between 80's rythmo-pop and rock, heavily influenced by bands like Joy Division and more recently The Strokes, British Sea Power and to a lesser extent The Coral.

The opening song, Jacqueline offers up not only British Sea Power style angular guitars throughout but also catchy, cheery lyrics gathering speed as it goes, building from a sweet acoustic introduction to a thunderous chorus. Alex Kapranos slyly introduces himself with the quietest moment of the whole record, just a croon and a guitar: "Jacqueline was 17, working on a

desk/When Ivor peered above his spectacles . . ."

The third track, the stand-out Take Me Out, as even the dogs in the street know by now, after a genius false start dramatically shifts gear by unexpectedly slowing down, introducing a funk beat, a fantastic chorus and a memorable guitar-riff. The band throw away a perfectly thrilling song after a minute and replace it with something twice as good and the lyrics are never less than quirky. The band manage to create something approaching high drama out of an unsuccessful attempt by the protagonist to woo the object of his affection at a party by imagining the thwarted lovers as snipers.

The Dark of the Matinee, a desperately obsessional unrequited schoolroom love story about escaping to the cinema has some excellent guitar work and an amazing chorus, as well as bizarre lyrics about Terry Wogan and a chat show featuring the band. ("So I'm on BBC2 now, telling Terry Wogan how I made it/And what I made isn't clear...). You have to admire any band whose idea of making it big is being interviewed by UL's own Terry Wogan.

Track 8 is their first single Darts of Pleasure, the release of which last year, like the beginning of Take Me Out was arguably a bit of a false start for the band. It is one of the weaker songs of the album and tends to be rather showy with its infamous German coda ("Ich heiBe Superfantastisch! Ich trinke Shampus mit Lachsfisch!") It is also placed badly on the album after a slew of excellent songs (Take Me Out, The Dark of the Matinee

and Auf Achse to name but a few.) The mood seems to dip slightly at this point of the album, if only slightly and the lull continues with Michael which is a love-song aimed squarely at a man. You simply don't get songs like Michael very often in current rock music and it is symptomatic of the originality that makes Franz Ferdinand so intriguing. Despite this originality however the opening few bars of the penultimate track on the album, Come on Home sound like those from Blondie's Heart of Glass. The rest of the track evokes the style of Take Me Out albeit with a slightly mellowed out chorus. The final track is 40ft, which with its pumping guitars which suddenly appear from nowhere is a fitting end to an excellent album. Despite the clichés, Franz Ferdinand are the one to watch this year. They have absorbed their influences, fully digested them, taken what they need without any slavish imitation and developed a sound that is simply their own. I can only see them going from strength to strength, because despite it being so early on into 2004 already Franz Ferdinand seem to be the benchmark to aim for by any debut album release this year. *GL*

Rating: 9/10

WAITING ROOM
CATERING FOR HEADPHONES

Cork three-piece, Waiting Room, are the good guys of rock, or so it seems. Nigel, Dave and Wayne create a sound that could be niceness incarnate. And believe

me, I mean nice in the most positive way I can. Formed three years ago, the band have just released their second album, Catering For Headphones, on new Cork/Limerick independent label Out On A Limb.



The album is a gentle delight. From the very opening notes, serial killers aside, it impresses you with its utter NICENESS! I'm sure that isn't a very rock thing to say, but no review of Waiting Room could be complete without saying it. These are nice guys, playing very nice music.

They are first and foremost a rock band, heavily instrumental, with liberally sprinkled sad, sweet vocals fitting the sound. There's a definite post-rock influence on the songs, with intricate interplay between guitar, bass and drums, startling tempo and dynamic changes but these boys aren't trying too hard to jump on the Redneck Manifesto bandwagon. Their sound is warm and accessible, even on the faster, more complicated tunes.

The lyrics, in those songs that have any, are wistful for the most part, allegedly because singer Nigel just sits in his room and thinks sad thoughts all the time. These songs are complemented on the album by lush string arrangements and sweet, subdued female backing vocals.

The band have just played in Limerick and are embarking on a tour of the country, as well as spending a week touring in England. They may well be playing in a town near your soon. Checkout www.waitingroomfun.com.

Catering for Headphones is on sale in Empire Music and HMV. *SR*

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Thursday Week 2

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Music View

RULERS OF THE PLANET WE ARE THE LATE-NIGHT TERROR DEATH SQUAD.

This latest offering from Cork five-piece, Rulers of the Planet is a four track follow-up to last year's much-played ep, "Nobody Understands the Devils' music better than the Rulers of the Planet."

Rulers of the Planet's incendiary live shows have quickly become the stuff of legend, earning huge critical praise for their show-stealing appearance at 2003's IMRO Showcase at Dublin's The Village.

TV appearances and a Fanning Session quickly followed and while being courted by several labels from the UK and US, the band have continued to put out their scorching brand of explosive rock on their own label.

We Are The Late Night Terror Death Squad should confirm to anyone who heard their excellent debut that Rulers of the Planet are at the top of the pile of this country's hard rocking bands.

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY BIKINI ATOLL REST Highstool, Feb 6th



This was it, boys and girls. The place to be was the High Stool, and it felt like everyone knew it. After sell-out gigs in Dublin and Cork, Texan instrumental post-rockers, Explosions in the Sky were coming to Limerick. And they were bringing Rest and Bikini Atoll with them. The rest of us were just along for the ride.

First up were Cork band, Rest. I've been a fan of these boys for quite the while, but I'm not being biased when I say that they almost always impress almost everyone. Mogwai better watch their backs is what a lot of people say. They do have their own unique sound though, and heads are listening to what they have to offer. Their debut album is coming out sometime in late spring, and tonight they're in blistering form. You can tell that they're really thrilled to be playing on a bill with Explosions, they are inspired.

Next up are Bikini Atoll, from Bella Union Records, the same stable as Explosions...

The NME described these guys (and gal) as "Like Echo And The Bunnymen playing post-rock on mushrooms". This could be a fair enough description. Playing and posing in almost equal measure, this London four-piece could have stolen the show on any other night but tonight. Instrumental post-rock is what this crowd is looking for, and while bikini atoll impress, they fall somewhat

short of spectacular.

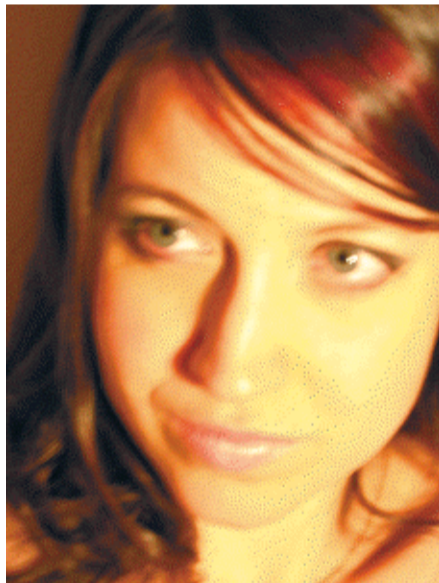
And then it was time for Explosions in the Sky. My reviewing skills, never particularly good, have almost deserted me on this one. Suffice to say that the Texans' magical, uplifting, powerful and resonant melodies brought a smile to the face of all who were listening, and a tear to many an eye.

Drawn-out suspenseful build-ups, military drumming and a breathtaking interplay between the instruments held the audience spellbound. The title of their album, "The Earth is Not a Cold Dead Place" gives some indication of the deep joy in their music. While some interludes were crashing and angry, it was an anger that resulted in determination and hope.

While the set continued it seemed as if they had always been playing for us, but all too soon, they had to stop. Not even a two minute ovation could bring them back to us. The feeling of elation and comradery through the back bar of the high stool was evidence that we had witnessed something truly special.

A contender for gig of the year? It may be early days yet, but this is one that will live long in the memories of those of us who experienced it.

RACHEL LOSHAK SCHOLAR'S BAR MARCH 2ND



The intimate setting of the Scholar's Function Room is becoming something of a platform for new emerging talent on the Irish music scene these days, playing host in the past to notable performers such as Josh Ritter, Mark Geary and Brendan O'Shea. The same can be said of singer/songwriter Rachel Loshak who performed in the function room last November. Based in New York, Rachel's creative output comprises three albums to date: Here I Am (1999), Firefly (2001) and Mint (2003), with a fourth currently in production. Rachel's music has had an important impact on the New York singer/songwriter scene where she has played and collaborated with the likes of Norah Jones and Jesse Harris. In addition, she features alongside Norah Jones and Jesse Harris on the 'Best of the Living Room' compilation released late 2002. She also performed with Norah Jones at the Grammy awards last year. Thus, her performance in the Scholars was awaited with much anticipation and excitement.

Playing on the first night of her second Irish tour she quite simply 'wowed' the

crowd with her operatic voice, accomplished bass playing and spiralling melodies and lyrics. Rachel is a truly talented and inspiring artist who delivers her songs to you like a gift. Starting with 'Rita', she silenced the crowd who were simply glued to their seats, overawed by her performance. Tracks performed included 'Never Look Back', an upbeat and defiant song, 'Sweet as Sin', which takes you on a journey through memories of hope and love and 'Did I Forget?' a

If you missed Rachel last time around you will have the chance to see her again at the Scholars Bar on Tuesday March 2nd and Wednesday March 3rd in the Quarter Club.

Support on the night is from Galway-based band 'Lucas' (<http://www.lucasade.com>).

Doors open at 7.30pm at the Scholars Function Room and tickets are priced 6.50 euro and 5 euro (student rate). For any further information, please contact Graham Brennan at (086) 865 3892.

In the meantime you can get a little taster of Rachel's music on her website: <http://www.rachelloshak.com>.

simple questioning of her and her lover's actions.

Rachel's sincerity always shines through in her performances as was the case in the function room where she simply charmed the audience with her playing. It was hard at first to know whether or not the audience was stunned to silence or simply overwhelmed by the occasion. The answer came in rapturous applause at the end of one track in particular, 'When the Moon and the Sun'. This may strike you as hyperbole, but on this particular night the audience truly responded to her warm and mystical vocals. Some of Rachel's lyrics can be dark and enthralling, others upbeat and simple but all literally captivated the crowd, who cried out for more. After two encores, and a very crowd pleasing rendition of 'The Sally Gardens', she left the stage to rapturous applause, spending the next twenty minutes talking to and thanking many of the people who turned out on the night.

To sum up Rachel's talent one would have to say that she is an enchanting songwriter, a polished and accomplished performer and, without doubt, her arrival heralds a fresh and unique addition to the Irish music scene.

VDAY FUNDRAISER GIG High Stool Jan 29th



On a cold January night, many of

Limerick's finest (and I) braved the temperatures and the transport system to lend their support to a fine cause - LSAD's VDAY College Campaign.

I arrived at a fairly quiet high stool just in time to see Bishops Love Sci-Fi start his set. This is a one man and a guitar job, but the songs are a lot more in the vein of acoustic pop-punk/baby-emo than anything else I can think of. Try to imagine the Ataris with no amps singing about drink problems and odd socks instead of just about girls. His endearing set finishes with a Hank Williams song,, proving beyond a doubt that emo is country music with baggier pants or sillier hats.

Next up are smarty-pants punk brats, FunBobby. These kids know their stuff, the seem to have been playing together since they were in nappies (about a year and a half). To put it quite simply, these guys are punk in the vein of Green Day, and if you liked Dookie, you'll like Funbobby. To be fair, I can't make out a single lyric, so they could well be astute political commentators. Never mind, it's rapid fire youthful energy alternating between enthusiasm and confusion, and I like it!

Taking the stage next is Niall Quinn, he of the Pennywhores and formerly of the Hitchers. Once again it's a one man and a guitar job, with simple singalong melodies and interesting lyrics. But the difference is that the man's a complete psycho. He comes across all nice and normal but the lyrics are like Half-Man Half Biscuit meets Hannibal Lecter. Or something. He can jump from murder to football and back to murder in the space of a few songs. Still, he's right. Dream Team jersey wearers should be shot on sight!

It's my first time seeing Hatch 77, the next act, and I'm quite impressed. They're very 'next big thing' with lots of noise and galloping tunes with an air of hipster. They may end up NME darlings or they may have missed the boat. All that matters now is that feet are tapping, heads are nodding and smiling, and some guy in the corner is dancing the funky chicken. Keep an eye out for these guys. Headliners tonight are Supermodel Twins, formerly known as the Riffs. They've streamlined their operation since they started out, and most of Limerick has them pegged as one to watch. They come across as a band that have been playing for years, and playing venues a lot larger than the High Stool at that. This could have something to do with the lead singer's fringe, which is remarkable in its almost at the chin, asymmetrical floppiness. Their sound is assured and catchy, and if it's all a little bit overly appealing, there's noone complaining. It's straight-up rock and it's doing the job. It's good to know that the gig raised a lot of funds for the VDAY Campaign (see pg 19), but it's a pity that there was not one single vagina onstage to bring us the rock.

Maybe next time.

If you think you could be a better reviewer than me, email sucommunication@ul.ie for a free trial!

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View



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Movie View

SCARY MOVIE 3



The Scary Movie horror spoof franchise goes for a third round, this time taking shots at Signs, The Ring and, bizarrely, 8 Mile.

Story

The re-emergence of horror movies in recent years has helped recreate the most inescapable monster of all: The spoof. This latest lampoon strings together scenes and characters primarily from three films, Signs, The Ring and 8 Mile, with a little Matrix thrown in for good measure, and unifies them into a single 90-minute feature. Is it funny? Sure, on occasion. The film follows Scary Movie series heroine Cindy Campbell (Anna Faris), now a college grad starting her first professional job as a local TV news reporter. Investigating the mysterious appearance of crop circles in ex-minister Tom Logan's (Charlie Sheen) farm, Cindy develops feelings for Tom's brother George (Simon Rex), a wannabe rapper. Suddenly her friend Brenda (Regina Hall), becomes the latest to be killed seven days after watching a mysterious videotape circulating around. After seeking advice from Brenda's Oracle-like Aunt Shaneequa (Queen Latifah), and having a run-in with The Architect (George Carlin), Cindy learns she is "The One," and the crop circles and videotape deaths are somehow connected. It's up to her to help the president (Leslie Nielsen) prevent an alien invasion.

Acting

SM3 has put Sheen, no stranger to this genre (Hot Shots!), in its cast, but the actor is pitifully wasted. His character Tom has to be the most boringly written in the film and should have been much more of a wiseass. His real-life wife, actress Denise Richards, has a small role as his on-screen wife but her lines in their one scene together, a piss-take of Signs in which she's been hit by a truck and reveals her dying wishes to her husband, could have been a lot more creative than "NO MORE SEX!" As Tom's brother, sweet but dim-witted George, Rex has much funnier lines and sight gags and the chance to put his perfectly clueless expression to work. SM3 alum Faris, like Sheen, falls victim to some unfunny dialogue and her character Cindy is too over-the-top stupid; she irritatingly delivers practically every line as if she was asking a question. Hall, who had some of the most brilliant, laugh-out-loud moments

in the original Scary Movie, is completely wasted--her hilarious character Brenda is killed off early on and reappearances of her lifeless corpse are all you see the rest of the movie. On a brighter note, there are some great cameos by Queen Latifah as Aunt Shaneequa, Eddie Griffin as Orpheus and Anthony Anderson as George's friend Mahalik.

Direction

The Scary Movie franchise was originally created for Dimension Films in 1999 by the Wayans brothers, who absconded from the series entirely after the second installment. The studio confidently gave the Scary Movie 3 reins to veteran comedy director David Zucker, whose '80s spoofs--Airplane!, Top Secret! and the Naked Gun series--rang true with brilliance. Sadly, with Scary Movie 3, the director/producer demonstrates how out of touch he is with pop culture and spoof fans. While there are a number of good gags scattered throughout the movie, including a jab at M. Night Shyamalan's cameo appearance in Signs, Zucker fails to assemble them into a coherent comedy. Zucker also lacks the irreverence that Scary Movie director Keenen Ivory Wayans has and too often falls back on bathroom humour and excrement gags such as stepping (or in this case, kneeling) in dog shit. The result is a spoof that lacks the scandalous effect of his hit comedy Airplane! and the cleverness of his 1984 World War II send-up Top Secret!. But the most baffling thing about SM3, however, is the spoofing of the film 8 Mile, which not only doesn't fit in a parody of scary movies.

Bottom Line

Those who haven't seen the movies being spoofed should skip Scary Movie 3 altogether. Those who can pick them out will laugh at some of the references, but will also have to sit through some painfully bad scenes and plotlines to get to them. **NM**



THE SCHOOL OF ROCK



RICHARD LINKATER, director of such indie classics as Slacker and Dazed and Confused takes a surprise dive into the mainstream mosh pit with School of Rock and goes to the top of the class for his efforts. Starring the larger-than-life Jack Black as Dewey Finn, a penniless rock guitarist, School of Rock manages to coax from Black the kind of inspired leading-man performance that his scene-stealing turn in High Fidelity (2000) so

tantalisingly promised.

Under Linklater's direction we are first introduced, via a creative opening credit sequence, to the ego that is Dewey Finn as he literally falls flat on his face while attempting to crowd-surf during a gig his band No Vacancy are playing. Fed-up with his self-indulgent guitar solos and impromptu on-stage stripping, his band mates have finally had enough and next day conspire to eject him from the band. Things go from bad to worse for Dewey as his nerdy flatmate Ned Schneebly (Mike White, who wrote the screenplay), usually a soft-touch when it comes to hitting Dewey for the rent, is goaded by his whining girlfriend Patty to issue his friend with an ultimatum - pay up or move out.

Ned is a substitute teacher - so when a call comes through offering him a lucrative few weeks' work at an exclusive elementary school - Dewey pretends to be him and snaffles the gig for himself despite not even being able to spell Ned's surname. Arriving with a roaring hangover and attitude to match, Dewey - or Mr. S as he now calls himself - proceeds to inform his impressionable young charges that recess will now be the order of the day - every day - for the duration of his stay. However, he has a change of heart when he happens upon his pupils during their music lessons and realises-in a scene reminiscent of Sister Act 2 - that he has a class of musical prodigies on his hands.

Inspired to mould them into a band with whom he can challenge his old band mates in the local Battle of the Bands competition and win twenty thousand dollars in the process he seizes his chance to stick it to 'The Man' (i.e the establishment and basically everyone who has conspired to keep him in his place in life). Assigning roles from lead-guitarist (for the musically gifted) to groupie (for the not-so musically gifted) to everyone in the class Dewey even creates a potential contender for music mogul David Geffen's crown in the shape of ex-swot come band manager Summer. From the band's initial incarnation as simply a vehicle for Dewey's woeful song /rant against his former band-mates, the evolution of The School of Rock (as it is named by the students) from dictatorship to democracy is also an education for the previously self-obsessed Dewey.

School of Rock is a smart, funny and irresistible crowd-pleaser with something for everyone - even Darkness fans. The only song ever allowed by the band to appear on any film soundtrack - Black Shuck - is used to complement the scene where the young drummer goes AWOL. Endorsed by The Darkness - do you need a more valid reason to go see this film? Grade A stuff.

GL



SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE



A sixtysomething playboy meets a fiftysomething playwright under less-than-ideal circumstances, and together they discover that old dogs can indeed learn new tricks.

Story

At 63, Harry Sanborn (Jack Nicholson) has everything every guy wants: Money, power and hordes of women under 30 throwing themselves at him. His current flame is Marin (Amanda Peet), whose mom, famous Broadway playwright Erica Barry (Diane Keaton), has a sweet beach house in the Hamptons. The older guy - younger woman couple has a romantic weekend in mind when they take the Long Island Expressway out to mom's fancy shack, but their plans change when her high-strung mom and feminist aunt Zoe (Frances McDormand) turn up there, too, catching Harry raiding the fridge in his briefs. After such inauspicious beginnings, it's not surprising that Harry and Erica are at each other's throats, and shortly thereafter, the stress gets to Harry and his ticker gives out. After consulting with local doc Julian Mercer (Keanu Reeves), the crew decides that Harry, unable to travel, will have to recuperate in the Hamptons, and Erica gets stuck taking care of the reluctant patient in her home while trying to write her new play. It all gets complicated when Erica and Harry start to fall for each other, Marin breaks it off with Harry, and Julian gets a yen to play doctor with Erica.

Acting

A deliciously well-cast romp, Something's Gotta Give offers the versatile Keaton a sexy, funny role, something that's no doubt hard for a woman over 30 to find in a town like Hollywood, where lipo-sucked hips, puffed lips, tucked tummies and bouncy boobs tend to get more screen time than intelligent, successful fiftysomething women whose brains are their biggest asset. Keaton runs with the opportunity, proving that older women can still be sexy and turning in what may be her best comic performance since Annie Hall. If her character is just the tiniest bit familiar, she makes up for it with impeccable timing and great delivery of the film's generally smart dialogue. For once, Nicholson's performance is enhanced by sharing the screen with an actress instead of the other way around; Keaton is every bit a match for his legendary talent and often commands more attention than he does. Still, when the movie falls a bit flat, and it occasionally does, it's in the chemistry between the Nicholson and Keaton, she and Reeves make a much sexier onscreen couple. McDormand is formidable and

Movie View

funny as Erica's sister Zoe, but her character regrettably all but disappears after the first act. Peet and Reeves don't have much to do comically compared to their older counterparts, but they do well playing it straight against the rest of the outrageous cast.

Direction

Director/writer/producer Nancy Meyers is known for making films like this one with strong female characters. From her first producing/writing effort with Private Benjamin in 1980 to 2000's What Women Want, which she produced, Meyers' choice of films has changed with the times but stayed true to her primary focus, intelligent comedies with great roles for women. If her 1998 directorial debut with The Parent Trap remake could have been better chosen, she's redeemed herself with Something's Gotta Give. Women everywhere, especially those of a certain age, will find in this film at last a love story that makes sense, and moviegoers around the country should be thrilled to see Nicholson finally get wise and hook up with somebody his own age.

Bottom Line

Something's Gotta Give may not be as good as it gets, but it's an intelligent, funny look at relationships with mostly sparkling dialogue and a great performance from Diane Keaton. *NM*



BIG FISH



A son has heard tall tales from his father his entire life; now his father is dying, and he's trying to understand the man behind the vivid imagination. Based on the novel by Daniel Wallace.

Story

Edward Bloom (played in his younger years by Ewan McGregor and as an older man by Albert Finney) is not an easy man to get to know, but everybody he meets loves him. William (Billy Crudup) has come home hoping to confront his father, whose incredible fictions enriched his childhood but made him an embittered adult. They both

know that soon, the only story left to tell will be the one whose ending Edward has kept secret his entire life: the vision of his death that the witch showed him in her glass eye.

Acting

Because the stories from the past and the present are interwoven so closely, Big Fish is a little hard to grasp in the beginning. Because the story's so complex, the characters aren't immediately accessible even though the acting is generally good--barring a few slips in the Southern accents from McGregor and Alison Lohman. Once we start to get the gist, though, it becomes clear that Big Fish has some very rich, rounded, complex characters, played well across the board. Finney stands out with an intelligent and moving turn as the older Edward among a cast of highly regarded thespians, including Jessica Lange, Helena Bonham Carter and Steve Buscemi. A five-time Academy Award nominee but never a winner, Finney may see another nod--and given his empty mantel, maybe even a win--for this role in the Best Supporting Actor category come February.

Direction

Next to the originality of the story, Tim Burton's direction is perhaps the most compelling thing about Big Fish. Known for embracing his inner weirdness in films such as The Nightmare Before Christmas and Edward Scissorhands, Burton continues that trend with Big Fish's "tall tale" sequences. The director restrains the freaky side of his creative impulse during the reality segments, proving himself as adept at serious drama as he is at fantasy. The cinematography and set design throughout are as gorgeous as they are appropriate to each segment's theme: The fantasy--of foggy lakeside sunrises, the quaint yet not-quite-right town of Spectre and its soft-focus hoedown, the dark haunted forest--contrasts with the stark reality of the hospital ward and a dying father's deathbed. Director of photography Philippe Rousselot, who worked with Burton on the director's last film, the ill-conceived Planet of the Apes, captures every meticulous detail of the magical sets designed for this movie.

Bottom Line

A highly original story--part fantasy, part family drama, mixed with very high production values, courtesy of one of cinema's most original directors and his team, makes Tim Burton's Big Fish a good catch. *NM*



If you fancy yourself as a bit of a critic, call in to the communications office or email

sucommunication@ul.ie

ulartsoffice

Monday 23 February 04

> SECRETARY
Director : Steven Shainberg
USA / 2002 / 104 mins

Featuring self-mutilation, arm restraints, and liberal doses of adult spanking, Steven Shainberg's film Secretary may scare off potential viewers (actually, then again...) This would be a shame as this good S & M love story is an imaginative and often amusing exploration of sexual difference and, on a wider scale, of how we perceive, categorise and react to what is atypical. The film centres on the increasingly bizarre (sexual) relationship that develops between Lee (Maggie Gyllenhaal), a shy, young woman who has just been released from an institution, and a stern and emotional isolated lawyer, E Edward Grey (James Spader). Eager to please, Lee seems perfectly suited to her new employer's demanding requirements. Yet Grey appears impossible to satisfy and becomes even more domineering, berating Lee for the smallest transgressions, until finally her repeated typing errors result in a physical chastisement. It marks the beginning of a dominant / submissive sexual relationship, one that paradoxically seems to liberate Lee and helps ease her psychological difficulties. In contrast, Grey remains frozen from emotional contact and becomes even more remote as the relationship continues. It is easy to see why Secretary won a special jury prize for originality at the Sundance film festival last year - this warm, intelligent film avoids the temptation to stereotype its characters and remains engrossing to the end.

Alan Brennan - The Irish Independent
Monday 23 February 04

Jean Monnet Theatre, 6pm

Where's Ben?

New Year, New Destinations



High Flying...

After a relaxing Christmas in the Garden our amazing traveling Gnome is off again!

Although we don't have a clue where he's off to, he did send us this snap from the plane. Hmmm.... Find out next week I guess!

Nersth

Arts View

The Love Hungry Farmer

Starring Des Keogh
Feb. 16th - 21st at the Belltable

This Farmer's a Charmer

When a New York Times reviewer describes a one-man show as "singular theatre...a fiercely serious and bruisingly hilarious suicide note." People tend to sit up and pay attention. The show in question is a John B. Keane adaptation and the actor at the centre of it is one Des Keogh.

When Keogh opened "The Love Hungry Farmer" in a tiny studio at the Irish Repertory Theater in New York last January, the NYT critic wasn't the only one to be impressed. The show sold out, and subsequently moved to the main stage, after a hatful of positive reviews praised Des Keogh's "razor-sharp definition" and storytelling skills. "The actor", declared the Associated Press, "is a wonder".

Keogh approached John. B about five years ago for permission to adapt "Letters of a Love Hungry Farmer". "When I read it I realised there was great material in it for a one-man show". Keogh continues "I had been on the look-out for suitable material for some years and this, I thought, was manna from heaven. It was funny, sad, rich in poetic language and had an array of fascinating characters. I straightaway wrote to John B. asking for his permission to adapt the letters and had a lovely reply from him."

THE LOVE - HUNGRY FARMER tells the story of John Bosco McClane, a bachelor who at 56 is, according to his own assessment, "past his best" and



evidently still a virgin. McLane's amorous adventures range from the cartoonish to the pitiful. He has tales of being led on and humiliated, outraged and offended, duped and shamed. Even the strenuous efforts of matchmaker, Dicky Mick Dicky O' Connor fail him! Given the rave reviews Des has already received for show and his strong Limerick fan base this is one show sure to sell fast. "The Love Hungry Farmer" runs Mon. 16th - Feb. 21st February at 8.00pm. 'This farmer's a charmer: The Village Voice; 'FIERCELY SERIOUS AND BRUISINGLY HILARIOUS New York Times 'KEOGH IS A WONDER, A MASTER STORY TELLER' Associated Press. Looking forward to his Limerick run at Belltable, no doubt Shannon-side audiences are sure to enjoy the amorous exploits of John Bosco McLane as much as the New Yorkers did!!

Booking from Belltable box Office at 061 319 866
Tickets cost: €20/ €18

The Return of Limerick Poetry

So there I was in the union minding my own business when I walk into Sarah's office. "Hey Jim your our new poetry correspondent!" This is the same Sarah who didn't want to give me a poetry column even after our commander and chief thought it'd be cool (harrumph plug plug plug). Then things got a little bit hazy and when I came too I was in the white house holding my little book of poetry that was given to me by my ex girlfriend of evilness.

The back ground to the rest of this article is the fact that the white house has been holding poetry readings for the past few months every Wednesday. I'd read their once before and upon arriving noticed my picture in the window (tip to my stalkers who haven't had a chance to snag a picture of me yet). The format of the evening is that every week a guest poet comes who is normally accomplished and published with all the Pulitzers and grand slam titles etc. the evening starts out with an open mike session where any one who writes poetry can read their scrawlings. This evening's guest was Laura E. J. Moran, An American poet hailing from the great state of New York. This lady actually has won the grand slam.

The evening started with readings from some local poets. Some were

incredible such as one of limericks finest poets John Carmody. Some were diabolical and shouldn't have been let near the mic. With over reliance on rhyme. After the usual babble of s*** came a few poets from Mary I. Who all wrote (all be it very well) about pessimism as all us young poets do who have nothing better to write about. Followed by to amazing Irish poets. The first was Trish Casey who's amazing use of alliteration made me want to get a recording as no written format could have portrayed the poems meaning half as well. Followed by Tim Eddings from Kerry who's poetry captured rural life in the most amusing way since I saw grandpa get into an argument with a cow. Afterward came me and needless to say it was brilliant and I deserve a medal.

Then came the crowd pleaser where Laura read us her chops. The incredible emotion she managed to portray was like nothing I knew existed. She wrote from the heart and managed to express it in her performance. The Awesome hurt, pain and joy made me want to cry and give her a hug. Then it was over and the crowd cried out for an encore (the first time I've ever heard for that happening at a poetry reading).

Jim Heneghan

Lovers

By Brien Friel
Belltable, 23-28th Feb

Island Theatre Company

Lovers comprises two short complementary one-act plays, Winners and Losers. In the first play, WINNERS, the lovers are a young couple preparing for their final school exams and their imminent wedding. In the second play, LOSERS, the lovers are older, but their love is no less real. It is their marriage that brings its share of compromises and unhappiness. These plays have become perennial favourites with theatre companies and audiences around the world.

Admission €18 Concession €15

These pages are a snapshot of what's going on in Limerick over the next couple of weeks.

Make it your new semester's resolution to try to experience some of it!

for further information, try

www.theamc.net
www.belltable.ie
www.dolans.ie
www.uch.ie
www.thehighstool.com

If you have a performance of any kind coming up, email sucommunication@ul.ie

Tina O'Connell / Tjibbe Hooghiemstra Night Flight

Limerick City Gallery of Art
January 16th - February 25th 2004

Trying to think of something to do with your spare time that challenges you cerebrally? A visit to Limerick City Gallery of Art might be just the thing for you. From now until the 25th of this month the gallery is hosting two major exhibitions by two significant artists.

Limerick-born, London-based artist Tina O'Connell has a very high international profile and over the last five years has created highly original sculptures and objects. Her untitled exhibition has been referred to by many critics as being her best work to date, incorporating as it does existing work recently commissioned for the new Irish Culture Headquarters in France and specially commissioned new work made specifically for the new south gallery here. This exhibition symbolizes a sort of homecoming for her but judging by the prominence given to the Irish environment and landscape in the work of the other exhibitor, Tjibbe Hooghiemstra, one might be forgiven for believing that another local artist could be the visionary behind his project. Despite hailing from the Netherlands, Hooghiemstra has built up many Irish connections and associations during his time spent working on the Cill Rialaig Project in County Kerry and as artist in residence at Annaghmakerrig.

The first object that one notices on entering the gallery is the visitor's book which really gives the exhibitions a run for their money in terms of entertainment value. From the bemused and sarcastic to the down-right hilarious, the comments written there help to build up a sense of excitement and trepidation as to what exactly inspired these people to express themselves so eloquently! That question is soon answered when one enters O'Connell's largely black and white minimalist exhibition on the ground floor. Several large random crystal spheres seem to have rolled carelessly

into the various rooms of the show and even into the room which houses the permanent collection itself. O'Connell uses her art to explore the mundanity of our physical surroundings and to make us aware not only of what is in front of us, but underneath our feet too. A case in point is 'Peckham Pothole'- a simple cast made from the bane of every rural Irish motorist's life - yes, the lowly pothole! The sparseness of the project tends to both challenge and frustrate the viewer in equal measure in that it can be interpreted in an infinite number of ways.

The first floor of the gallery is host to Hooghiemstra's 'Night Flight' show which is an altogether more natural and colourful affair. Mainly through the use of watercolours Hooghiemstra succeeds in replicating on paper the quality of Irish rain, light and environment. Complemented by two short poems by John Brown at the top of the gallery stairs, the elusiveness of Hooghiemstra's work serves to amplify the fragmentary nature of Brown's strangely cryptic verse:

I'm Excited
Most
By what
I don't know
Where does
Land end
Or lake begin
After snow?

Though not as challenging as O'Connell's work, Hooghiemstra's exhibition is elusive enough to make any reviewer feel that words could not do it justice. Both projects deserve a visit to the gallery, admission is free and while you're there don't forget to sign the visitor's book!

Grace Loftus

Arts View

Calendar of Events 16th - 29th Feb

16th:

Dolans: Gus Black - *from L.A., warm acoustic guitar and piano-based pop arrangements and heartfelt lyrics info here* Doors at 9pm Tickets €10

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer (see preview)

Highstool - Sunshine Cab Co -jazz/funk

17th

LSAD - Vagina Monologues (see preview)

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer (see preview)

HighStool - LIT Battle of the Bands

18th

LSAD - Vagina Monologues

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer

Highstool - The Names

Dolan's - DOT COMedy Club with Daniel Kitson, MC Karl Spain

19th

LSAD - Vagina Monologues

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer

Highstool - Lucas

Dolan's Footwork Club: The Sugarhill Gang - (*Rap HipHop Legends*) followed by Shane Slattery and Marc O'Neill

20th

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer

Highstool - Stars of the City (*hook-filled, amazingly good tunes*) with Seven Even Words (*admission €4*)

Dolan's - Metalitia - *Metallica Tribute Band*

21st

Belltable - The Love Hungry Farmer

Highstool - Niall Quinn and the Pennywhores

Dolan's - Le Roy Troy the "Tennessee Slicker" *bluegrass banjo & fiddle player from Tennessee... 'the real deal'*

22nd

Highstool - The Makings

All details are correct at the time of printing

23rd

Belltable - Lovers (See preview)

Highstool - Sunshine Cab Co.

24th

Belltable - Lovers

Highstool - Articulate (*poetry, writings, songs from the audience*)

25th

Belltable - Lovers

Highstool - Open Mic Night

Dolan's - Preston Reed - *a guitarist of many parts - so many parts that when he brings them all into play, first-time listeners often find it impossible to believe that they're hearing just the one musician, in real time*

26th

Belltable - Lovers

Dolan's - DOT COMedy Club with John Whitehead, Dermot Carmody, MC Karl Spain

Ger Wolfe & The New Skylarks - *from Cork, a writer, singer and performer of absolute originality, imagination and flair*

Footwork Club: FISH GO DEEP's Greg Dowling and Shane Johnson

27th

Belltable - Lovers

Highstool - Mourning Beloved

Dolan's - Ten Speed Racer *exciting guitar band from Dublin with the same name as a band called Ten Speed Racer from Australia*

28th

Belltable - Lovers

Highstool - AMC presents Squall (*Czech rockers*)

UCH - Phil Coulter, with Rebecca Storm and Sweet Charity
Dolan's Frankie Lane & The El Paso Band with some very special guests

29th

High Stool - The Makings

Squall

Highstool, Feb 28th

Described as "music for sinking ships" Prague based trio SQUALL features a Canadian forestworker, an Irish electronic engineer and an English bird watcher. They came together by chance while shopping at Tesco.

Since forming in 2001, SQUALL has traded processed food for minimalist guitars, bass and drums. Canadian guitarist/vocalist Tyson Cosby has suckled long and hard at the teats of such luminaries as THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282, NOMEANSNO, JUNE OF 44, and RED KRAYOLA while Irish bassist Richard O'Connor was raised on a force-fed diet of JOY DIVISION, GIRLS AGAINST BOYS and SHELLAC. English drummer Carl Warwick discovered SIX BY SEVEN, SONIC YOUTH and MOGWAI while

shoplifting.

SQUALL's compositions range from 90 second blowouts to dynamic 12 minute acupuncture sessions to mid-range fueled noise-rock. After their second live show SILVER ROCKET RECORDS was quick to take them on board and the result is the debut full length CD "How Things Work" (SRR 19). "How Things Work" was recorded and produced in March of 2002 by Ondrej Jezek.

"...SQUALL can easily rank with bands like UNWOUND, SONIC YOUTH, SHELLAC, SLINT, NOMEANSNO...superb!" Sensor of Radio 100 in The Netherlands

Doors at 9pm
Admission TBC

The Vagina Monologues

Feb 17th - 19th,
Clare St. Campus, LSAD

On the 17th, 18th and 19th of February, the LSAD V-Day College Campaign Crew present a benefit performance of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues". Tuesday Night is Opening night: Admission is €10 or €5 for Students Wednesday Night is Gentlemen's Night: Admission for males is €7/€4 Thursday Night is Wrap Party Night: Tickets €15/€10 include entry to aftershow party in the Redrooms, with female DJs, firebreathers and a live graffiti artist.

(standard tickets can also be bought)

All proceeds from the shows will go to local charities Adapt House and the Limerick Rape Crisis Centre.

What is V-Day? V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. Through benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues," unique documentary film projects and innovative gatherings designed to change social attitudes toward violence, V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery.

V DAY
UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS

Organiser Stacey Grant said that while there had been a number of obstacles to overcome in putting on the production, there were a number of people willing to put in time, money and effort in order to make the event a success.

"We've got 19 actresses, a huge backstage team and two directors, Jessica Foley and Emma Teck. Our associate producer, Dawn Stafford, has been a godsend and put in a huge amount of hard work.

"Special mention to Dan Kenny, husband of one of the actresses, who designed the whole stage and built it from scratch with the help of a team of set designers and builders. He helped out a lot with sponsorship and organisation.

"There was a huge team of people putting a load of effort.

"We've received a lot of help and support from Jan O'Sullivan, TD, some local businesses have sponsored us too, and the AMC put on a fundraiser gig for us, which was really great. I'd also like to thank the students of LSAD, who have been really great."

The Vagina Monologues

V DAY is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V DAY is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst promoting change around the world.

Help lift the veil of silence

Presented By

Limerick School of Art and Design

Clare Street Campus

17th -19th February 2004

7pm

Tickets :Adults 10 euro / Students 5 euro

Available at the Clare St. Campus

Mon. to Wed. from 4.30 - 6.00

V DAY

Until The Violence Stops

Enquiries: Stacey - 0877821311

e-mail: vdaylsad@yahoo.co.uk

All proceeds go to Adapt House and Limerick Rape Crisis Centre

Clubs and Societies

UL Softball Club: New Year, New Challenges.

The UL Softball club enters the New Year with revenge on their minds after a loss to UCD in the first leg of the annual Intersvarsity tournament in Waterford. With legs still to play in Dublin and on home soil in Limerick, UL hope to turn the tide and retain the trophy they so emphatically won last season.

Two teams were assembled for the trip down to the first leg in Waterford. Along with two teams from Waterford I.T and one team from UCD, this made the weekend quite a hectic one as regards the scheduling of matches, as there was a round-robin stage to complete as well as the all-important knock-out stages.

UL (A) went into the tournament with a huge amount of experience: With a mixture of home-grown talent from the likes of Emmett Byrne and Taz, along with mighty American players such as tournament MVP Adam Mantazaris on their side, the team brushed aside all who stood in their way on day one of the competition. In a passionate and good-humoured game, UL (B) ran them the closest, with pitcher Anthony Kilpatrick just one out away from clinching the game and all shreds of dignity from the A team. Maybe next time.

UL (B) found the going a little tougher on day one: managing only one win versus Waterford I.T, but ran a number of teams incredibly close. The lack of real experience on the team was their main weakness, but the players still remain optimistic about the upcoming legs in Dublin and Limerick.

On Sunday the knockout stages commenced. Unfortunately UL (B) were comprehensively beaten by Waterford I.T in the playoff to reach the semis,

where another meeting with UL (A) would have been on the cards. UL (A) then breezed into the final after a victory against Waterford: despite a brief scare at the beginning of the game.

A repeat of last years final was on the cards between UL and UCD, and just like last year, action, drama, and controversy were ever-present in the game. Just a pity the result wasn't the same. UCD rallied in the early innings and eventually extended a lead of 27 runs. This was too high a mountain to climb for our team and eventually bad light prevailed and the game was declared a victory for UCD. Despite the loss, the players appear even hungrier for success in 2004, and are determined to prove this against UCD in their own back yard.

Softball is the only Co-Ed team sport here on campus, and offers a great way for both men and women to get fit, have fun, and widen their social circles! We are always looking for new players, and all we ask is that you just give the sport a go. We supply all equipment so all you need to do is contact us! We hope to have a stand in the main canteen during week 1 at some stage so keep an eye out for us. We have also recently unveiled our new website which is www.ulsoftball.tk

Contact details, training times, and photographs of the team in action can also be found on this web page.

I hope to see some of you along at training soon, and I'd just like to wish everyone all the best this semester. Finally, best of luck to the UL team in the remaining two legs of this years Varsity tournament.

HARDING CUP comes to Limerick

Thursday the 19th of February sees the kick-off of the Harding cup 2004. This year the university is honoured to host the annual competition, which includes all the universities: north, south, east, and west. The competition, which kicks-off on Thursday of week one, will last until the final on Sunday @ twelve noon. The fixture list is as follows:

Thur19thFeb Preliminary Round (90 minute matches)

| | | | | |
|----------|---|--------|--------------|-----|
| UUC | v | UUJ | 2pm Pitch: 2 | (A) |
| UCC | v | Mary I | 2pm Pitch: 3 | (B) |
| Maynooth | v | NUIG | 2pm Pitch: 1 | (C) |

Fri.20thFeb. Quarter finals (90 minute matches)

| | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|------------------|-----|
| (A) | v. | UL | 2pm, Pitch: Bowl | (D) |
| (B) | v | DCU | 2pm, Pitch: 2 | (E) |
| (C) | v | QUB | 2pm, Pitch: 3 | (F) |
| DU | v | UCD | 2pm, Pitch: 1 | (G) |

Sat.21stFeb Semi-finals (90 minute matches)

| | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|-----------------|-----|
| (D) | v | (E) | 2pm Pitch: Bowl | (H) |
| (F) | v | (G) | 2pm Pitch: 1 | (I) |

Sun22ndFeb. Final

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----|--------------------|
| (H) | v | (I) | 12noon Pitch: Bowl |
|-----|---|-----|--------------------|

So if you or your friends are around for the weekend and have nothing to do, come on down to the playing pitches and cheer on our boys to victory.



Ladies Soccer YFG Sleepout

Intersvarsity Galway 2004

The Squad has been training hard over the last few weeks in order to prepare for the Intersvarsities in Galway. The Tournament will run from the 11th-13th of March, and as last year's Runners-Up, UL will enter the Tournament as one of the teams fancied to make it to the latter stages of the Cup competition. There will be training scheduled 3 nights of each week before the Tournament and all club members and anyone else interested can attend, as the final squad has yet to be announced.

UL B Team Fixtures

UL B will be in action on Wednesday of Week 1, when we host DCU, at 2.30pm in UL. This will be followed by an away trip to NUIG on the 25th of Feb and our final match of the season, away to TCD on 3rd of March. Both the B Team and A Team will train together in order to prepare for Intersvarsities.

Details of all training are available by emailing Eoin at 9942203@student.ul.ie.

UL A Team Fixtures

UL A still has half of their League fixtures to play, as postponements have played havoc with our season. Currently, we are 16 points behind Sligo IT, but we have 3 games in hand and have to travel to Sligo as well, so it's not over yet. Details of our league progress can be found on www.a2zsoccer.com. On the 25th of Feb, we entertain WIT in our last home game, then it's away matches to Sligo on March 3rd, UCD on March 24th, Inchicore on March 31st and finally CIT on 7th of April.

Young Fine Gael held its second annual sleepout to raise money for Limerick's homeless over Thursday and Friday of week 12. We had a great turnout with over 25 YFG members being there at one stage or another.

Unfortunately our chairman Barry Walsh was unable to attend as he was on a junket with

YEP; the European party with which YFG is aligned. Over the 24 hours on O'Connell St., €5415 was raised for Br. Russell Shelter for the Homeless, an improvement of €1500 on last year's collection.

Thanks go to Brown Thomas for letting us kip outside their store, Aubars and Supermacs for feeding us, the Gardaí for their co-operation and of course the people of Limerick for giving so generously. We received much press coverage, local and national, including a picture in the Examiner and the Echo on the Friday. Congratulations must also go to James Lawless, YFG Member of the year, who has been co-opted onto the National Executive as a result of his stellar work in the name of YFG. James and Barry were both in the audience for last Monday's Questions & Answers, but owing to shyness neither got to ask a question.

YFG has a load of different things lined up for Semester 2, so keep an eye out around Campus.

Denis Hurley - Pro ULYFG

Clubs and Societies

UL Riders Skills and Safety Day

Us UL Riders have rider skills and safety high on our list of priorities, so we decided to do something about it! Rider training for any motorcyclist is about increasing confidence and enjoyment by learning to ride safely. Having experienced the benefits of training himself, Eoin Stephenson made contact with some local instructors on our behalf and organized a training day.

On Sunday November 9th, the UL Riders held their first Rider Training Day in the East Gate car park. The day was booked out quickly. Trainers like to keep the student-teacher ratio as low as possible. We closed bookings with three trainers and eight trainees. The trainers were all from the Irish Rider Training Association (IRTA), highly skilled trainers who have passed the most stringent of tests set by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). We're very lucky to have IRTA trainers in the area; they are pretty scarce in the country as a whole. The day was brilliant value for money at €20 each for members, made possible by the IRTA's special rates to us on the day and Mike Meskell's generous sponsorship.

The trainees came along on all sorts of bikes and with various levels of experience and licence categories. There was a perfect gender balance too, with four lads and four girls. The bikes ranged from Aprilia and Suzuki scooters through to a 1000cc Yamaha R1, including an NSR80, RS125, VFR400R, YZF600 and Dragstar 650. A nice even spread.

The trainers split the group in three and put them through their paces, first in the car park with some work on braking and slow riding. Seamus gave a run through on the things to check out on a bike before starting it up, Tim stressed the importance of wearing decent gear while Stuart entertained with some emergency braking exhibitions! After the car park work the riders took to the road.

The road work was tailored to suit the riders, each trainer took their group on a different route. Each rider was provided with an intercom headset through which the trainer could guide them and provide a running commentary on their riding and the traffic conditions. There was a briefing over lunch after which the riders took to the road again. The day finished back in the East Gate car park where the trainers gave a final analysis of the day



and took questions.

Everyone I spoke to afterwards was very impressed and agreed that the day was an outstanding success. Check out some of the testimonies on our web site! We would like to thank the following: Mike Meskell for sponsorship, buildings, the Arena Sports Bar and the Students' Union for their support and finally the IRTA instructors and the trainees for delivering the goods on the day!

If you are interested in getting involved in a training day or other UL Riders activity please mail us at ulriders@skynet.ie or check out our website, www.skynet.ie/~ulriders.

Badminton Club

All Ireland Club C'ships, Gormanstown, Co Meath, 2003

The All Ireland club championships took place again this year in Gormanstown Co. Meath on Saturday and Sunday the 29th and 30th of November. U.L were well represented with teams competing in divisions two, four and six. We set out from the Stables archway in the early hours of Saturday morning with sleepy faces all round.

When we arrived in Gormanstown the competition was already in full swing, with teams from all over the country present. The U.L 1 team was playing at this early stage and their early start did not seem to deter them with some fine wins throughout the day. The U.L 2 team also fared well with some great play from Decky, Enda, Conor, Ruth, Angela and Elaine. The U.L 3 team however, did not fare so well, going down to Dunboyne, though losing gracefully under the captaincy of Ray Eagan (gaffer!!). Despite the loss, spirits were still high and there were many laughs throughout the day especially as Barry Gleeson and Damian Flynn took to the courts wearing headbands!! No doubt to keep their flowing locks out of their eyes during play! A Kodak moment!

Everyone was glad to see the first day of play draw to a close as it really dragged on and we retired to our B&Bs (which were fantastic, cheers Danny!). Here the rest was welcome and then the glad rags were put on and we headed to Drogheda for a song and a dance, and many of each were had!! The band really appreciated our enthusiasm, as did the local 'older' women who took a shine to Ray, Enda, Rob and the two Barrys! (god bless camera phones!!) Our next stop was a club where more unique dance moves were shown off.

The next morning we had an early start, breakfast and around twelve jugs of orange juice and it was back to Gormanstown. After a much-needed warm up and a shoe smelling incident (don't ask!!) it was back to the badminton. U.L 3 blamed the early start for going down to Tolka Rovers by the narrowest of margins, but U.L 1 continued their winning ways with great performances from all, Derek, Conor O'Brien, Aidan, Ronan, Conor Flatley, Gillian, Susan, Bríd and Elaine, and they went on to win the final! So well done lads!! The U.L 2 also played well and also reached the final but unfortunately finished runner-up after a tough match, but credit must go to the team of Decky, Enda, Danny, Ruth, Jane and Alison. The U.L 3 team of Ray, Barry, Rob, Catriona, Catherine and Ann Marie also finished runner up in their final so all in all in was a very successful weekend for the U.L team. A special word of thanks must go to Danny for organizing everything and to Eric, Ray, Decky, Ruth and to every one else who drove.

UL Rugby Hat-Trick in Colours Match



In front of a sizeable attendance at Thomond Park last Wednesday evening, the UL college rugby team put in a sterling effort to retain the O'Brien trophy, and thus record a first hat-trick of wins in the annual Limerick colleges' Colours fixture. The Colours game is played each year in memory of LIT and UL students, brothers Andrew and John O'Brien, who died tragically in New York some years ago. This was the seventh Colours match, and it was keenly contested by both sides. Before kick-off, both teams and the match officials observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the untimely death of Jacinta O'Brien, who was a PE and Sports Science lecturer and former UL Sports Officer, and who was instrumental in setting up the Colours fixture.

The conditions in Thomond Park were perfect for expansive, open rugby and both the LIT and UL teams endeavoured to keep the ball in hand, and to move the ball wide at every opportunity. UL got into their stride early and following some excellent lineout play, with wing-forward Conor O'Beirne, hooker and vice-captain Tom Ryan, and locks Liam Crowley and Pat Quinn prominent, Billy Fitzgerald crossed for the game's first score with a classic scrum-half's pick and dive close-in. The second try was the result of a brilliant individual effort by man-of-the-

match, wing Ian Dowling. Following some slick passing in the backline, the ball made its way to Ian, whose powerful, balanced running and highly effective handing-off of defenders combined to enable him to scythe through the LIT cover to score. UL's third try followed a classic forward Maul, with ebullient prop D.J. Collins getting the touch-down, much to the delight of the attendant female support. UL's next try came in the second-half after brilliant and elusive outside centre Philip Treacy made a searing incursion into the heart of the LIT defence, and good handling by backs, full-back and captain Tony Hall and first-centre Alan O'Boyle created space for wing Ronan Likely to score in the corner. Ronan played superbly throughout the game, and always looked dangerous with the ball in hand. Ian Dowling crossed for his second try midway through the second-half, again following strong running and fending-off of multiple defenders. Superlative No. 8 James O'Neill finished UL's try-scoring after some excellent interplay between UL's backs and forwards. Following the game, James was called up to the Irish Colleges side to play a selection from current Heineken European Cup Champions Toulouse in France; UL rugby wishes him the best of luck. Out-half Niall Yelverton, who displayed his usual wizardry at stand-off, converted three of the tries and marshalled his team expertly throughout the game. Although UL made the better of the exchanges, LIT, ably led by Brian Farrell, never capitulated, and they scored a number of impressive tries towards the end of the match. In particular, LIT's Brian McMahon, Barry Heaton and Brian Rennison performed excellently out-of-touch. However, UL ultimately prevailed

by 36 points to 29. Overall, both teams contributed to what was an eye-catching display of adventurous and open rugby, played in the best traditions of the colleges' game.

UL: 1 Mark Adams (Garryowen), 2 Tom Ryan (UL Bohs, vice-captain), 3 D.J. Collins (Kanturk), 4 Liam Crowley (Bandon), 5 Pat Quinn (Shannon), 6 Kevin Dinan (Mallow), 7 Conor O'Beirne (UL Bohs), 8 James O'Neill (UL Bohs), 9 Billy Fitzgerald (UL Bohs), 10 Niall Yelverton (Shannon), 11 Ian Dowling (Shannon), 12 Alan O'Boyle (UL Bohs), 13 Philip Treacy (UL Bohs), 14 Ronan Likely (UL Bohs), 15 Tony Hall (Shannon, captain)



Squad (all played): Cathal Garvey (UL Bohs), Daragh Nicholas (UL Bohs), Aidan Rees (UL Bohs), Martin Fitzgerald (Clonakilty), Dave Gallagher (Garryowen), Pdraig O'Connor (UL Bohs), Stephen Roycroft (Garryowen), Damian Daly (Shannon), Owen O'Connell (Old Crescent)

Coaches: Mike Reid, D.J. Collins, Tony Hall

Clubs and Societies

Debating Union

Dia dhiaobh go léir, tá súil agam gur bhain sibh taitneamh as an sos, is cinnte go raibh sé tuilte ag gach éinne! Well lads how's it going? Hope everyone had a nice break and are revitalised and all ready for another tantalising semester of wit and argument in the fabulous ("mental") institution known as Debating Union. This semester we will be doing a huge drive to entice new members and new master debaters in the making, cause in all honesty we are getting a bit tired of the ones that are already there and just won't go away! So what have we been up to over the break? Well quite a lot actually. We ran the inaugural Limerick Schools Debating Competition, which went really well, and we hosted an Irish Times Debating Semi-Final. We offered schools the chance to host a workshop by a member of the committee, followed by a run off debate in the school in which the two best speakers went on to represent their school in a final in UL. It was the first competition of its kind, and a new experience for the students who did very well. The winner of the competition was Gearoid Devitt from St. Clement's College.

The Irish Times debate was a much heavier event, in which our very own Diana Diamond-Buckley represented UL. The debate was about African unity and contained about as much humour as a river in the desert. However it was an informative if somewhat stuffy debate. Well that's what we have done but here is what we are going to do. Our main focus for this semester is attracting more members, and yes the rumours are true we will have BOSCO! That red haired asexual friend of your childhood will be coming to UL to chair a debate on child pornography, watch out for future updates!

Our workshops will be recommencing in week 2 at 6.00 pm on a Monday just before the main Debate at 7.

Our first debate of the semester is highly controversial and an important issue for everybody, this debate is about abortion and we will have guest speakers on the night, everyone is welcome to attend:

Motion: This House Believes in a Woman's Right to Bodily Integrity

Time: Monday Week 2 7.00pm

Venue: Scholars Function Room

ULKC Does Wales!

WALES 2004 was what everyone was talking about to get their minds off the dreaded exams. Exams passed by quickly and before we knew it, it was early Sunday morning and we were all packing our gear into the bus before we left for a whole week's paddling in the wild, Welsh water.

Keeping with tradition we stopped to paddle the River Inny on our way to the ferry. We were all divided into groups of about 5 or 6 for running rivers, loading the trailer and other every day tasks. The Inny was an ideal training river to try out our groups. Everyone got on really well on this river, especially considering that this was some of the 1st years first or second river. What really impressed me were the 1st years attempts at playing on the wave. Even though they got a bit of a milling they were still as enthusiastic as ever to keep trying!

We all dragged ourselves out of bed at 9 o'clock to face our first day of paddling in Wales. The first river we decided to take on was the Alwen River, which sounded suitable; according to the guidebook, that is. We were first greeted with a weir full of nasty trees. Once we got past the telegraph pole crossing our path on the right, we thought the river would tame out. How wrong we were! Low-lying trees and dangerously low barbed wire plagued us constantly as we continued down the river. We were also surprised by an extremely low footbridge, which also had to be portaged. All these obstacles happened to be left out of the river guide! It began to get dark as everyone reached the mini gorge section. Some took refuge, before the gorge, in a farmhouse of a very kind local lady. Light definitely wasn't on our side and everyone had to get off the river early. Only problem; how do we get back to the bus with all our boats. Fortunately, a very helpful farmer brought all the boats to the bus in his trailer. Thank god for friendly locals! It was a tough river but everyone helped each other out and so the river was enjoyed by everyone.

The next day we slept in later than usual to give everyone a chance to recover from the epic day before. Unfortunately there was no water on the rivers so we decided to do the slalom course on the Dee. This was a nice section with three

rapids and plenty of holes and stoppers to avoid! This was a brilliant learning experience for everyone. We all got plenty of practice making lines and getting through nasty holes as Jacinta certainly found out with her incredible experience in the hole on the second rapid. The hole at the end also provided great entertainment, as it was many people's first time playing in a hole. All happy with the day's paddling we headed back to the hostel all absolutely ravenous. Not to worry, we had a massive feed of the infamous ULKC spag-bol to satisfy us. We were in for a major surprise that night as well. Corran Addison kindly agreed to give a workshop on river running. Unfortunately he couldn't make it but he did send his latest DVD Legend of the Falls instead. This showed us the best approach to run a river and he went through river signals, how to grade a river and the type of boats which should be used. Despite Corran's absence we all learned a lot! The rest of the night was also quite eventful. It involved stories from Mike Sweeney about his 'butt bullets' and also very dangerous wedgies. All I can say is, lads, hide your jocks when Loraine and Barry are around!

The next day we woke up to snow. Unfortunately that meant no rain. But it did mean a chance for snowball fights and tobogganing. The bus was having minor difficulties on this morning and while the people in the cars waited for the bus to show up we decided to set up a snowball ambush. We spent ages making up as many snowballs as we could. Tony made these gigantic "Canning Balls" and soon we were ready to bombard the bus. Sadly the bus never made it out to us so we had a snowball fight amongst ourselves.

The following day we decided to run the Dee again. It was more of what we did the other day but more complicated lines were being attempted by all this showed that the standard of everyone's paddling was clearly improving. Again there were plenty of stories from the hole at the end. Yuri, paddles and this hole just did not make a good combination! Well, at least he wasn't as bad as Ronan "no paddles" Callanan who thinks throwing away his paddles and paddling with his hands is a

more effective way of paddling! Our prayers were finally answered the next day. It had rained continuously that night and it hadn't stopped the next morning. The NantGwyrdd was running because of the amount of rain and so the lads jumped at the opportunity to do it. A few of us did rescue along the river and luckily we did. Ronan, Justin and Barry were there on two occasions to pull



Daren out of very sticky situations. The lads were all buzzing coming off the river, not surprisingly as this was a really challenging run! It was now the last night! Awh! No scandal had been created yet but that changed quickly after the last night. I won't mention any names but two 2nd years took advantage of two innocent 1st years! Scandalous behaviour! By the way Ronan I have to ask what actually made you attempt to get climb up a chimney!?

It was the final day and some people arose at 7 o'clock to paddle the Ogden River. I can't believe you didn't get up John Power! At 3 o'clock, a happy but very tired group boarded the ferry. This ferry ride consisted of plenty of slugging unfortunately. Back in Ireland we all said our goodbyes, which meant that Wales 2004 was officially over. Despite the lack of water everyone had a fantastic time. ULKC's trips are getting bigger and better and this trip was no exception. Big thanks to Don, Homer and Ritchie who put a lot of work into organizing this incredible trip. I can safely say that this was another trip not to be forgotten.

UL Computer Society News

Welcome back to another semester of ~~work, study, and boredom~~, or what I should say is welcome back for what will hopefully be another great semester. Last semester, Skynet successfully ran a number of popular events. Those included the Retro Gaming and the series of talks we gave in Greek Week. Once again we would like to thank all the speakers; Mikael Fernstrom, Mel Gorman, John Sturdy, Pamela O'Shea and Pdraig Brady and in particular our sponsors Commnet and PC World. We would like to also thank everyone else that attended those talks and hope to see you back again at future Skynet events. This semester Skynet is once again

planning to run a number of interesting events for its members and for the student population at large. To begin with, Skynet will start a number of workshops on computer programming to help out with those nasty projects your lecturers seem to dream up for you all. These workshops will teach you and help you with stuff like the Web, C++ and Java. Our highly trained and highly skilled members will teach you the ins and outs of each topic. Honest. The Workshops will run from Tuesday Week 2 from 18:00 to 21:00 and will cost €4. They will take place in the Fishtank. Which for those who don't know is the computer lab in block A on level 1. Hope

to see you all there. Mail workshop@skynet.ie for more information.

Skynet will also be starting its administration training for its members this semester for those interested. This training will also start in Week two but on Monday nights from 18:00 to 21:00 in the Fishtank.

Skynet will also host a few other events this semester that are more of a social nature for its members. Skynet is always open to new members so if you are interested in joining to learn more about computers or to finish taking over the world just call into the server room in the Students' Union building on Thursdays



from 12:00 to 13:00 and someone will sort you out with an account or mail accounts@skynet.ie

Daniel Nagle

UL Windsurfing and Surfing Club

We have a jam-packed calendar of events organised for semester two! Please come and support our table quiz during Week Two in the Sports Bar (keep an eye out for posters). Intermediate sessions are starting up again soon in Killaloe; our first session is Saturday 21st of February in the UL Activity Centre. We also have a beginner's course starting in Week Three (details on the website: <http://www.skynet.ie/~winds/>) as well as a trip away to Castlegregory over the Easter Bank Holiday Weekend.

Meanwhile here are two reports of recent events organised by the club to give you a little taster of what we're about:

Trip to Rusheen Bay: Saturday February 8th

By Fergal Hourigan, our correspondent on the Bay!

On a cold but sunny Saturday in February six club members decided to brace the cold temperatures and go for a spot of blasting in Rusheen Bay, on the outskirts of Galway City. Cathal Kavanagh, the man behind Rusheen Bay Windsurfing, was on hand to give members tips on rigging sails and the use of harnesses, which we all eagerly put to use when rigging the new sails and booms the club had acquired over the last while. This was the first time all this new gear has been used by the club and we were keen to get it out on the water.

Rusheen Bay is on the coast road from Galway to Barna. It is a very benign location for windsurfing; it is very safe, with no hazards in or on the water. Even better, the water is usually flat in all wind directions. There are good areas of shallow water, which gives a great



chance to those who want to practice their beach starts. The best wind direction for Rusheen bay is south to west. From this direction, the wind, when it is there, is consistent, with little in the way of sudden changes in strength and direction. In fact, Rusheen Bay appears to be a nearly ideal place to learn the techniques of windsurfing. The Windsurfing Club goes to the UL Activity Centre in Killaloe on a weekly basis in season and is well used to the gusty winds and wind-driven waves that you sometimes get there. Rusheen bay is a great location for a trip and probably the place where I've gone fastest on a sailboard so far.

Out on the water, the wind was coming from a less than ideal location; a little too much from the north. As a result, the wind was a little gusty, coming to us over hills, houses and trees. All the same, there were plenty chances to blast up and down the bay. I started off with one of the larger sails, in danger at times of being overpowered by the wind but I managed to get up and down the bay with something that looked like a coherent turn at each end. About half way through I swapped the big sail for something

smaller with another club member.

After we got off the water, de-rigged the gear and made sure we left the place more or less as we found it, we headed into town and into a well-known coffee house. A well-deserved rest after a great day out on the bay!

Ballybunion surf trip: Saturday, 29th November 2003

By Marie-Terese Conere, our correspondent on the waves!

It's a dark, wet Saturday morning by the East Gate. The ends of the parks are flooded as usual and we do a "mission impossible" scrambling over walls and fences to avoid the swamp. The only thing different about this typical day in Limerick is that we are not staying here, woohoo! We're going Wesht, to the wilds of Ballybunion, Co. Kerry, where we'll fancy ourselves as the next Kelly Slaters and Laird Hamiltons bombing down the beach, surfboards beneath our wings; we would glide effortlessly through the water like dolphins or that was the plan; I would settle for a drunk, blind, wingless, legless seagull impression myself.

It only takes a bit over an hour to get

there, but with surf analysis, munch and surfboard retrieval it's a while before we get wet. By this time the surf has become slightly cleaner, the strong on-shore breeze has gradually decreased and even the sun decides to come out.

Getting out back (behind the waves) is proving impossible; the swell is two foot at best but with all the wind chop and waves crashing from the side the only way out is rolling onto your back with the surfboard like a turtle shell on your stomach and letting the waves crash over you. The waves are closing out too fast in any case for that amount of effort, sticking to the shore break seems best. We were looking forward to going surfing for so long we would have surfed anything. Claire and Mark catch some nice ones before they close out, you can expect to see them soon in "Blue Crush 2-Actually Surfing, (not the type with digitally super-imposed images)"! Mark proves to be fairly nifty with a camera, his documentary, "the Ups and Downs of Surf Photography, Nuff Said!" is nearing completion! If you wish to see it just hand in your student card to him and then beat yourself over the head, with the bat he will hand you, for being so gullible.....But anyway, the hours flew by and before we knew it we were changed out of our seal disguises, had the wagon hitched up and were back at the ranch for tea, Sweeeeeeet!

This last paragraph is dedicated to Pádraig, (Cheers Páid!), without whom this surfing excursion would be non-existent, due to the wheel-less nature of our operation, and purely a figment of our imagination.

Out in UL

New year, new queers! The second semester has just kicked off and Out in UL are already well into the swing of things. While all you fairies have been on your arses for the break, we've been working like mad to make sure we pack it all in this semester.

To start off with we have the new website up and running, heaven.skynet.ie, after saying a sad farewell to that rainbow flag that was close to our hearts (!). Then our AGM is on 18th Feb so we'll have a new committee to boss us around and on Thurs 19th we're off to Galway to meet up with some NUIG students.

For week 2 the Garda Liaison Officer will be paying us a visit to talk to us about our legal rights and who to contact if we're ever in trouble. Then, on Thursday, we're meeting OPC to go rock climbing again. If you feel like laughing at a bunch of lads and learning how to use a harness then come along. It's bound to be a laugh if last semester was anything to go by.

In week 3 Out in UL is hosting "Queer Bash". This is gonna be the big one lads. Students from 12 colleges in the south

and west are going to descend upon Limerick and live it up for the night. Trinity Rooms are hosting the event and tickets are on sale now. This promises to be a great night and it's a mixed event so grab your handbags and grab your friends. Along with this event the Gay Southern Forum is also going well. We have already met up with colleges in Cork and Galway and for this semester we plan on visiting colleges in Waterford, Tralee and Athlone while the "Queer Bash" brings them in our direction.

For more information on any of these or upcoming events for the next term you can check out the Gay guides that'll be around college this week. Or else log on to the website where we'll have the full list of planned events for the coming weeks.

As you can see there are lots of things going on for us this semester. It's going to be even busier than the last one. Its great fun and you'll make some cool friends so if anyone wants to join, just come to a meeting or e-mail us on outinul@yahoo.ie

UL G~Soc

We're here to kick ass and chew gum, and we're all outta ass



While everyone else was fighting their hardest to cram a semester worth of notes into their brains in the space of one night, the G~Soc team were busy fighting a small war of their own.

For the past two months, seven of G~Soc finest gamers had been playing against teams from around Limerick in the FrontierX 'black hawk down' league. Having progressed as top of our group the G~Soc team had a very impressive record going into the play-offs; 10 wins out of 12, and nearly 1500 kills between them.

The finals saw a semi-final match against the Limerick-based St. Munchins team, who were seen off after a massive killing spree on G~Socs' favourite map,

'Bombed-out'.

The final match was a tense affair with the other finalists, the John the Baptist team, putting up a stiff defence in the first round. In the second round, the G~Soc team went back to the 'bombed-out' map and slaughtered the opposition with team captain Admiral Jack scoring well over 100 kills.

With one tournament victory under our belts the G~Soc team has already begun its defence of their crown, in the new 'Call of duty' league, and with a comprehensive victory over St. Munchins it looks like another final is calling.

The winning team was Jack Nolan (Adm. Jack), James Sadier (Spoon), Barry O'Dea (EL WIZO), Jim Henegan (McArthur), Niall McLaughlin (Skippy), Francis short (Slipper boy) and Jim Foley (Herr_Cron)

Once again anyone interested in LAN gaming, paintballing or role-playing feel free to contact the Games society at www.gsoc.net.

Clubs and Societies

UL Basketballers in Cardiff

Cardiff Covered:

During the break the Basketball Club headed to Cardiff with four of their teams, Senior men & women and Fresher boys & girls. Matches started on Friday night with all four teams playing. The Senior women took on the Welsh University Squad and were narrowly defeated by 4 pts. The Fresher girls' team, playing their first-ever competitive game, emerged victorious against the host team UWIC after a closely fought encounter. Meanwhile the Senior men were battling it out with the UWIC National League side. Unfortunately UL, who were missing their own National League players, could not match their opponents. The Fresher boys, playing against the UWIC senior team, ran out of steam in the last quarter but will be heartened by the experience going in to their Varsity Tournament this weekend. Saturday saw a combined men's team face the University of Glamorgan and on Sunday the same combined team matched up against the University of Cardiff. These closely fought encounters saw UL narrowly defeated on both occasions. The men's team won't be too worried about these defeats viewing them as an opportunity to give the up and coming Freshers extra court time. The Senior women also faced the University of Cardiff on Sunday in a decidedly one sided encounter, running out winners by 30+ points. Thanks to our sponsor Castletroy Park Hotel and to Clubs and Societies for their funding.

Cardiff Uncovered:

If you thought 'Ibiza Uncovered' was crazy, the term "you ain't seen nothing yet" comes to mind!! I think it's fair to say that Cardiff got a lot more than it bargained for with the recent visit of the basketball club!

"Friends" were made in more ways than one, and unfortunately sometimes even left behind!! (Phil??) But the 'close' relationship between the boys and girls teams ensured that this only happened once!

It was a trip that began as a hunt for a husband (Lorna!), and ended up being a search for so much more, including a glove, hotties, con-tacts (Eadaoin??), and of course who could forget the shoe?!! (It's a long story!) We won't mention names - Brosie and Fitzzy - but some real bargains were found in the basement!!! I hope ye kept your receipts!!

The reliable 'Confession Cam' was always on hand to keep an eye on the mischief but proved that all we were left with at the end of the trip were empty pockets, killer hangovers and an odd shoe adopted by "Gingerella"!! But it was worth every minute, and basketball was the real winner of the trip - well, maybe not, but we tried anyway!! Games were won and lost, but sure it's getting to the "top of the bench" that counts anyway isn't it!!

We look forward to part two at the Varsities where "hunt for a husband" will continue, and you never know, we might even find the shoe!!

UL Basketball Players Shine for Home Clubs in the National Cup

The National Cup weekend is the 'Super Bowl' weekend for club basketball in Ireland. During this weekend the top teams in the men's and women's senior and junior (Under 19) sections compete for the Cup title. UL Basketball Club were well represented with college players competing for their home clubs on four different teams. In the Junior Men's cup fresher Tommy Canavan lined out for Team Westaro Castlebar in their semi final against UCC Demons. Canavan contributed 20+ points to his teams total, unfortunately he didn't have the same strong supporting cast as UCC Demons and the Leesiders eventually won out and went on to claim the Cup title.

In the Senior Men's competition UL stalwarts Paul Freeman, Aidan Holden & Alan Bromell and Varsity Coach Matthew Hall appeared for Team Burgerking as they began their cup quest against Neptune from Cork. Having won the cup in 2001 the Limerick Team was back with a completely new team of young players with the exception of team captain Hall. Experience was to triumph over youth on this occasion as Neptune went on to face UCC Demons senior team in the final. Demons needed overtime to secure their victory by the narrowest of margins.

In the Senior Women's section UL were represented by Dearbhla Breen, Eileen Lyons & Maura Guiney playing for UL Aughinish and Miriam & Mairead Liston

playing for Bausch & Lombe Wildcats. Both teams came through their semi finals to meet in a repeat of last years final. UL Aughinish got off to a cracking start with Dearbhla Breen running in some early scores, Wildcats were slow to respond and found themselves 12 points adrift at the end of the first quarter. UL continued to build on their lead and try as



they might there was no way back for the girls from Waterford. UL Aughinish went on to claim their second cup title in two years.

The club is very proud of all of its players and with league honours still to be decided wishes them well for the remainder of the season.

Trad Music Soc storm GLASGOW!

During the mid-term, eleven representatives from "Gan Ainm", U.L Trad Music Society travelled to Glasgow to take part in the first ever-International Festival School. The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama hosted this inaugural event, and Celtic Connections staged the first concert. The objective of Celtic Connections is to commission new work and bring up-and-coming artists to the big stage. This in turn brings together Celtic music enthusiasts from all over the world. Upon arrival we met up with the University of Northumbria, Carl Nielsen Academy, Denmark and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama representatives who were also taking part in the event. Altogether, our group consisted of singers, dancers, mandolin, accordions, uilleann pipes, fiddle, flute, snare drum, guitar and piano players. Rehearsals for the upcoming concert in Glasgow Royal Concert hall started almost immediately, but it was not all work and no play!

The nightlife more than made up for time spent in rehearsals! We were each given a wristband, which entitled us to artist discounts on festival club tickets. At night time the only place to be was the festival club hosted by Gibb Todd in the central hotel. Some of Celtic music's biggest stars have played together on this stage.

Every night was fun packed with concerts and numerous sessions, it's safe to say little sleep was had by all! We took full advantage of the evening concerts: Afro Celts, Kate Rusby, Altan and La

Bottine Souriante to name but a few.

The climax of the event was undoubtedly the Saturday night concert in the Royal Concert Hall. It was a huge success and left everyone wanting more. After the concert we performed it all again on the festival stage, we had an incredible reactive audience and left the stage on a high. The time came for everyone to make their goodbyes but the Danes made sure it was not a sad event with an impromptu strip tease!

Hopefully the success of this trip is a sign of what's yet to come for the U.L and its Trad Soc. This has been perhaps the biggest milestone for our humble society on our path to becoming Global Superstars. There is already been discussions about a Return to the festival next year. Watch this space.

"Gan Ainm", wishes everyone the best of luck for the new Semester and Exam Results. Also, Just a Reminder that our session returns again as usual, every Monday night in the Sports Bar, starting at 9.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend and admission is free!!

Regards to you all, Aoife Murray.



Out in U.L. presents
Queer Bash

Wednesday 3rd March at 11.00pm

Admission: €1.00
Info: ontind@ul.ie

TRINITY ROOMS

Clubs and Societies

Irish Peace Society

The Irish Peace Society has had a particularly busy pre-exam and post-exam time. In December John Cushnahan M.E.P. spoke to the Peace Society in his capacity as the EU Chief Election Observer for the two general elections in Sri Lanka in 2000 and 2001 and in Pakistan in 2002. The Cuban Charge D'Affaires, Teresita Trujillo also spoke to the Peace Society on her experiences of Castro's Cuba.

This year the chosen international charity for the Irish Peace Society is Global Learning (GL). GL is an international non-profit organisation that works to empower youth in under-served public elementary schools in economically challenged neighbourhoods in Latin America. Global Learning offers the university student volunteers who staff our programs a profound, intercultural work experience in a community-centred nongovernmental organisation (NGO). GL is a group whose impact far exceeds its financial resources. GL volunteers teach between three and four thousand children annually, in Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua and the United States.

Global Learning team members collaboratively create hands-on lessons in subject areas requested by each teacher in whose classroom they work. The lessons are then taught to students in small groups. Such groups foster

personal attention for students with diverse learning needs. Global Learning provides all classroom materials and supplies necessary for our interactive lessons. GL volunteers teach and learn with children in Kindergarten through sixth grade. Lesson topics include art, science, environmental studies, math, world music, geography, international cultures, health and social justice/activism. In addition to expanding children's learning resources, broadening their world view and being relevant to children's lives, GL's lessons are a vehicle for volunteers from children's local and international communities to serve as positive role models and inspire passion for life-long learning.

Irish Peace Society have fundraised in excess of €7,000 for GL through bagpacking, ticket selling, Who wants to be a Millionaire, collections at rugby games, crime seminar, balloon selling, donation from Scholars Christmas Daze fund, co-op ball raffle.... Fundraising is ongoing.

Nine members from the Irish Peace Society will travel to Costa Rica and Nicaragua in early February to visit the GL projects. A full account and itinerary will be detailed in the next edition of An Focal.

The Global Learning tour was budgeted for by the Irish Peace Society in its annual budget which accounts for a limited partial cost towards flights, accommodation and other costs. Members fund the remainder individually with monies fundraised going directly towards the GL projects.

Fundraising was at times intensive, definitely exhausting and always imaginative. Like everything, it had its successes and disappointments but fundamentally it had behind it a team of committed people with an acute sense of parallel determination and purpose.

The society wishes to issue a most sincere, heartfelt appreciation to those who supported the various fundraising activities in the many different ways. From small acorns, may great oak trees grow. Robert Kennedy once said, "Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." Thank you.

Elaine Byrne PRO Irish Peace Society
www.peace.ie



ATTENTION FASTERS!

Please return your sponsorship forms and money to the Clubs and Societies mailbox in the main reception of the Students' Union by Friday of Week 1.

Please return in a sealed envelope labelled "Concern Fast"

Thankyou!

For information contact
Alan Higgins:
0242241@student.ul.ie

Warriors of Limerick Unite

The Leinster Open tournament before Christmas, staged in UCD, attracted many forms of Martial Arts. The forms ranged from Kung Fu, wearing all black, looking like ninjas with a fast and flowing style. Tae Kwon Do clubs from Dublin and elsewhere with a traditional style, traditional all white uniform and a habit of standing on one leg waiting for the opponent to get close, then kicking them. There were at least three styles of kickboxing, from Dublin, a club with an emphasis on European style boxing and the biggest gloves of any competitors in the tournament. There was another kickboxing club from Dublin with red uniforms and technique that seemed to place great emphasis on shouting something whenever they scored a point. Nobody was to be able to figure out what they were shouting but after hearing it over and over nobody cared either. UL Kickboxing Club's style is a combination of traditional Tae Kwon Do particularly the kicks and European style boxing for punching and movement. There were other clubs in Dublin that day with the same style from UCC and LIT. This style is the most popular style of kick boxing in the country. So how does UL style Kickboxing rate against the others in competition?

Instructor Miss Debra Donovan won her category of Black Belt in continuous sparring showing why she was awarded National Female Competitor of the year for 2003. Katrin Kahler got third place in

green to red belt (intermediate) level sparring and second in intermediate patterns. Beginner Tess Hueber won against a kick boxer from UCC but lost against a Kung Fu opponent from Dublin.

Beginners Morgen Jensen and John Reilly competed in the largest category of the day, heavyweight white to yellow belts. Morgen was drawn against the man who went on to win the category. Morgen put in a good effort and as soon as his luck in the draw changes is bound to start winning. John Reilly achieved both his ambitions for the day 1) not getting knocked back onto his back-side and 2) actually managing to score a few points against an opponent as for winning, well in kickboxing you have to lose and learn for a while!

During the holidays the day after Valentine's Day when many people had love on their mind the warrior folk of Limerick rallied together for an altogether less romantic purpose. Students from UL, LIT and LSAD under the banners of UL Kickboxing Club and LIT Tae Kwon Do Club shared a bus up to UCD to do battle on the whole country in the Intervarsity Competition. The squad from UL was seriously depleted by the fact that UL were still on holiday with most of the best fighters absent so it was up to the instructors and novices to stand against the best in the country.

The results were as could be expected, the best in the club were the best in the country and the novices were able to put up a spirited fight even when facing more experienced opponents.

Instructor Miss Debra Donovan won first in the patterns section and first in Black Belt Sparring showing again that she is really a world-class competitor. Instructor Mr. Tim Murphy won second place in Black Belt sparring after some intense fights, with furious action and blistering pace. It's no surprise Mr. Tim Murphy was deemed National Male Competitor of the year in Ireland. UL Kickboxing Club is very fortunate to have the best Male and Female Competitors in the country instructing the club. A mark of the kind of people involved at the highest level of this sport is the fact that when the black belt competitors are finished competing they then turn around and help judge the rest of the tournament. At one stage five fights were on simultaneously during the tournament, thanks to the Black belts including Miss Donovan and Mr. Murphy for putting their time back into the sport.

A novice in many sports can be carried by a strong team of more experienced players, but when a fighter steps into a ring it is just two opponents with nowhere to hide and no one to hide behind. A novice can often be fighting an opponent with two or more experience

compared to a few months. Martial Arts can look very dangerous but in fact it is very controlled and safe. But that is not what a novice thinks when stepping into the ring with someone who has done it many times before. To get up a 6am the day after Valentines, to get on the bus at seven, to spend three hours on the bus to Dublin, to spend from 10 am to after 5 pm in a sport hall just to fight in fights lasting 2 minutes on the clock or about 3 including stops while knowing that you will probably get knocked out after one fight requires courage and dedication. Honor and victory are not the same thing. Students of UL can be proud that they were represented with heart and commitment. Victory will find the UL novices in its own good time and as long as they keep fighting the same way honor will stay with them. Well done to Mike McCoy, Shane Cuddihy and John Reilly from UL.

Special thanks to Aileen O'Sullivan from LIT for organizing the Bus and well done to LIT ladies Deirdre Bhreathnach winning first in the heavy weight white to green belt sparring, Bidy Kissane getting second place in middleweight white to green belt sparring and Claire Griffin getting second place in light weight white to green belt sparring.

By John Reilly

Your Letters

This fortnight, we're adding a new dimension to An Focal, your Student Newspaper of Choice.

Fr Wendy Shepperd Henderson has very kindly agreed to counsel and advice you on all of your problems! Email him today!



Ever feel happy, contended and zealously enthusiastic about life? Well if the answer is yes, Father Wendy Sheppard Henderson says fuck off. He wants correspondence from people who are sad, lonely and generally messed-up so Brendan Coffey took a pen and paper and asked him for some direction to his life. Here is what Father Henderson had to say.

BC-Father, I've been having trouble with my faith for some time. Every time I hear Louis Walsh speak, I begin to question my faith in the need for a reproductive system. Why do such people exist?

Father Wendy-Well Brendan, firstly let me say that I'm delighted with your obvious disillusionment with life. I'm sick of all these 'happy' people everywhere I look. Happiness of the Irish people has been the downfall of the Roman Catholic Church here.

When God created the world in 1966, with the release of The Beach Boys album 'Pet Sounds', the greatest influence in my life to date, he gave a lot of hints as to why there is a need for this 'reproductive' system to which you refer, through the medium of the amazing lyrics of the great apostle, Brian Wilson.

The album was the first mention of 'God' in the charts, with 'God Only Knows' reaching number one in the US. It is from this song that I like to draw some great words of wisdom "God only knows what I'd be without you".

You see the Catholic Church, without sad and lonely depressed bachelors like yourself Brendan, would all but collapse. These individuals have been the cornerstone of the priesthood and congregation in Ireland over the last century, but sadly men like you, Brendan are becoming the exception and not the rule. Thus, we have seen the Catholic Church disintegrate before our very eyes in the last number of years, with people becoming 'happy'-whatever the hell that is-and thus our numbers have dwindled.

Without these people we are a complete mess. Brian Wilson's visionary depiction of a succinct inability to understand what we would become without "you" pertains to us not being able to function without certain people. The Church cannot function without you and your ilk, Brendan. Five year olds that listen to what's in the charts-I don't think anyone older could possibly be responsible for what habitually resides there, or else I'm quite scared-couldn't function without the likes of Louis Walsh. Parents who like to neglect their children and allow them to listen to what's in the charts and on Limerick's Live 95 FM generally, could not function without Louis Walsh existing. Also, those teenagers that are foolish enough to believe they are talented and appear on "You're a Star" wouldn't exist without Louis Walsh and some of the young ones on that programme aren't bad looking either so it's not all bad.

But, by and large, the message that comes across generally from "Pet Sounds" is that most of us "just aren't made for these times". That doesn't mean that we aren't right, but it means that we have as many if not more people in existence that are wrong-Walsh et al-so as to prove how wrong society can get it, no matter how many people believe it to be right.

Remember, Brendan, minorities are always correct in their assertions. Brian was similarly in a minority in embarking upon the making of "Pet Sounds", within the Beach Boys.

"Wouldn't it be nice to live together in the kind of world where we belong?"

Of course it would Brendan, but unfortunately, as is clear from God's message inherent on "Pet Sounds", this is an unlikely reality. That is why we have the kingdom of heaven to look forward to, where we can escape the dregs of society. My message to you Brendan is continue to listen to the Beach Boys and look forward to dying, where we can meet Keith Moon, Beethoven, George Harrison and not forgetting both Carl and Dennis Wilson. Remain hopeful that Mike Love is rejected by God and sent to hell, but remember greater rewards await us so look forward to them. Keep the faith.

Yours sincerely,
Wendy.

If you're feeling blue and you don't know what do to, just ask Fr Wendy about it.

**Email:
askfrwendy@hotmail.com**

Something getting your goat? Someone rained on your parade? Something about the last issue of An Focal that you cannot let pass without comment? Trying to be funny to impress your friends? Never fear! An Focal's Letters Page is here. Vent your spleen here on whatever topic you like. Just e-mail your letters to sucommunication@ul.ie

Ducks for Joy!

A chairde,

I have a dream, that one day on the fountains of Ul yellow rubber ducks will roam free along side other bath toys and aquatic friends.

UL has a bad reputation as being unimaginative and conservative, well here is the perfect opportunity to break free and embrace our youth and creativeness, and in all fairness, fairy liquid in the fountains just doesn't cut it anymore.

Picture the scene, it's a lovely summers day and you are sitting out on the grass or playing football Frisbee, etc. etc. and on the fountains the rubber ducks bounce up and down in the gently breeze, its idyllic!

While some may think this proposal somewhat ludicrous and I am aware of the very fine line between what is cool and what is crazy, I firmly believe this idea is on the right side! I have spoken to many people about this idea and many are in support of it, however I am interested to see how many students actually think this may be an achievable goal.

The key to this idea is in being able to visualise it.

Quack quack.

IS mise le meas,
Michelle Ní Ghabóid.



Article Commended

Hi,

Just writing to compliment & thank the girl who wrote about her attack for An Focal (Me & A Gun, Issue 7). I'm glad to see An Focal really telling it like it is re this kind of situation. I hope it does some good. If you know the girl in question please pass on my good wishes and tell her that while she doesn't believe herself to be brave she is a person who we can all take inspiration & more importantly advice from.

Mags Lahart.

Credit Where Credit Is Due

News Writers:

Alan Higgins
Sarah Ryan
Eoin Ó Broin

Features Writers:

Mikey Stafford
Dónal O'Driscoll
Anne Sheridan
Gemma Nolan
Elaine Kiely
Mary Sweeney
Brendan Coffey

View Writers:

Grace Loftus
Niall Murphy
Sarah Ryan
Jim Heneghan
Graham Brennan

Proofreaders:

Grace Loftus
Sarah Ryan

Photographers:

Eoin Stephenson
Anne Sheridan
Sarah Ryan

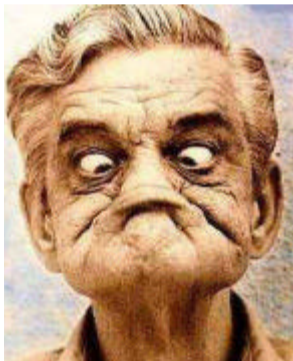
Back Inside



An Bainisteoir as imparted to Brendan Coffey

Dear Readers,

An Bainisteoir here. As I write this, I am languishing in a lonely prison cell. My cell mate keeps trying to tell me how much he loves kids. I don't know why, but one of the prison officers told me he was in for child sex offences. At least I'm safe enough sleeping at night then I suppose. But that is my only consolation readers. I am being held in custody pending a court appearance, which mightn't be for another few months. It would be sooner, only there are not enough prison officers available to bring my good self to court because they have to bring some other bloke to a tribunal every day of the week. Even if there were enough prison officers available, I'd only be leaving the cell and coming back just as quick because all my money, about two hundred quid, would be gone in about two and half minutes to my lawyer, as his fees are charged from the moment I leave the cell.



How I have arrived at this point is beyond me. Everything started out so well on New Year's Eve. We had a few drinks around at Johnny 'Five Bellies' McCarthy about half twelve. All the lads from the Junior C football team were there. Butch Cassidy had provided us with a load of meat from the abattoir. Even Sergeant John 'Likes His Sauce' Humphries brought us some bangers that had been left over in the station from Halloween. They were damn good ones too. He said they only ever took the good ones. They'd search all the kids but if the bangers were shit they'd let them off with a kick up the hole for each of them.

As it was An Bainisteoir's birthday, the lads said they had a surprise lined up for me. They weren't letting a word slip about what it might be, so instead of continually asking them what it is, An Bainisteoir just decided to go with the flow. By half nine that evening, all the lads were getting their second wind and we made for town.

We passed through a few bars but we kept getting moved on because apparently An Bainisteoir kept putting the clock forward to twelve and telling everyone it was midnight. Finally, we reached my surprise destination-a strip club. The boys were dying to see my reaction but apparently I was asleep.

By the time they got me inside I had woken up and I was getting my second wind. We were in a bar area first, with a couple of dancers but nothing over the top. After a while we moved into a room that the boys had booked, which had seating for about thirty of us and there was a small stage. We sat down and were brought a round of drinks.

Then the fun started. A couple of women came out and did a bit of a dance around the poles, but I puked on one of them, so they quickly departed. Then this small fattish, funny looking one came out. She came down to my seat and brought me up to the stage with her. She had a couple of microphones and gave me one. Then the music for 'I Will Survive' came on. I sang it apparently.

I was awful concerned about your one though. She was wearing a skirt and a string top-far more than any of the others had been wearing, and she was fucking ugly.

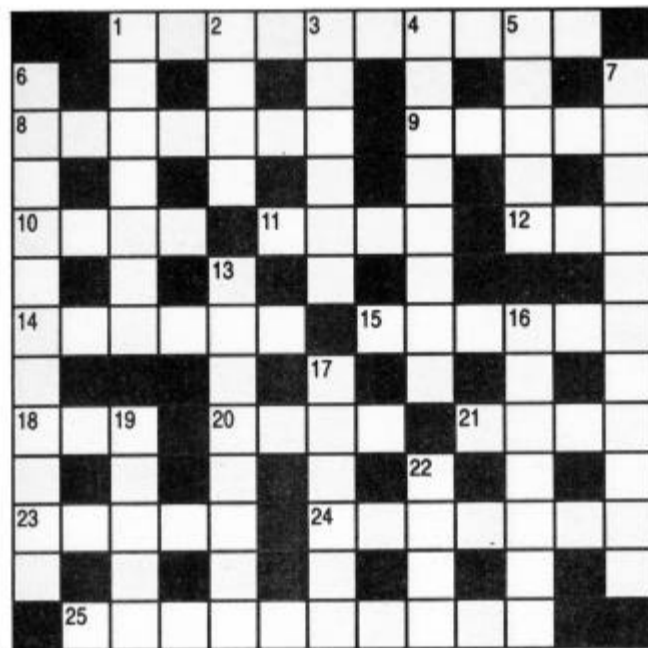
Then she started dancing with me and getting very raunchy. There still wasn't something right about her.

Then about half way through the song, up came the skirt and out came her dick! Next thing I know, I'm being bundled off the stage by three Gards and into the back of a van. They were raiding the place and arrested me for sexual assault.

Now I'm stuck here with this fucking weirdo-oh wait he's trying to hang something out the window as I speak. The way things are looking, I mightn't even make it out in time for the Junior C championship. Please help,

Yours sincerely,
An Bainisteoir

An Focal Crossword #8



No. 137

ACROSS

- 1. Deposing from priesthood (10)
- 8. Covered with greenery (7)
- 9. Correct reasoning (5)
- 10. Verse work (4)
- 11. Tune with words (4)
- 12. The Lion (3)
- 14. More reckless (6)
- 15. Was the reason for (6)
- 18. Male cat (3)
- 20. Baby's bottle attachment (4)
- 21. Fronded plant (4)
- 23. Intersections (5)
- 24. Line of communication (7)
- 25. Normal (10)

DOWN

- 1. Blackens (7)
- 2. Flutter (4)
- 3. Alternative (6)
- 4. 1000g (8)
- 5. Man's name (Kennedy) (5)
- 6. Turning into steam (11)
- 7. In appropriate fashion (11)
- 13. Throw out (of ship, plane, etc.) (8)
- 16. Breastbone (7)
- 17. Pipe inserted into barrel (6)
- 19. Channels of communication (5)
- 22. "— Krishna" (4)

SCRIBBLE BOX

Sabbatical Reports

PRESIDENT - EOIN

Hej!



On the tip of my tongue every day for the last few weeks has been sort out the shop, complete Union budgets, fix the photocopiers, put the Wired FM issue to bed, get the library opening hours, run a campaign to get more class reps and get more people involved in the Union. Of course the finances are paramount. I have had more meetings with solicitors, auditors, accountants, insurance brokers, bank managers in the last few weeks than I may ever have in my life again.

News from around the country is that USI also have serious financial issues & for the first time in 30 years students going on work practise have been given a materials, travel & accommodation allowance. It happened in UCD for physiotherapy students! The Student teachers here have been waiting just as long! It is not clear as of yet if there will be a meeting of the European Ministers of Education in Ireland in the next few months. It would be a good opportunity to protest the fees issues which is a big deal all over Europe at the moment.

Closer to home the objections against the Stables & Scholars having their licences renewed was struck out at the Limerick District Court on December 19th. If you have not collected your membership sticker please do so any evening in the SU. If you are not yet a member apply online and check your status there as your application is processed.

At Academic Council we raised the issues that UL was not doing enough to encourage Students to go on Erasmus. At the moment far more Students come to UL than leave. Thus UL is subsidising the fees of the extra numbers from abroad. With the tightening of belts all around UL could stop the influx of Erasmus students until equal numbers are leaving the campus.

Good luck to Cllr. Kieran Walsh (3rd HPSS) Cathal Crowe (4th HPSS) and who are contesting the local elections in June for Labour & Fianna Fáil and respectively. Bringing the voice of youth to the table!

Slán,
Eoinsupresident@ul.ie

DEPUTY/WELFARE - DAVID



Davey-Boy took a well-deserved holiday for the past two weeks, so he missed the

deadline. He'll have plenty to report for next time! He's refreshed and back in the office now though and he'll have plenty to report for next time!

suwelfare@ul.ie

EDUCATION - MADELINE



Hey there guys and welcome back!!!

Well hope ye all had a great 3-week break and are back and ready to party and STUDY!!!

Ok, first off loads happening round campus while you were away. And lots more to come I suspect. First off committee meetings were held regarding student safety and disciplinary issues. Also regarding plagiarism we have a problem, in that a number of students are failing their modules due to the 'copy and paste' technique of research. Some cases of Academic cheating have also cropped up. So students keep away from these methods of "RESEARCH" please. Academics are top notch in their spotting of these paragraphs, sentences, pages etc.

Committee meetings also took place regarding rules and regulations, and the new courses etc coming on-line in the not too distant future. We also attended FUSU (Forum of Universities Students Unions) in DCU on which I will report to you all on next issue.

Also the Student Status Committee cases are going to be held soon. This committee is where students go to apply for internal transfers, re-admission, leave of absence and exemptions. If you need any advice contact your advisors and also me if you so wish and are worried about anything.

Make sure that your class has a class rep. Its really important and I've had loads of problems (some small some not so small) brought to my attention through this system. Remember your class rep represents your class. This system has power within the university and is recognized which helps when a problem arises.

Make sure for each and every module that your class receives a module outline and ensure that the repeat assessment is included on it. Faculties are obliged to provide this information.

Exam papers are taking some time but we're getting them on the website as quickly as we can. Also some departments are really good and supply the entire collection of past exam papers on their public folders!

On another note safety on campus and in the estates is now a major issue. Please don't walk home alone after dark and if there are any dark areas on campus please let us know. Any incidents that you know of or that have happened to you please report them to the Gardai and also to the Union. Incident report forms are available in the Union for you to fill out which are totally confidential. In this way we can monitor the problem and push for more lighting, security etc.

Campus Watch is arising from the ashes and we will have a big week in which all students will be informed of safety measures etc. It's coming soon!!!

I've spent lots of time arguing the students' case about the poor lighting in Brierfield. I contacted all parties' involved and all local councilors in the area. Now after much denial of any problem on the part of some, thankfully the wheels are in motion. This is a thanks in no small part to Councillor Noreen Ryan who represents this area. Councillor Ryan also promised to provide an additional light in the area and is seeking extra bins in Elm Park.

Anyway after all that, I hope ye've a fab 2 weeks,

Behave and take it easy schmeers,

Madeline

sueducation@ul.ie

COMMS & CAMPAIGNS - SARAH



Hey everyone and welcome back after the break.

Hopefully you got on OK in the old exams, and if you didn't get on as well as you liked, don't forget to talk to your advisor and lecturers and see what can be done.

Since the last issue of An Focal, I've had my tonsils out, thankfully, and am back in the saddle again and ready to go.

I went to a meeting of the IT Steering Committee in early february, and while there weren't any major developments as regards Students, I'm keeping a

close eye on what's going on.

Other Committees I've been sitting on included the Appraisals Committee (for minor discipline offences), the University Marketing Committee (I'm hoping to get some ideas on Marketing the Union), Coiste Na Gaeilge, and the Stables, Scholars and Student Centre Management Committees.

An Focal is hopefully back with a bang this semester. But it's only going to work well if people get involved. So if you like writing, know a bit about music or movies or drama, know the rules as regards apostrophes and where they go in a sentence, or want to write hard hitting news pieces to challenge the student reader, just go for it! The next meeting of the Communications Group (for anyone interested) will take place in the Main Canteen on Wednesday Week 1 at 6pm. Do call along if you've any interest or ideas.

The new website is still in the planning stages, as soon as I have any updates on this, I'll let you know, because it's going to be great!

On another note, if you're interested in the Financial Situation of the Students' Union, come along to the Class Reps Council meeting on Tuesday of Week 2. The location for this meeting is yet to be announced, but information will be available in the SU as soon as we have it.

That's about it for now,

Take Care,

Sarah?

sucommunication@ul.ie