



We Vote This Friday. But Who Will Make The Worst Taoiseach? Page 6.



UL Ladies' Rugby Walk Away With 32-0 Victory Over NUIG. Page 13.

LIFESAVER PROJECT FILLS PLAZA

Written by **Evana Downes**

ROAD Safety Week saw approximately 300 students watch a live demonstration of a fatal car accident, in the UL Plaza on Thursday, 10 February 2011. The event, which was brought to UL by your SU, was promoted by the Lifesaver Project, a road safety awareness campaign which aims to reduce the number of potentially fatal road traffic collisions in Limerick.

The campaign concluded on Thursday with the live demonstration, which gave students a chance to view the procedure when emergency services arrive at the scene of an accident.

The demonstration featured two accident damaged cars, one of which was tipped on its side and billowing smoke. Various emergency service vehicles arrived at the scene where live actors from UL Drama Society were cut from the vehicles. One man was placed under mock arrest for drunk driving, while a second fatally injured man lay on the ground beneath a black cloth.

Students from a city secondary school attended the event.

A Lifesaver Project presentation followed the demonstration in the Jean Monet Theatre. Garda Tony Minter spoke of how the lives of victims and their families are destroyed in the aftermath of serious crashes.

John Lyons of Limerick Fire and Rescue explained the difference between being legally allowed to drive and having the experience to do so responsibly. "Listen to experienced people and always wear a seatbelt," he advised.

The danger of overloading a car with passengers was highlighted by paramedic Keith Mullane, who explained how this practice destabilises a car and adversely affects its passengers on impact.

Several vehicles, which had been involved in collisions, were placed in strategic locations around the campus as reminders of what can happen as a result of an accident.

The event was brought to you by your SU Campaigns and Services Officer, Vivion Grisewood. The Lifesaver Project is a collaboration between the Gardaí, Limerick Ambulance Service and Limerick Fire and Rescue Services. UL's Corporate Affairs Department were also involved in the demonstration.

The Lifesaver Project is funded by Limerick Corporation. A video of the event is available on YouTube and www.ulsu.ie



LODGE NIGHTCLUB BIDS A FINAL FAREWELL

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald,**
News Editor

Popular Student Venue Costing Too Much To Continue Trading

THE Lodge Nightclub ceased business on Thursday, 10 February, amid concerns over the financial viability of the club. The beginning of this semester saw patrons express gross disappointment and dismay over an increase in admission prices, with entry after midnight increased to €7.

The price hike made the weeknight entry fee one of the most expensive in Limerick. The acclaimed free entry for each year group on different nights of the week was also reduced. Facebook events and comments were posted following the price increase, urging students to boycott the venue and bring

their custom to the city venues instead. A response posted by the Lodge Nightclub on its Facebook page stated "like any customers you may take your custom elsewhere should you feel we no longer offer value for money."

The Lodge's Facebook page became a platform for customers to express their distaste, with some branding the statement by management as "condescending" and "A PR Disaster". More than 200 irate comments were posted before page administrators removed them, suggesting they were

"abusive". On the night of Tuesday, Week 3, a statement was posted on Facebook stating that the venue would cease operation on Thursday of that week. The management confirmed its staff had been issued with letters. A staff member told An Focal the letters confirmed floor staff "were out of a job [as of] Thursday."

Management informed An Focal the nightclub had been losing money over the previous two years, and the hotel was no longer in a position to subsidise its operation.

Wayne Neilon, General Manager of the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel said "in the last two years there has been a serious trend towards off license sales which has had a detrimental effect on our drink sales and the trends of our customers." "We have tried over this period to increase footfall and revenues through concessions, free entry and drinks promotions. While we were maintaining the footfall, the revenues continued to decrease as our customers

were arriving from house parties and no longer spending in the club," he added.

Some students have slammed management for failing to offer any regular drinks promotions, unlike competing venues. Despite their obvious anger, student patrons expressed their sentiments of fondness towards the club, with messages such as "it feels like someone has died" and "I love the Lodge!" posted on Facebook.

"It is with regret and disappointment the decision to close the club has been taken. But we are evaluating our position at the moment and we are confident that we can identify a new plan for the club in the future," added Mr Neilon. "We will take many happy memories from our 15 years catering for the students and would like to thank them all for their contribution to the club," he said.

News

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

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

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EDITORIAL



Finn McDuffie, Editor

IT seems nobody really wants Kenny to be Taoiseach. In fact, he's a bit of a joke. But who's the alternative? The sad fact of the matter is, the public reckon he's the best of a bad lot. And what a lot we have to chose from.

As the journalists and the column writers come out in their droves and the great cannons of political satire roll out on every street, even Kenny, an easy subject of the finest ridicule, seems almost better or more deserving than the other candidates.

The polls, the polls, the polls. They tell us what we think. Apparently we think Kenny would be a better Taoiseach than the fence percher

Gilmore. And who's going to vote for the radically banal Micheal Martin as he fumbles around the country trying to decide what his promises actually mean. I'd comment on Adams, but he knows where I live.

It's a real shame. This general election should be an opportunity. Instead, it's a case of who's better. Better is not best. And we all want what's best for Ireland, don't we?

Alright, maybe I could give Kenny some slack. This issue has been a little hard on him. But it's just so easy. Have you read the Fine Gael manifesto? How on earth will the party live up to those sort of promises? Anybody who

bothers to investigate it will find out renegotiation's a farce and change is a long way off, especially when the politics come with a complimentary blindfold.

We're in for another roller coaster journey guys. And with Kenny at the helm, we'd better buckle up.



Gardaí sign up students to the Register of Electors in your SU Courtyard on 8 February 2011. Image: Finn McDuffie

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

Written by **Rachel Dargan**

THE International Education Division recently honoured their high achieving international students.

They were presented with a number of Scholarships and Merit Bursaries in recognition of their achievements.

Scholarships presented include the Faculty of Science and Engineering Scholarships. A number of generous scholarships are available to full-time non-EU undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

A 50% fee scholarship is available to undergraduate students for the duration of their four-year programme and to postgraduate students for the duration of their one-year programme while the International Education Division Merit Bursaries are offered to undergraduate students at UL who show academic excellence.

Bursaries range from €500 to €2,000

and are awarded automatically to students who perform well, while the UL Foundation Entrance Scholarship worth €2,000 each are awarded on merit to new undergraduate American students.

The awards were coordinated by the International Education Division and were presented to the students by vp Academic and Registrar, Professor Paul McCutcheon.

Recipient students are from China, India, Thailand, the USA, St Lucia, Mexico, Japan and South Africa.

On the day of the presentation of these prestigious accolades, faculty and staff from all faculties of UL, along with UL's Chinese Cultural Assistant Ms. Wang Yan Nan, were present.



Elaine O'Hara from the UL Foundation with Mara Kelly and Kathleen Kavanagh who received the UL Foundation Entrance Scholarship and Professor Paul McCutcheon. Image: UL Press Office

News

MINOR FIRE CLOSES SCHUMANN

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald**,
News Editor

A MINOR fire temporarily closed the Schumann building on Friday, Week 3. It is understood the incident, which occurred at around 8am, took place in an office on the first floor of the building.

Three units of the Limerick City Fire Service were in attendance, along with one unit from Cappamore Fire Brigade.

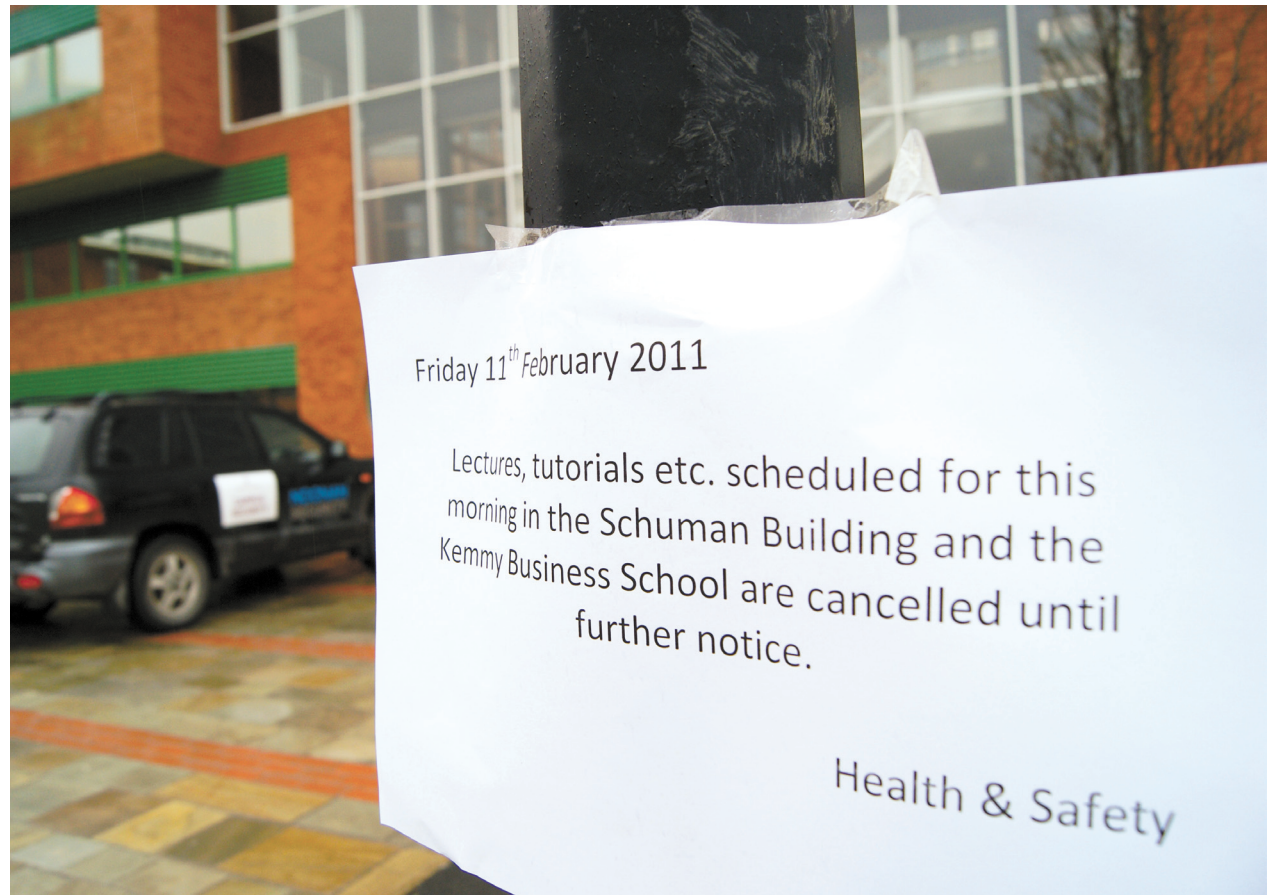
In the interests of health and safety, it was decided to cancel all classes scheduled in the Schumann for the remainder of the day. Operations resumed on Monday, Week 4.

The adjoining Kemmy Business School was temporarily affected, with classes there cancelled until 11am.

It is understood there was some smoke damage to the parts of the building in the immediate vicinity of the fire. The damage was cosmetic.

Philip Thornton, Safety Officer praised the timely response and actions of staff.

"I would like to thank the University's service and support staff for their efforts both during, and in the aftermath of this incident," he said.



A temporary notice at the entrance to the Schumann Building, an hour after the Fire Services had been called. Image: Finn McDuffie

CUMANN GAELACH STAGE VALENTINE'S SILENT PROTEST

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald**,
News Editor

Conradh na Gaeilge Describes Plan To Make Irish Optional As "Very Odd"

AN Cumann Gaelach held a silent protest on Valentine's Day, Monday, Week 4 in Limerick City.

The protest, which was held in Arthur's Quay Park in the city centre, coincided with a similar event staged outside the Dáil.

An Cumann is one of many organisations concerned over the future of Irish following an announcement by Fine Gael leader, Enda Kenny, that Irish will become optional at Leaving Cert level under its education policy. It is likely Fine Gael will form a majority of a newly elected government.

Mr Kenny claims removing Irish from the core subjects is the "best way forward" for the language and would promote it in the long run. However, in the six year lifetime of this plan he has not furnished evidence to prove this is in fact the case.

Contrary to common belief, a recent survey carried out by Ipsos Mori illustrated that 61% are in favour of retaining Irish as a core Leaving Cert subject, with those aged 15 to 24 years, most in favour.

Christóir Ó Faoláin, an tUachtarán UL Cumann Gaelach believes such

a policy would be retrograde. Mr Ó Faoláin said "there is nothing to suggest Mr Kenny's policy is the correct one, and plenty to suggest that it will result in irreparable damage to the language. Our protest is to highlight the opposition to this policy."

"We believe that FG need to sit down with Irish language Organisations such as Conradh na Gaeilge and Comharna Muinteoírí Gaeilge, and all stakeholders in the issue and work out an evidence based policy that will reform how Irish is taught to the next generation, based on the recommendations in the twenty year plan for the Irish language, so that they will be the first generation in over two century's to see real growth in the use of the national language," he added.

Following the removal of compulsory foreign language at GCSE level in England, the numbers taking these subjects halved, with many schools discontinuing these classes entirely.

An Cumann suggests a similar effect could be expected here, including a loss of jobs, tourism and Gaeltacht.

More than 15,000 have signed an online petition against Fine Gael's plans.

Conradh na Gaeilge described the plan as "very odd" and said it "doesn't bear up well to scrutiny."

Fine Gael offered Valentine's e-cards on its website during the romantic holiday, sadly for some, not in Irish.

SINN FÉIN PROMISES FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL

Written by **Colm Fitzgerald**,
News Editor

High Earners To Foot The Bill

SINN FÉIN has revealed its education policy will feature free education for all. The party's recently released election manifesto claims that primary, secondary and third level education will be completely free of charge for everybody, regardless of socio-economic background.

It is proposed funding will be acquired through introducing a third rate of income tax. PAYE workers earning in excess of €100,000 will be taxed at 48%.

The party claims the notion of "free education" in Ireland is a myth, with a child's education generally costing in excess of €70,000 from national School to college, with parents traditionally meeting the cost.

Commenting on the development, Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Education, Aengus O' Snodaigh said "every September is a struggle for parents to come up with the money needed to send children back to school and college. Added up, the cost of books, uniforms, accommodation and transport reaches into the hundreds and often thousands. We are committed to making free education a reality." Sinn Féin has claimed it will oppose third level fees.

"In our 2011 pre-budget submission Sinn Féin showed how we fund public services such as education in a way that is fair including asking those who have more to pay more. We have shown that public services such as education can be spared from cuts.

We have shown how investing in services such as education will pay dividends and ultimately in the long run will end up saving the state money," he said. Voters go to the polls on 25 February.

GET ON BOARD AT UL

Written by **Finn McDuffie**, Editor

A DOUBLE decker bus painted turquoise, pink and yellow visited the UL campus on Wednesday, 16 February (Week 4).

The bus visited UL as part of the national campaign, Get On Board, which seeks to put youth mental health on the political agenda in the run up to the general election.

Speaking to An Focal, event organiser, Anthony (pictured) said "Our first stop today is the UL campus, where we've been serenading the students, telling them all about what we're doing."

"We got loads of people on the bus to email their candidates from our big monitor and to bring a smile to some faces on this chilly day!"

"We're off the Rathkeale now, to meet Enda Kenny and Dan Neville," he continued. "It's a brilliant step forward in terms of getting youth mental health on to the agenda."

The campaign is supported by national pro mental health groups Reach Out, Foróige, BeLonG To and

Headstrong. The multi-coloured bus was flanked by brightly coloured and jovial hosts, who attracted the attention of passers-by. The moveable venue, which has the potential to be open-top, hosted Dublin ensemble

Blind Yackety on the upper deck. Downstairs was comprised of an inviting and comfortable seating area where student voters could sit down and email their local election candidates.



Umbrella-wielding hosts of the Get On Board Bus, who serenaded passing students. Image: Finn McDuffie

News

NEWS IN BRIEF

AN FOCAL PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL STUDENT POLL

AN Focal has teamed up with the independent student newspapers of the other six Irish Universities and CIT, to compile a student electoral survey.

The results, which seek to ascertain how students will vote in the general election, will be compiled by the date of issue of this paper. Results of the national student survey will be communicated by email to UL students in Week 5. This is the first poll of its kind in recent years and represents a step towards a more co-operative and unified national student media body. News Editor of UCD's The College Tribune, Donie O'Sullivan, co-ordinated the national poll.

FOUR COLLEGES LAUNCH €1M STUDENT SUPPORT WEBSITE

NUI GALWAY, Trinity College, Dublin, University College Cork and Dundalk IT have launched a new €1m student support website. The website is called "My Mind Matters" and will provide information on issues such as anxiety, depression, exam stress and coping with the transition to college life. The project aims to provide better information about mental health problems to students, provide confidential and anonymous help and advice. Students will also be able to apply for confidential one-to-one counselling online. The colleges worked closely with Reachout.com to develop the website. Reachout.com is an online service which tries to help young people to help themselves through difficult times.

RUBBERBANDITS TICKETS ON SALE FOR CHARITY WEEK

TICKETS for the Rubber Bandits are now on sale at your SU Reception for €12. The Rubberbandits will headline Charity Week 2011, which takes place in Week 6. For more information on the Rubberbandits see Page 24. All information on Charity Week charities and events can be found in Pulse magazine, available free in your SU or on www.ulsu.ie.

NO WINNER OF UL'S C&S LOTTO

THERE were no winners of the Clubs and Societies Lottery this week as it moves to the new Jackpot figure of €6200. The four winners of the €25 Lucky Dip prizes are Adrian Thomas, Limerick; Kevin Johnson, UL; Donal Cahill, Limerick; Colm Fitzpatrick, Clare. With another four draws planned for this semester, there is still a chance to win the cash for a terrific summer if not before then. Upcoming draws are on 22 February (Week 5), 8 March (Week 7), 22 March (Week 9), and 5 April (Week 11). Visit www.registers.ulsu.ie to buy tickets.

AIESEC RECRUITMENT ON 2 MARCH

AIESEC seeks members for a UL branch. The organisation is run by young people for young people and offers its members with an integrated development experience comprised of leadership experiences, international internships and participation in a global learning environment. AIESEC's mission is for personal and professional development while offering the platform to network globally. A fee is required. For further information, email Aiesec.UniversityofLimerick@gmail.com.

STUDENT NURSES MAY WITHDRAW LABOUR OVER CUTS

Written by **Liam Gleeson**

THE Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) plans to ballot student nurses for industrial action, although Tánaiste and Minister for Health Mary Coughlan has agreed to review the cuts, that could save the country €32.5 million by 2015.

According to the INMO, the decision to cut students' pay was made without any prior consultation. The nurses' union has urged its members to vote only for parties in the general election who agree to reverse the cuts.

Hundreds of UL student nurses took part in a peaceful protest at Limerick's Regional Hospital on Wednesday, 9 February against the plans to phase out all paid placements by 2015.

The INMO's Industrial Relations Officer for the Mid-West, Mary Fogarty,

said students would be exploited by having to work full time shifts, long hours and for nothing, during mandatory nine-month placements.

"The Department won't say who made this decision, but maybe it was a parting gift from the Health Minister before she left office," she said.

Second year student nurse, Catriona Ni Dhonnchúsaid said she thought the cuts were "shocking" and promoted slave labour. She added "in a job that is so mentally and physically exhausting, to be asked to do the work free is an absolute disgrace."

UL student, Leona Ryan said "we are replacing qualified nurses. We are actually saving the Government at least 20% anyway. The focus should be on job creation and not cutting pay."



The INMO protest outside the Regional Hospital.

The INMO has spoken with the political parties and asked them to clarify their position on the matter. Only Sinn Féin said they would reverse the cuts, calling them "unfair and unjust". Fine Gael said it would review the issue if and when in government. Labour's Spokesperson on Health, Jan O'Sullivan told the union she would "reflect" on the issue, while the Green Party did not respond.

Meanwhile, Labour's election candidate in Limerick City, Joe Leddin, said "my initial thought is it's grossly unfair targeting the sector, especially with all the waste and miss-management within the HSE."

Talks continue between the INMO and political parties in the run up to the election.

UL student, Leona Ryan said "we are replacing qualified nurses. We are actually saving the Government at least 20% anyway. The focus should be on job creation and not cutting pay."

UL STUDENT RUNS IN GENERAL ELECTION

Written by **Colin Clarke**

KATE Bopp, final year Law student, has decided to run in the upcoming general election. Ms Bopp is a Wexford born mother of five living in Coolbawn, Co. Tipperary. She is the co-founder of the aid organisation Haiti Connect which has been involved in a number of projects in Haiti for the last 12 months.

"Like so many people in Ireland, I have become more and more disillusioned with the state of Irish politics and the way that the current government does not represent, or even listens to, the opinions of the Irish people," Ms Bopp said. "Considering that not voting was really not an option, there was only one other option for me – and that was to run as an independent candidate," she said.

Ms Bopp will be running in North Tipperary against Fine Gael's Noel Coonan, Labour's Alan Kelly, Fianna Fáil's Máire Hoctor, and independent Michael Lowry. A total of eight candidates will be fighting

in this difficult three seat constituency.

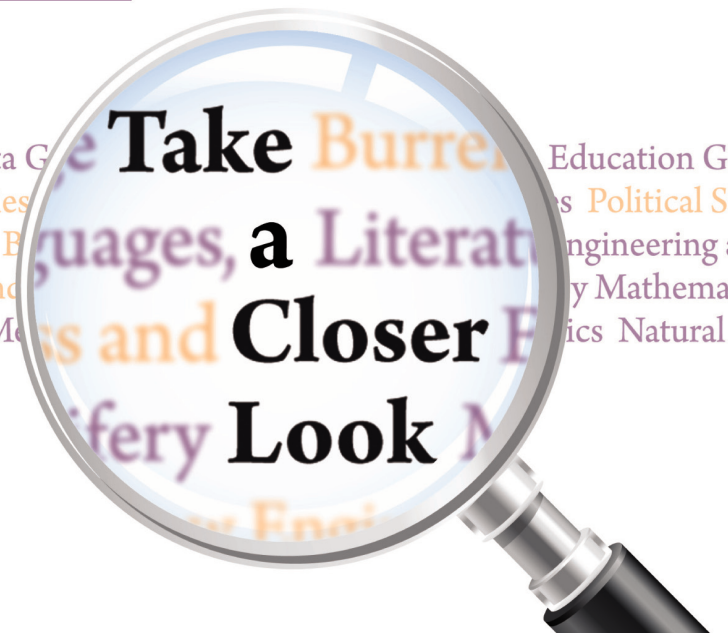
"I believe we must pass power and responsibility to local government at local level," Ms Bopp said. "Introducing directly elected mayors and giving local councils more executive powers."

"I will call for a complete overhaul of the current healthcare system. Transition to a 'Dutch style' health insurance system providing a basic level of health care for everyone irrespective of income." Ms Bopp's healthcare proposals are similar to Fine Gael's in terms of the 'Dutch Style' system which FG has been proposing for months.

Ms Bopp also shares some of the views of the Labour Party when it comes to constitutional reform. She said "I believe it requires an overhaul of the constitution bringing it into the 21st century."

NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

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Postgraduate Open Day, NUI Galway

Wednesday 2 February 2011, 12.30 pm to 4.30 pm

Bailey Allen Hall, Áras na Mac Léinn (Student Centre)

- Develop expertise in your chosen subject
- Boost your employability and earning power
- Work with leading academics in your field

Visit the Open Day to find out about our programmes, attend information sessions, and to talk to lecturers and students.

To book your place at the fair visit:

www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate-open-day

Or just turn up and register on the day.

For enquiries about the Open Day email: postgrad@nuigalway.ie

Opinion

THE CULT OF NEWS

Written by **Darragh Roche**,
Deputy Editor

"THE news goes on for 24 hours a day." These are the words of Charles Foster Kane, the billionaire newspaper tycoon from the 1941 classic Citizen Kane. The film is a dark portrayal of the power Kane exercises through his newspaper chain and his charismatic, indomitable personality. Today, 24 hour news is a part of the fabric of modern media. But this new media galaxy resembles the world of Kane's world in another, more worrying way. Just as Kane dominated and manipulated the fictional media empire, so this century's media is increasingly dominated by overwhelming personalities.

Rupert Murdoch has long been synonymous with the most conservative and brazenly right-wing news organisations in the United States and increasingly in the rest of the world. The aging magnate is the ringmaster of the NewsCorp circus and owns a string of print and TV media, with Fox and Sky News among the most blatantly partisan and right wing. Murdoch's power scares people and it should. He has huge control over opinion formation and is willing to use

that to his advantage. In recent weeks the American liberal establishment has found itself a new and largely self-proclaimed champion. Arianna Huffington, controversial foundress of online news aggregator and liberal opinion generator the Huffington Post, has found herself in command of vast new resources following a so-called "merger of visions" with AOL. Huffington has placed herself as the voice of reason and civil society. In the coming counter-attack on the Fox News vitriol machine, Huff Post will be the vanguard and Arianna will try to place herself as commander-in-chief.

The public would be forgiven for seeing more than a little Kane in both colours of the political spectrum. Murdoch and Huffington are ready for battle, and they're fighting for the future of the information society itself. The days of unbiased reporting have ended. Both sides have an agenda and are prepared to shout about it. Our perception of truth can be altered by how it is presented to us and the influence of personality can detract from an objective reading. This is particularly true in the case of Julian

Assange. The moping, skeletal Assange has, ironically, become the biggest story to come from the Wikileaks releases. The controversy surrounding him is the story and the glut of secret information has been largely and quietly forgotten. Assange stepped outside of media as usual and his story is what dominates the headlines now, though he had no desire to be the centre of such interest. He was just a personality the media couldn't help concentrating on; it simply happened.

Such unintentional perversions of reportage can happen and will happen very easily when the magnate becomes more important than the news. When we want to know what Murdoch's agenda in reporting something is or why Huffington chose to make something a lead story, we lose sight of what we're supposed to see. Information is sacred; we mustn't let personal ambition smother truth.



"The public would be forgiven for seeing more than a little Kane in both colours of the political spectrum."

SCRAP THE SEANAD

Written by **Colette Sexton**

IRELAND breathed a sigh of relief as the past year drew to a close; it was time for a fresh start. The possibilities are endless for 2011 (it's rumoured that the light at the end of the tunnel might even be switched on again) but as we leave the disaster that was 2010 behind us, the country is plagued by something else that refuses to just fall away and die: the Seanad. This completely undemocratic house of the Oireachtas costs the tax payer thousands every year.

That the Seanad is a necessary part of the Irish legislative system is a weak and unconvincing argument. The Seanad double-checks legislation to ensure that the government is doing its job correctly (which, if the past five years are anything to go by, proves the Seanad has failed marvellously in this objective). Senators claim changes are being made to ensure the Seanad improves in terms of its contributions to

"An economical and creative solution would be to turn the Seanad chamber back into a ball room."

the state. Such changes include senators only getting paid travel expenses if they appear in the chamber for at least 100 days of the year, not that it would really affect the rest of us if they bothered to turn up at all. It's time to cut our losses and scrap the Seanad. Committees can take over from them. Given the amount of time senators actually dedicate to their official jobs it shouldn't take committees too long to give a glance over the legislation.

Once the money squandering senators are gone, the next problem to solve is what to do with the empty Seanad chamber. An economical and creative

solution to this would be to turn the chamber back into a ball room, as it was in the days before Leinster House became the home of the Irish government, and charge an admission fee. Then the Seanad would be packed in record time and the revenue raised could help with the giant hole in the Pension Reserve. Session through the recession will take on an entirely new meaning.



The Seanad chamber: a ball room in waiting?

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Written by **Aoife Coughlan**

POLITICS, violence and uprising are entirely too prevalent in today's global news coverage. To promote sanity amid our manic world, more than the offerings of pandering politicians and arguing analysts are needed. We need to bask in light-hearted entertainment or risk becoming increasingly dizzy with the sickness of seriousness. Lately, the malady of diplomatic sensitivities has gripped even comedic comment. Wicked wit is caught by the claws of controversy and satirical statements are subject to solemnity. This is the product of political correctness in our lives today.

Most recently, we see the popular television programme Top Gear falling foul of this new philosophy. Remarks of a stereotypical nature regarding Mexicans prompted apologies to the country's ambassador on the part of the BBC. According to co-presenter Richard Hammond, "Cars reflect national characteristics don't they? Mexican cars are just going to be lazy, feckless, flatulent, overweight, leaning against a fence asleep looking at a cactus with a blanket with a hole in the middle on as a coat." Hammond's comic imagery is at its most controversial but one has to admit that it does raise a slight smile. The offence taken by some is excessive. We need to register the context of any given statement, in this case, a tongue-in-cheek entertainment program. We assume the majority of the audience anticipate this sort of humour, thus it is not necessarily distasteful to them. Also, due to the context, it loses malicious intent. If it had been spoken on a political or current affairs type program then it would have had increased gravity. But, as per usual, the politically correct world we live in manages to deaden the humour by rearing its ugly head of reproach.

Stereotyping in general is part of un-PC humour; we have to accept that, in some areas, it is OK to indulge in it. We do not see a tirade of abuse every



Surely satire deserves to thrive?

time an Irish person is portrayed as the drunk, conniving "Paddy" or when the English are imagined as a nation of stiff upper lips with a penchant for shooting foxes and eating marmite. It is natural to find these examples funny. Closer to home, we can look at the Rubberbandits, their humorous view of the Limerick stereotype is either loved or loathed. Can people really think their sketch is intended to demean the Limerick people? A quick laugh and quick buck are more plausible reasons for the creation of the "Bandits". I am amazed at people's relish in debasing flippant humour to the levels of political correctness; surely satire deserves to thrive regardless? Political correctness degrades our abilities to detach imagery and comedy from seriousness and malice.

Being un-PC does not mean being disrespectful or distasteful. More often than not it is intelligent humour based on observance. A laugh drawn from any source is better than none at all.

Features

HUGS MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER

Written by **Jenny Armstrong**

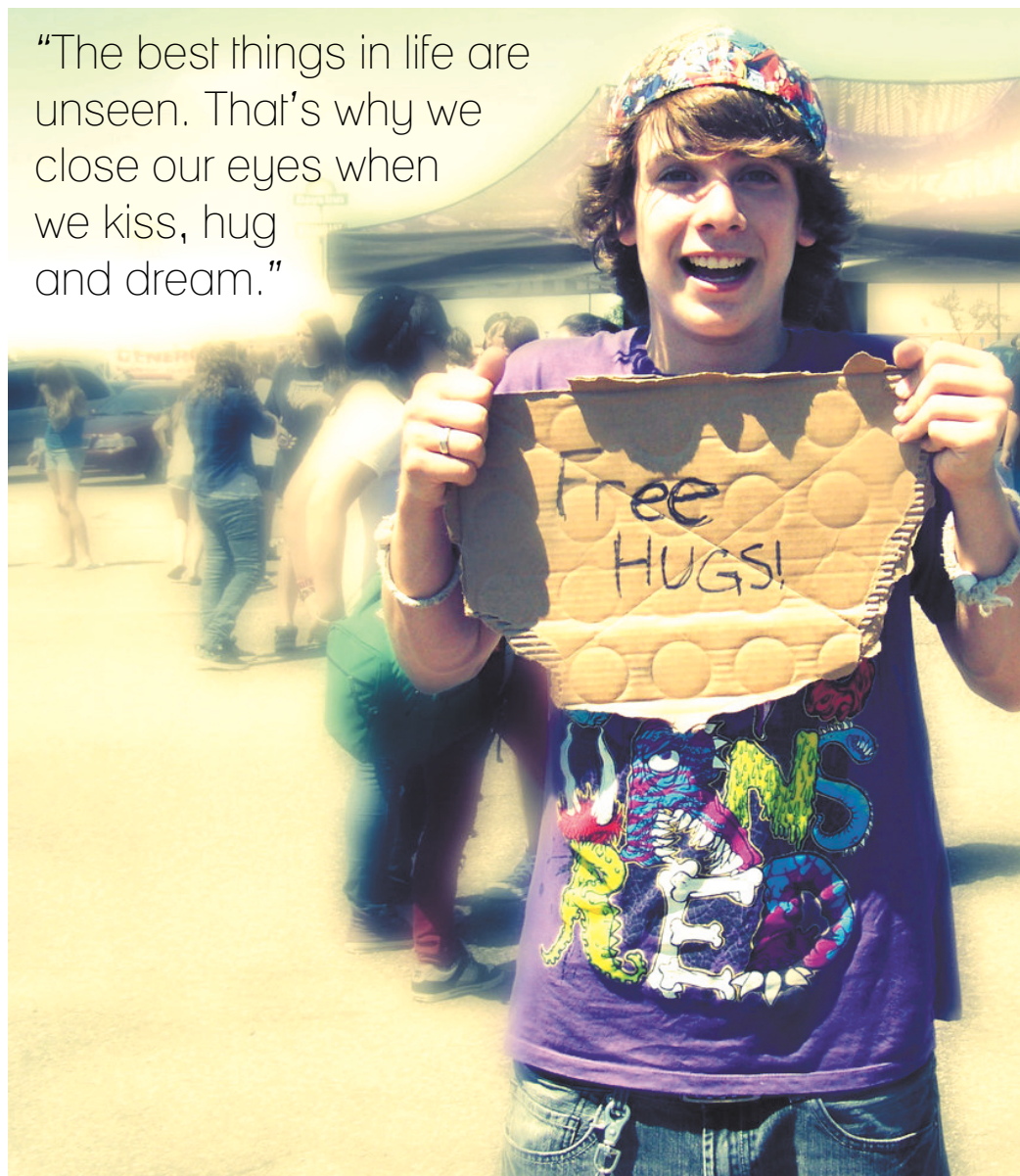
A SIMPLE linking of the arms, a fragile head upon a strong shoulder, a warm blanket of protection when in a moment of terror; hugs can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. A new study shows that we experience an increased level of ease after an embrace with a loved one. Researchers at the University of California have not only proved this, but have actually carried out experiments showing that the touch of another person can make us feel less physical pain. In their experiments, they also found that people who were simply looking at a picture of a loved one felt a milder sensation of pain in comparison to those not looking at a picture. The study also suggested that a few

hugs a day could potentially save a marriage from breakdown. When words cannot be found, an embrace demonstrates love and consolation, without the need for explanation.

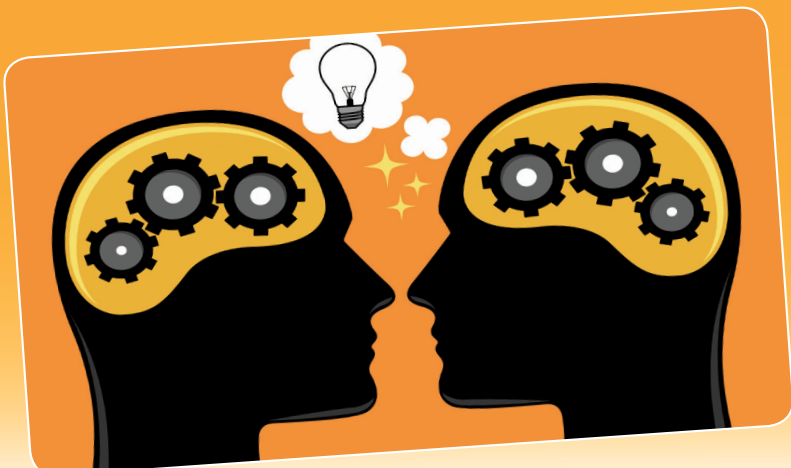
A hug or a touch doesn't have to come from a romantic relationship of course, babies and children find comfort in the arms of their parents and often the hand of a friend can soothe and console more problems than words can ever solve. The study also mentioned the growing trend of pet therapy. The outlet of having a pet to stroke and caress can actually relieve stress, lessen the need for pain medication and reduce recovery time for patients who have recently undergone hip

or knee replacement surgery. Be it a cuddle, a tickle or the swine flu inspired 'hygienic hug', why turn down any form of embrace? Often said to be the best gift, (it can be returned immediately) a hug can brighten any day. Many even decide to roam the streets offering free ones, strange, some may say, but why not? Why not be happy and optimistic and show acceptance to those around us, even if it is just a three second embrace with a stranger? Life is hard enough, and if simply opening your arms to someone for a few seconds could change their mood, then Carpe Hugs I say! With times like these, I'll be taking as many free squeezes of happiness as I can get.

"The best things in life are unseen. That's why we close our eyes when we kiss, hug and dream."



Find out more about the free hugs campaign at freehugscampaign.org



Written by **James Bradshaw**

GILMORE!

HE spoke very well; he was eloquent, articulate, and charismatic. What a contrast from his stale and discredited counterparts in the two main parties. Nick Clegg was going to be the next Prime Minister. But now, a year and a half later, the Lib Dems continue to suffer the public's wrath over spending cuts and broken promises. It appears that a place at the cabinet table isn't all it is cracked up to be.

Here too we have a traditionally weak party whose leader is riding high in the opinion polls, and promising us the sun, the moon and the stars. Only he can't deliver. Eamon Gilmore will not be the next Taoiseach. In order to for this to happen, Labour would have to win more seats than Fine Gael and that simply isn't going to happen. So this isn't really an argument about why he shouldn't be Taoiseach so much as an argument as to why he shouldn't even be Tánaiste.

When did you first hear of Mr Gilmore? Unless you have more than a passing interest in politics, it's unlikely you came across him before 2007. Pat Rabbitte's resignation as leader led to Gilmore being elected unopposed, simply because no one else wanted the job. I haven't any memories of Gilmore doing much before the crash. He outshone Enda Kenny in Leaders' Questions, but a scarecrow could do the same. No, it wasn't until the country started going downhill that Labour began to climb in the polls.

Everyone knows the details of our economic collapse: it's hard not to feel queasy as socialists of all stripes gloat about the failure of 'free market capitalism,' whilst remaining silent about the inequality produced by benchmarking, or the destructive intransigence of the trade union leadership. Few now remember how Labour promised to ramp up spending even more than Fianna Fáil had during the good times, and the damage

that this would have done.

Now Gilmore travels the country, promising in each constituency that the election of a Labour TD will safeguard the local hospital, and that a Labour-led government will create thousands of 'green jobs' and re-negotiate the bailout and do so many other things that they know cannot be done because the country is broke. We are broke. And unless Comrade Gilmore has some forged currency stowed away from his days in the Workers Party, his being in government will have no effect on that whatsoever.

If we cannot trust a doctor to give us an honest and frank diagnosis, why would we trust him to provide us with a cure? Regardless of the outcome of this election, tough decisions will have to be made, and when you enter the voting booth you should think long and hard about who is best capable of making those decisions. I cannot say I know who that is. But I can say it is not Eamon Gilmore.

HEAD TO HEAD

WHO IS THE WORST CANDIDATE?

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

Written by **Darragh Roche**,
Deputy Editor

KENNY!

IN IRELAND'S darkest hour, when the pressures of the European community and the IMF seem unbearable and when the whole body politic is convulsing with imminent change, the people should be able to look to their leaders for guidance, direction and reassurance. When you look into the stern face of your country's leader you should be able to say, "There is a man who will pull us through or die trying". But much to our dismay, the man who is almost certain now to be the next Taoiseach is insipid, uninspiring and banal.

Enda Kenny is poised to fulfil his ultimate ambition and he may even be able to head a single party Fine Gael government without the limiting effects of Labour influence. But he isn't ahead in the polls because he is an inspiring leader, because people believe he can save the nation from its crisis or because his speeches fill voters'

hearts with hope. He will be Taoiseach because he has clung on to the FG leadership despite electoral failure, unpopularity and betrayal. He is a survivor who has dug himself into his trench and now emerges to capitalise on the calamity of the Recession, the bank guarantee and the bailout. His time has come and he has been immensely lucky.

Ireland cries out with one voice: "No more Fianna Fáil". This election is about punishing the excesses and incompetence of the party of Bertie and Biffo and it is Enda who will be handed power on a platter. His policies, his views, his ability to lead: none of those matter anymore. He is the leader of the only other leading party Ireland has known; to vote for FF now is almost a sin, so it must be FG and it must be Enda. This tedious, stuffy, prevaricating bureaucrat is master of all he surveys by default. FG might consider this election an historic and unparalleled victory but it rings hollow for the man who will be king.

A face on a poster, whose blank expression encapsulates his lack of substance, is no architect of the future.

A future Taoiseach who flees the public scrutiny of a leaders' debate on the flimsiest pretence cannot hope to transform the bleakest mood of his countrymen into the inspired determination needed to make Ireland work again. The trouble with Ireland, it seems, is that in a time of dire need, leadership is optional.

This week's election will change nothing. The politics of the Civil War are as live today as they have been since Mick Collins was shot. Enda Kenny is just one more in a long line of Irish leaders lacking vision, charisma and the tools to solve the nation's problems. Don't look to the Dáil for leadership because the only thing Kenny brings to that house is a uninspiring banality, a disgusting sense of entitlement to power and a continuation of politics as usual. Only this time, they're wearing blue shirts.

Travel



ATLANTA'S AMAZING ATTRACTIONS

Written by **Umaymah Tabani**

"I was supposed to be there for no more than 45 minutes while waiting for a connecting flight to Dublin. Fate however, had something else in store."

WHEN the United States is mentioned, we immediately begin to think New York, Florida or Boston. But there's more to the US than these high-profile states, and that little bit more is called Atlanta. Atlanta is one of the cleanest cities in America and is the birthplace of Coca Cola, CNN, and Delta Airlines.

My visit to Atlanta wasn't planned; it wasn't even on my "must see" list. But one day, when returning to Ireland from two months in Chicago, I got to see it anyway. On the day in question, I took off from O'Hare airport after a two hour delay, and reached the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta. I was supposed to be there for no more than 45 minutes while waiting for a connecting flight to Dublin. Fate however, had something else in store. After missing my connecting flight, I discovered that the next available flight was two days later. After waiting in a seemingly endless queue of angry people, I rearranged my flight details, gathered my luggage and brought myself to the nearest hotel.

The rising of the sun the next morning, marked the beginning of my Atlanta adventure. The MARTA subway brought me to the City Centre directly from the airport, and that's when the fun started.

The first stop was the CNN headquarters which somehow convinced me that news doesn't just evolve, it has to be created. As a child, I had always wanted to see the Olympics. And after years of wishing and hoping, my dream finally came true at the Centennial Olympic Park. Basketball has always been my favourite sport so wanting to visit the Philips Arena, home to the Atlanta Hawks, was only natural. Atlanta would not have been complete without The Atlanta Motor Speedway, the World of Coca-Cola and the Georgia Dome, so, if you ever find yourself in Atlanta, don't leave your trip incomplete by not visiting them.

STUDY ABROAD IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Written by **Jason Kennedy**

AFTER spending some time in a foreign land, people start to develop the native accent. To my horror, it happened to me after my co-op placement in Cork, but it's not going to happen in Newfoundland. I'm going to come home from here with the strongest, most exaggerated Irish accent imaginable. It really is a joy being a proper Paddy on an Island full of fifth and sixth generation Irish.

My big culchie accent, which is mocked by friends in Dublin and Cork, is cooed at over here. I've lost count of the amount of times I've been asked to speak more during nights out. It's a great talking point. Most of the people I've met go on to say that they're part Irish and extrapolate on how they'd love to go back to Ireland. I'm still getting a kick out of it and I don't think the novelty will wear off any time soon. One night, I met a lad who professed to be a proud Limerick man, despite the fact he has never left Newfoundland in his life. He almost cried when I told him that I study in Limerick and he demanded that I tell him every detail about the Treaty City. He told me that his father moved from Limerick because it was too dangerous, which I didn't buy for a second. I chatted to him for

a total of five minutes before he asked me if I wanted to buy some Grade A drugs. It was around that time that I faked a call and left him. Every proper Irish person I've met since has offered me the same. It's slightly suspicious.

The best things I've encountered so far are the pubs around St John's. In my first month here, I've been given four free double whiskeys from friendly bartenders, just because I'm a proper Irish

person. This is something that I could get used to. It must all be part of some bizarre initiation ceremony that takes place in Newfoundland.

All I can say is roll on St. Paddy's Day!



CO-OP IN CLARE

Written by **Keira Maher**

AS I write this, I can hardly believe that I'm in my fourth week of co-op. As they say, "Time flies when you're having fun" or, in my case, working hard.

The work is still interesting but it's becoming a bit monotonous but the interesting people make up for it. There are so many people involved in this organisation that even after nearly a month here, I still haven't met everyone. Most of those that work here are social care workers who are really nice.

To quote my supervisor, "social carers are nice because they care". I find this statement so true and the people in the office offer their assistance whenever I need it.

This placement is really opening my mind to what really happens behind the scenes and what companies are all about.

From health and safety to writing up tenders, I've learnt a lot so far and I still have 22 weeks to go (and counting). Communication is also a huge part of this organisation which will help me in jobs to come.

It is opening my eyes to the world of social housing and people with disabilities and really making me appreciate the good health that I have.

In other news, I've finally gotten used to my new house! It was strange living alone at first, but it's nice to have the place to myself. Since the weather has been so bad I haven't had a chance to get out and around yet, but I have had one or two sneaky visits to Limerick.

I have yet to immerse myself in the Ennis night life. From what I have heard it has plenty of hot spots with "Queens" and "Cruises" being the topic of most conversations. As a traditional accordionist, I think I will find myself at home as Ennis and Clare hold immense pride in traditional music.

Now that I've filled you in on my activities, hopefully the next article I write will be about all the 'go-to pubs' in Ennis!

Lifestyle

WHY COUNTING CALORIES NEVER WORKS

Written by **Cathriona Slammon**

FOR those of us trying to lose weight, it can be easy to get sucked into the vortex of fad diets. Even the most sensible dieter can suddenly find themselves turning down fruit for an Atkins-friendly burger or farting themselves friendless on cabbage soup. Why does this happen when we know the basic principle for weight loss is to consume fewer calories? Because just as important as the amount of calories we take in, is the type, which we pay little attention to and therefore don't get the results we want.

Counting calories to lose weight is a deceptively simple idea. If we consume fewer calories than we exert, we lose weight. While this is true in theory, the reality is that the source and type of calories we ingest is just as important. If we were to go by calorie-counting alone, we could happily skip breakfast and scoff a McDonald's and a Twirl

"Gorging on white toast and biscuits puts you in a blood-sugar rollercoaster of cravings and mood swings."

every evening while still staying below our calorie limit. But how many of these calories come from saturated fat and sugar? And as for nutrition, it's about as balanced as a one-legged man.

Simply counting calories does not account for the time of day we eat nor the body's response to sugar. And lest we forget, sugar also comes in all things white (bread, rice, flour). Too much sugar harms the body and gets stored in fat cells if you're inactive. So, while a meal of chicken and vegetables prevents over-eating and provides nutrition and fibre, gorging on white toast and biscuits of the same calorific

value keeps you on a blood-sugar rollercoaster of cravings and mood swings, as well as being nutritionally lacking. In a study by Harvard, it was demonstrated that a low-calorie and low-carb diet was more effective for weight loss than low-calorie alone. So, for those of you counting maniacally and not getting results or feeling sluggish (and a little bit mental), ensure your calories are coming from the right places. Limit processed carbs, increase your fibre (wholegrains, vegetables and fruit) and see the difference it makes!



THE QUIRKS OF YOUR COFFEE

PUT down that coffee cup, boys, and back away from Starbucks because according to new research, it could be the reason why that girl in your tutorial always pips you to the post when answering lecturer's demanding questions.

Written by **Róisín Flanagan**

According to research carried out by psychologists at the University of Bristol, men and women respond quite differently to cups of the delicious, smooth, aromatic goodness.

It has emerged that women, when faced with stressful situations, benefit from caffeine but our male counterparts find it a hindrance. Researchers studied 64 men and women, who were put into same-sex pairs and asked to undergo various tasks such as memory exercises and puzzles. To give that 'high pressure' edge, they were told before starting that their work would have to be presented to members of the public. Before beginning their tasks, different pairs were given decaffeinated or caffeinated coffee to consume during their work, all while being closely monitored.

After downing several cups of coffee, men became less confident and slower at completing their work, being over 20 seconds slower than men drinking decaf. Fast forward to the ladies and those who had consumed caffeinated coffee completed their tasks 100 seconds faster. The big shots in Bristol University tell us this is due to men and women responding differently to stress. In times of urgency, women work together as a team to conquer the task at hand whereas men strive to win, blocking out everything else. This study may lead employers to re-think the free production of this beverage

in the workplace, especially in male-dominated professions.

I think it's safe to say that we students are quite familiar with coffee and its helpful use as a stimulant to keep awake for that late night essay or early morning cramming session but along with the energy for completing your project, caffeine can also lead to diabetes, gout, liver damage (as if we don't have enough of that already) and even Alzheimer's.

So boys, next time you reach for buckets of your dark, rich buddy to see you through the night, think to yourself, do you really want to end up slow, unable to drink and forgetting your own name? I thought not.



THE BEAUTY COLUMN

Written by **Meghann Scully**

HAVING suffered the cruel winter elements of Manhattan, I journeyed home with dry skin, chapped lips and damaged pores. On the flight I discovered Elizabeth Arden 8 hour cream travel set. Having heard so much fuss and praise made of the products, I had to test it.

Upon the first use of the Intensive Moisturising Hand Treatment I noticed a major difference. My hands were so smooth and soft. Then I applied the Lip Protectant Stick and to my amazement it too smoothed the chaps and flakes. Surely this was luck. Next I grabbed the eight hour cream skin Protectant.

After six hours of a terrible jet setting nap I awoke to smooth soft clear skin.

Is it magic? This product was created in 1930 and still holds high esteem and beauty awards. It contains petrolatum, a skin-soothing beta-hydroxy and vitamin E. That's a bit of a mouth full. But you heard it here. I discovered the cream was intended for horses' cuts and bruises. Elizabeth's stable boy noticed that his hands were becoming extra smooth from using it on her horses. The cream was obviously perfected for human use and low and behold is one of the world's leading cream brands.

But you didn't see that one coming!

Seeing as I have horses myself I know the serious effect day to day care can have on your hands, lips and skin. Elizabeth Arden is the Queen of beauty in my eyes and such products deserved their own column. The products are a little more expensive in shops ranging from €20. If you do happen to fly with an Irish airline you can pick up a travel set for €24. If you can't wait I did find a website that sells the items at discounted prices. Check out www.onsalenow.ie and see if Elizabeth works wonders for you too.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ingredients:

225g butter
225g castor sugar
1 egg yolk
250g plain flour
½ tsp bread soda
½ vanilla pod or two drops of vanilla essence
250g of chocolate chunks (dark, milk white or all three!)

Method:

Combine the butter and castor sugar using a food mixer, then add the egg yolk and vanilla. Sieve the flour and bread soda into the wet mixture and mix to a dough.

Add the chocolate chunks. Lay a sheet of cling film on the counter-top, place the cookie dough in the centre and using the cling film roll the dough into a tube shape and covered with the cling film, so that you have a cookie log. Put the cookie dough log into the fridge for about an hour. When the dough has chilled, cut off as many cookies as you want and place on a tray covered with parchment paper into an oven preheated to 170°C for about 20 minutes.

Gorgeous hot from the oven with a cold glass of milk!



DID RECESSION REVIVE 80s' FASHION?

THE fashion of the 1980s is commonly known as 'the time fashion forgot', so why is it that the worse the Recession gets, the more the 80s inspires us?



Written by **Sinead O'Grady**

Many are too young to remember this decade at all, but we seem to have perfected the trends. Is 80s fashion the fashion of economic hard times? Leggings, shoulder pads, acid wash jeans, big hair, leotards, lace, dark lips, leather jackets. God help us. If we were to turn back a good 20 years we would be literally on the cutting edge

of fashion. Personally, I believe it is because opulence is back with a bang. With the return of the ever so fashion forward Skins series, the 80s trend is intensifying. Frankie is oozing 80s. Her backwards style which is somehow fashion forward is accompanied with a killer soundtrack plucked literally out of 1980s.

Some say life was better back then, easier, and despite a Recession, quite enjoyable. Contrasts are clear between today's Recession and 80s recession. In the 80s, pints were affordable, there was a stronger sense of community spirit and the music and television was arguably better. In 2011 we have the internet to occupy our jobless lives,

Aldi and Lidl sell us food on the cheap and drinking at home is the better option. The one thing that remains in common is 80s fashion. Ireland seems to be failing in every other aspect of life why not throw our fashion credentials into the mix. The strange thing is that I am not sure whether to embrace it or cringe. Nobody can deny that the 80s

are well and truly back with a tacky, latex, colorful bang, but maybe all of these unforgivable trends are a way of amusing ourselves while everything else crumbles around us. They had it hard in the 80s and we have it hard now.

WOULD YOU WEAR YOUR CAT?

Written by **Michelle Browne**



IN a move that is long overdue, the Green Party is planning to outlaw fur farming. The practice became illegal in Northern Ireland in 2003, and we are over 10 years behind Scotland and the Westminster Parliament in introducing the ban. It will result in the closure of the five remaining fur farms in counties Laois, Donegal, Kerry and Sligo by next year. Mink and foxes are the most commonly farmed animals here, and over 120,000 mink pelts were exported in 2008.

Unethical, inhumane and downright horrific, fur farming is also a totally unnecessary practice. The farming of animals like mink and foxes solely for their fur is both immoral and barbaric. The glamour in wearing a slaughtered animal treated with chemicals to stop it decomposing is beyond me. There is absolutely no excuse for wearing real fur. Not only is faux fur just as warm, it is also a much more economical and cruelty-free option.

The ban could not be coming at a better time. Each season, trends filter down from the big names in fashion, and the recent reappearance of fur coats and trims on the catwalks is worrying. Fur wearers often try to defend their purchases by questioning the difference between wearing a fur coat and a pair of leather boots, but both have hugely different production processes. Cows are slaughtered humanely for food consumption, and leather is a by-product of this practice. They are not killed solely for their hide; the whole animal is used. Mink and foxes are bred exclusively for their fur, and the industry remains unregulated. It takes 60 slaughtered female minks to make a single fur coat, and horrific slaughtering methods are chosen first and foremost to protect the fur, with no concern for animal welfare.

I have never worn, nor will I ever wear real fur. There is nothing elegant about it. The caged animals electrocuted or gassed to make a fur coat certainly do not lead a glamorous life. Fur belongs on an animal, not rotting on a clothes hanger, and as a shopaholic, I certainly have no room for any more skeletons in my closet!



STUDENT STYLE

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

Name: *Sinead O'Brien*

Course: *Politics and International Relation*

Year: *2nd*

Where did you get your outfit?

Jacket - Tally Weil

Waistcoat - Some random shop in New York

Top - Penneys'

Jeans - My sister's

Bag - River Island

What are your favourite shops? *Forever 21 and Tally Weil*

What was your best buy? A bright red dress in Vienna.

What is the most expensive item of clothing you've ever purchased? *A coat that cost me €250.*

Do you go for comfort or fashion when buying clothes?
Comfort.

Name: *Sarah Kennedy*

Course: *Midwifery* Year: *1st*

Where did you get your outfit?

These are my sister's clothes.

What are your favourite shops?

Penney's and Zara.

What was the most expensive item of clothing you've ever purchased? *My Debs dress.*

What is the most useless item of clothing you've ever purchased?
Probably the same Debs dress.

Do you go for comfort or fashion when buying clothes?
Comfort.

Letters

AN FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Sir, - For many reasons this upcoming general election has been labelled the most anticipated and important election in the history of our state. Ireland has seen recessions before where hundreds of thousands of people have become unemployed, tens of thousands of young people have been forced to emigrate and the general public have lost support for the Government. We now find ourselves in a position where foreign investment has deteriorated and the economy is on the brink of collapse. The failure of Ireland's banking system has left that nation in billions of euros in debt and left a growing majority of Irish citizens in negative equity. All these factors contribute to the fact that this General

Election will be like no other the country has ever witnessed. UL Staff and Students have had a mixed reaction. Tom Felle, Journalism and New Media Course Director and working journalist has covered elections and has worked in Leinster House for the Irish Independent. He said "This is the first time in history Fianna Fáil was not going to be the largest party heading into the election." It is indeed historic that Fianna Fáil cannot achieve the 84 seats needed to gain an overall majority for the first time ever, as they are only running 75 candidates. Mr Felle also had this to say. "People are really angry; they have lost all faith in politics. The debt that Ireland has will kill us all; there are so

many zeros in front of the one." Michael Harte, First Year Energy student, highlighted the public's despondency for all politicians. "Everybody seems to be the bad guy, this is not your run of the mill election" Francis Carlin, a First Year Journalism and New Media student has said "this is the first General Election where politicians will need to pull their fingers out and get down to the business of wooing the public." And social networking is dominant in this election. "The Green Party is dribbling out their manifesto over Twitter". Whatever party or parties that do get elected certainly have an extremely difficult task ahead of them in getting

Ireland back on track. But the political parties are not the only people who will play a huge role in this election. Independent candidates are now more popular than ever before and received an 18% overall support in a recent opinion poll. Emer Connolly, lecturer in Journalism, reiterated this point. "There are huge numbers of independents running and it will be interesting to see the part that they play in forming the next Government. If you believe the opinion polls they are going to have a certain influence", she said. Clearly the next two weeks will be extremely exciting for anyone interested in Irish politics or anyone interested in the future of our country for that matter.

Yours, etc,

COLIN CLARKE

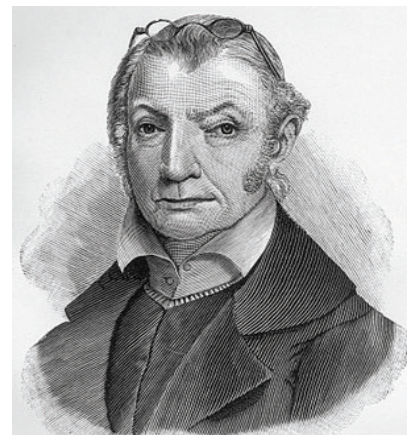
QUITE INTERESTING

TO SHOOT SOMEONE AND GET AWAY WITH IT

In Paraguay, duelling is still perfectly legal as long as both duellists are registered blood donors.

Duels are governed by rules drawn up by two Irishmen in 1777 which are sometimes referred to as the Clonmel Code or the Irish Code of Honour. Duelling with swords or pistols, often to the death, is a traditional way to settle disputes between gentlemen. Most US states have no specific laws prohibiting duelling.

In fact, the great American statesman Alexander Hamilton was killed in a duel by Vice-President Aaron Burr in 1804.



Aaron Burr, who hated Alexander Hamilton so much, he shot him.

THE PATHETIC PHALLUS OF PARIS

Written by Gina V. O'Brien

The Phallus of Paris, erect in its stead,
From solid wide base
To its shiny eyed head.
Loops lazy in Grace
Does the vein of the Seine.
High fame flows faster
Than is able to drain.

Napoleon's Arc just a
stone's throw away.
Countless suitors for both of these
pleasures do sway.
Forbidden to meet,
At a distance doth greet
Abelard his Heloise.
Births a sky iridescent,
Glowing golden as wheat.

The Bells await knell,
Hang exalted and loose.

Through the ages they yearn
To unleash potent use.
And lost heroes do dwell
Down so close to Hell.
Lady Guillotine has expired,
But her legacy is well.

And this Bauble does thrive
On the Red Mill's right side,
Where the women do frolic as bawds.
And the heart of the place
Overlooks its ascent,
Where the Black Cat dodges and
weaves,
Secure in the scent
Of a thousand young disciples to
Amore
and
Allure,
Reaching boundless heights or

With sublime sting to endure.

The foundations do rattle.
The pigeons do prattle.
The Doors Father has opened are
Wilde
And
Obscene.
Bohemians wage battle
On an urban with mettle unmatched
That would threat all else so serene;
Its own genteel beauty a wondrous
scene.

Art gushes like wine
Through erections divine
And the fillies still swoon at the sight
Of Delacroix's revolution
In the eaves of La Lourve;
The people following Liberty's might.

And Voltaire did so sigh
When it came time to die in a town
That entreated he write.
Enlightenment still harbours his light.

And when all's said and done
And the sugar is spun
And rejection to privilege does turn.
Penetrate will it
Deep, Our minds' romances
Steep,
And our souls with carnal urge
Burn.
From the crest of the keep
Will mad fantasies leap
And the Phallus of Paris towers!
Supreme
And
Sans
Spurn.

THE HOMELESS EXILE

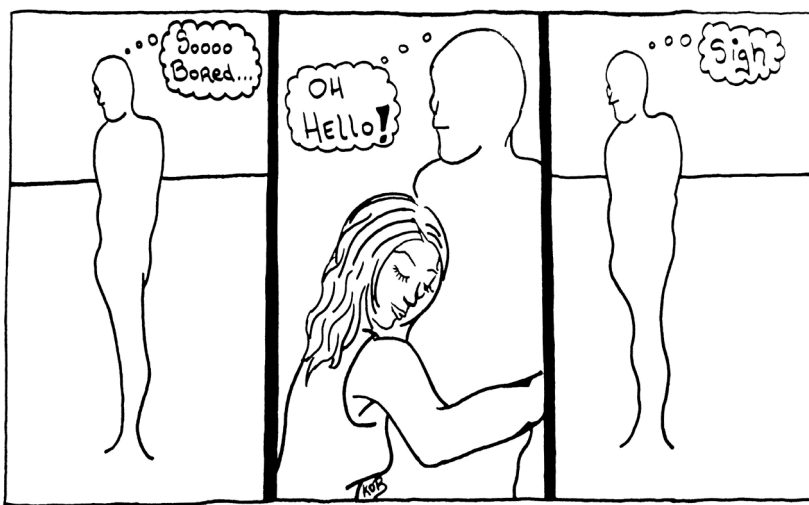
Written by Thomas Lawless

Conform or don't come,
You fatherless child,
You homeless exile.

My strength is in oppression,
Knowing what it is to be master,
To observe all things,
to know what power is.

I sit here, a cold parent,
Love is an unknown quality,
You shall see strict justice.

My eyes see the prize, An eternal
freedom, the freedom to achieve,
Foolish eyes, how deceptive you are.



OVERHEARD IN UL

Excerpts from the hit Facebook page

A UL student has made an interesting observation.

"You can't go thru half the female population of UL and not expect to have some awkward moments."

Sound advice from the gentleman. And there's been even more sound advice doled out on Overheard in UL.

"My mum's coming down now and please don't try to shift her again!"

Awkward. But what about specific advice? What should you do if you're in a sticky, knickerless situation, for example? The girls on the way home to Plassey have the answer.

"I can't believe I'm still not wearing any knickers. First thing I'm doing when I get home is putting on some pants. Can't wait!"

And on the subject of knickers, a lady has shared a revelation.

"The only thing that drops faster than your knickers is your standards."

So true.

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10					11		
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22					23		
24				25			

CLUES

ACROSS:

- Seafarer (7)
- Attain (5)
- Catlike mammal (5)
- Type of rock (7)
- Respire (7)
- Gaze (5)
- Resembling a horse (6)
- Unit of time (6)
- Pandemonium (5)
- Melodious (7)
- Elusive (7)
- Prevaricating (5)
- Foe (5)
- Distinguished (7)

ANSWERS (ISSUE 9)

ACROSS:

- SPOON
- TRAIL
- IGNORE
- ISSUE
- ORDER
- UNICORN
- SAMPLE
- CINEMA

DOWN:

- Gruesome (7)
- Variety show (5)
- Elevated (6)
- Parts of a ladder (5)
- Fruit (7)
- Less of this, more speed (5)
- Colossus (5)
- Unwitting (7)
- Artist's tripod (5)
- Can be Turkish or Shepherds' (7)
- Hinder (6)
- French pancake (5)
- Glossy (5)
- Tinkles in the wind (5)

ANSWERS (ISSUE 9)

DOWN:

- SAILORS
- OWNED
- TEDIUM
- ALIBI
- LISSOME
- STEIN
- RURAL
- MAGNATE
- IDIOM
- ABRIDGE
- ADORED
- WAIVE
- RATED
- FELON

Union

THE
PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN

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

STUDENTS should vote. As the general election rapidly approaches, we all need to be reminded of the importance of this little act. It only takes a minute to put a mark on a ballot paper but that minute can make a huge difference.

The whole country faces difficult times as the economy continues to struggle and any new government, no matter which parties form it, will have to make deeper cuts. These cuts will affect students in particular and the threat of third level fees hasn't gone away either.

In a fortnight when student nurses protested against the cuts in pay for those on work placement and committed Gaelgoiri took to the streets to defend compulsory Irish, the parties are already under mounting pressure. Your vote can make a difference. Every vote matters in this election. The result is not yet decided and when the votes are counted and the new government is formed, your voice will matter.

On Friday, the people of Ireland will make decisions in polling booth that will affect the future of this country for many years to come. Don't be left out, vote and make your voice heard.

WELFARE
WATCH

Written by **Derek Daly**, Welfare Officer

SO the election is this Friday. Whatever you do, I encourage you to vote. There is a new website, www.telluswhy.ie, that allows you to see the specifics of why you should vote for a particular candidate in your constituency.

As I type this, there is a real shot that Ireland may be governed by a majority government for the first time since 1977. The leaders have debated; some many times. Many people are cynical. But when you vote, make sure you do it on the basis of a manifesto.

If I could make one plea, whilst not plugging my party political affiliation, it would be not to vote for independents. Independents have a history of holding the nation to ransom for the benefit of one constituency; they have an overbearing degree of sway on policy and in general one person can prevent policy that is in the national interest for the sake of a sectional interest.

As always I'm here to guide you where I can. I'm best contacted by email on Suwelfare@ul.ie if you need me for anything or have any ideas.

ENLIVENING
EDUCATION

Written by **Aoife Finnerty**, Education Officer

DON'T know about you, but I'm a sleep-lover. Sometimes the toughest battle is bed vs. work! But sleep could be affecting your ability to perform well this semester! While you snooze, your brain increases its ability to perform at problem-based tasks. Not getting enough sleep can slow your response rate and make focusing difficult. If you think about it, response rates and problem-solving skills are key to learning, particularly at university. Poor sleep can also affect concentration; vital for those challenging classes.

Get the most out of the night time!

1. Avoid stimulants (caffeine and nicotine). Caffeine can be tricky to avoid because it can be found in unexpected places including cola, energy drinks, tea (even herbal) and chocolate.
2. Exercise early! It's a great way to make sure you get a good night's sleep. But exercising too close to bedtime can have the opposite effect, leaving you too alert to sleep.
3. Darken your room. This may seem obvious, but even light from a laptop, radio, streetlight, can confuse your body into thinking it's daytime and consequently, wake-up time. Come over to the dark side!

CAMPAIGNS
BRIEF

Written by **Vivion Grisewood**, Campaigns and Services Officer

CHARITY week is upon us and what a week it's going to be! There's going to be loads happening on campus for the week: from jelly wrestling and bungee jumping to a bucking bronco and a hypnotist. Make sure you don't just stay in your house drinking!

Get out and come in to campus to experience one of the best weeks of your college year. In a way, I hope you'll be too busy to read this. Too busy watching one of your mates eat as much pizza as he can in 15 minutes or trying to win the coveted raft race championship.

We'll have the MnM's out again this year, looking to keep students safe and Castletroy clean. If you see us over the course of the week, be sure to come over and say "Hi!" This year we've tried to make Charity Week affordable and enjoyable.

But we need you to get involved to make the week a success. I genuinely hope you all have a savage time, and one that you'll never forget!

WORDS
FROM THE
PSA

Written by **Dan Comerford**, PSA President

PSA Graduate Charity Ball: Just around the corner, tickets for this event are selling very well. I urge you to get yours ASAP. Tickets cost €40 for one and €70 for two. They are available from your SU reception, PSA President's office and PSA Exec members. Please email dan.comerford@ul.ie for more info. All proceeds to Pieta House Limerick. See www.pieta.ie for more.

Charity week: Taking place week 6, remember to get your tickets early. Also, keep an eye out for what the PSA has up its sleeves. We're in the process of organising a Silent Disco and a Showcase. Remember, Charity Week is about raising money for charity. Please respect all property and residences.

Elections: Do you want to be the next PSA President? PSA Elections will be held before the end of the semester. No dates have been confirmed yet, so watch this space and the website for more details or contact me.

If you wish to contact me at any point, please email dan.comerford@ul.ie, see www.postgrads.ie or search "PSAUL" on Facebook.

Summer 2011 in
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J-1 Students



On Campus Interviews
University of Limerick

Thursday, March 3rd, 9:30AM - 5:00PM

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PADDY'S RUN

Written by **James Mangan**

UL ROWING Club had a spectacular year in 2010, winning six National Championships. Three of the athletes go on to compete internationally for Ireland and prospects for 2011 look even better.

This year we want to expand our rowing scholarship programme. To do this, we started a run on St Patrick's day and called it Paddy's Run. We wanted to involve students and alumni from the programme, setting up runs all over the world. Sign up was done over the web, the club would get signees a t-shirt and all they needed to do was send the club a photo.

To date, events have been set up all over the world, including Chicago, Abu Dhabi and Melbourne. It has caught the interest many people of Irish ancestry, who have no connection with UL. Maybe they just like the idea of doing something good for young Irish students. Or perhaps they just like the idea of a run on Paddy's Day. Whatever their reason, the event is growing and

has the potential to be even bigger. We are expanding the event through our Facebook page "Paddys Run" and website www.paddysrun.com You can help us promote this! Just visit our Facebook page, Paddys Run and join the group. Invite as many of your friends as possible and link our website www.paddysrun.com to your friends (in Ireland and all over the world).

Anyone can participate by starting or supporting an event. This is our first year. So the support of students and faculty would be great appreciated!



Student Speak

HARK, VOTERS!

Are you in this issue of Student Speak?



News Editor, Colm Fitzgerald, stepped out on a brisk morning in search of your words of wisdom.

So guys, would Enda Kenny make a good Taoiseach?

Sean Forde
"Who the hell is she?"



Tara Kelly and Greg Murray
"That would be an ecumenical matter."



Lisa Blake "Yes. He's been sitting in the Dáil for long enough. He must have some good ideas at this stage."



Emma Norris
"Who the f**k is Enda Kenny?"



Ronan "He's the worst kind of moronic coward. Nothing worse than a thick **** running 'cute whoore' politics."



Aisling Walsh
"No! I want a man not a boy!"



Shane Harty "We don't want a school teacher running the country. F***ing ridiculous."



Becky Mangan and Sarah Walsh
"Damned if you do, damned if you don't."



Eoin Devereux "He'd be appalling! The last thing we need is more right wing, neo liberal ideology."



Rachel Dargan and Niamh Broderick
"Yes. Ireland's version of Berlusconi."

Sport

UL SENDS HOME SORRY NUIG: UL 32 - NUIG 0



Written by **Kelly Dwyre**

It took the UL team, a combination of Freshers and experienced players, ten minutes to settle into the game.

A strong wind made conditions difficult. This did not stop Sarah-Jane Cody who, with a few side-steps and a fast change of direction, sailed over to make it UL-5, NUIG-0. Fast ball out the backline allowed Laura O'Mahony, leaving NUIG in the dust, to score the second try of the match.

Winger Anna Nolan had a few great breaks during play, and some pick-and-gos from the forwards allowed us to make great ground. Many of the NUIG scrums and rucks were turned over due to the powerful UL forwards led by Fiona Reidy, Anna Caplice and Rosie Flanagan. Anna Caplice ploughed through and managed to score right under the posts after a fast ruck and pop

pass from the UL captain Reidy. Sarah Jane-Cody kicked and increased UL's lead. By halftime the score was 17-0 in favour of UL. The second half was delayed by 40 minutes due to a neck injury on one of the NUIG girls. After the ambulance drove her away it was business as usual and we were ready to get stuck back into the match and win the second half. An NUIG score attempt was ended by flanker Fiona Malone, who threw in a fierce tackle on our own 22, driving the player back and over the touchline. The lineout was won by UL jumper, Sarah O'Sullivan, and a kick from out-half Ailish Toner saw us out of the danger zone. Prop Rosie Flanagan kicked a loose ball down the pitch for Claire Keohane to recover. Good support resulted in Anna Caplice scoring her second try of the match.

The NUIG team responded badly to the score line. With dangerous play, the match was called off 20 minutes early. But this did not stop Eleanor Power scoring the final try of the match and taking a hard hit, from NUIG hooker Louise Fitzgerald, when she attempted to place the ball down as close to the posts as possible. The final score was UL 32, NUIG 0.

A spokesperson for the highly successful team said "this result was a great start to UL's campaign to retain every trophy available in Colleges Women's Rugby." The club has achieved this remarkable feat almost every year since the beginning of these competitions 13 years ago.

UL LADIES' first rugby game of the semester against NUI Galway had been strongly anticipated, given NUIG's failure to field a team last semester. These games are traditionally tough encounters. This was a must-win game for UL. There was an air of nervous excitement before kick-off.

UL SOCCER ROUND-UP

Written by **Cian Healy**

UL LADIES' soccer has had a busy two weeks, with a trip down to UCC and games at home to Sligo. UL travelled to Cork with just 13 players due to flu, but the depth of the squad ensured it was a strong 13 who managed to secure a 4-2 triumph. The game started off slowly, but it was UCC who took the lead despite playing against a very strong wind. A free kick caught all the UL players out, and it went in off the knee of the UCC striker. UL tried to come to terms with the strong wind

they were playing with, and eventually got back level with a goal from Meghan O'Grady, who was making her first appearance for the A Squad. A second soon followed and it was another debutant for the A Squad, Nicki Miller, who gave UL the lead. The Shannon siders scored two early goals in the second half, with Meghan and Nicki both adding to their first half scores. UCC scored a second midway through the half but UL saw out the victory.

Week 3 saw UL play on a Monday for the first time and the challengers were IT Sligo, who were looking to do the double over UL, having beaten them 3-2 in Sligo in Semester One. UL started playing against a strong wind this time, but the start was the same. Sligo took the lead from a superb volley on the edge of the box, giving Laoise O'Driscoll in the goal no

chance. UL had the better of the rest of the half but just could not score. The second half saw better fortune for UL as they smashed five goals past their rivals. Julie-Ann Russell scored twice while Lynsey McKey, Jenny Critchley and Jennie Brennan also contributed with the goals to put UL back level on the top of the table. UL B took on Sligo B after the A game, but were not as fortunate, going down 3-1, but a cracking debut goal from Alice Heath spectacularly marked the start of her UL career. On the men's side, it has been a quiet start to the Semester with no games of a competitive nature to report. All squads are training for their respective Interschools, with the Freshers looking forward to competing in the Harding Cup in Maynooth.

GAELIC GAMES ROUND-UP

Written by **Mark Connolly,**
Sports Editor

IT has been a busy last few weeks for UL's GAA teams with almost all involved in competitive games recently. The pick of the action was the senior hurling team's savage demolition of a poor DCU in the second round of the Fitzgibbon Cup, the Shannon siders running outclassing their opponents to run out winners on a 4-18 -0-08 score line. The performance represented a clear statement of intent from Ger Cunningham's side as they seek to secure the Cup for the University

for the first time since 2002 Their intermediate colleagues, who were involved in action against both UCC and cross town rivals LIT, had mixed fortunes with a disappointing reverse at the hands of the Lee siders redeemed somewhat with a sweet derby victory 10 days later with a three point margin of victory.

Both Fresher football sides endured disappointing setbacks at the hands of the men from the capital however, as the A and B sides both went down against DCU and DIT respectively.

The UL Camogie side had better fortune as they walloped UJJ by no less than 24 points in the Ahbourne Camogie Qualifier as UL ladies teams of all sporting codes continue to impress and dominate nationally.

Sport

GREAT LIMERICK HOPE FINALLY SET FOR BIG CHANCE

Written by **Conor McGrath**

A FORTNIGHT ago, Richard Keys cited 'dark forces' as the catalyst for liberating the ardent football folk of his smug exterior from television screens in this part of the world for the foreseeable future.

In the face of this, let's spare a thought for Limerick's middleweight boxing prospect Andy Lee and his recent travails with the 'dark forces' in the boxing world. Last May, Andy fought Mamadou Thiam in the UL Arena which was effectively his opportunity to mark down his credentials for a world title bout with then champion Paul Williams. Lee was hoping to re-affirm his worth after a seven month break and some less than assured performances. Unfortunately, the fight was equally as anti-climactic as reading King Lear for the Leaving Cert. Thiam controversially retired on his stool at the end of the second round which left the crowd, and presumably Lee, cheated. Even Thiam's fight purse was almost withheld by the Boxing Union of Ireland. The kingpin fighters and widespread television networks hadn't taken notice yet.

With half of 2010 already washed away, Lee took to the American highways and claimed another three knockouts between July and October to leave his record at 24-1 with 18 knockouts. But last December, Lee's smooth path came to a shuddering halt as his fight on the undercard of Vladimir Klitschko's was postponed due to the Ukrainian's stomach injury.

Bad luck, nothing more. In an effort to give the Irish boxing public its due and Irish-American exposure in the US, a proposed middleweight fight against Derry's John Duddy became a HBO pay per view 12 March 2011 reality. Simplicity has yet to attach itself to Andy's career as Duddy controversially retired from the sport just days after the fight was announced. With Duddy taking his gloves and leaving, Lee looked to have taken three steps back after taking two steps forward.

An unhealthy rut of peering in from the outside looked inevitable until Craig McEwan threw himself into Duddy's vacant spot. McEwan, trained by Freddie Roach of Manny Pacquiao fame, has already defeated Lee's only conqueror and with a reputedly heavy forearm, Lee's fortitude will be tested like never before. The bout has been rightly perceived in the boxing community as a world title eliminator and at the sprightly yet experienced age of 27, Lee's carpe diem moment is now. Victory at any cost and a world title shot is in sight. Let's hope adversity fails to rear its ugly head before Lee's seminal moment. He's had enough for one year.



Andy Lee, right, in action against Mamadou Thiam during their middleweight bout in the UL Arena last summer. Image Credit: Diamuid Greene. Image Courtesy: SPORTSFILE

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY REVIEW

Written by **Darren Mulryan**

THE biggest sporting event of the year landed in Texas recently, bringing with it a world audience.

The Bears were one of Green Bay's many whipping boys this season as their impressive defensive form tore apart the division. But it was not just the defensive end that helped them clinch the Lombardi Trophy this term. QB Aaron Rodgers has had an amazing season with almost 4000 passing yards and 28 touchdown passes. The likes of Dan Marino and Brett Favre would be proud of those numbers. Rodgers could not have put up those stats without his offensive team. WR Gregg Jennings put in strong performances out wide in the regular season and had a special chemistry with Rodgers.

Fittingly, George "Dubya" was indeed among the big names to turn up at Cowboy Stadium in Arlington. But sadly for George, the only WMD to be found was Aaron Rodgers right arm. Rodgers threw for 304 yards and three touchdowns to lead Green Bay to a 31-25 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers. Rodgers was named Super Bowl MVP; an honour that his predecessor, Brett Favre, never received.

The Packers dominated the opening, cavaliering into an 18 point lead just

before the interval with MVP Rodgers, finding Jordy Nelson for a TD. Worse followed for the Steelers when Nick Collins picked off a Roethlisberger pass and ran for a second touchdown. It was 14-0 Green Bay. Pittsburgh was knocked again when Roethlisberger was again intercepted. A couple of plays later, Rodgers was at it again, this time hitting Jennings: his number one receiver from the regular season. Things were looking bleak for the Steelers until Big Ben combined with Hines Ward for a touchdown to cut the half time gap to 11 points.

After the break the Packers lead was slashed to four points with a rush from Ike Redman and a score by Rashard Mendenhall. Soon after Rodgers found Jennings for his second touchdown catch. But the Steelers did not give in. Roethlisberger came up with a set of completions in some poor Green Bay coverage, finding Mike Wallace in the end zone. The Steelers cut the gap to three with a conversion but they could not stop Rodgers hitting Jennings yet again on a massive third down conversion as the Packers went on to claim the title of Super Bowl Champions.

WENGER AND ARSENAL WILL GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Written by **Chris Callaghan**

AMIDST the economic downturn and price rises in the Lodge, Premier League clubs continue to spend money like there is no tomorrow. It appears as if the Recession has not taken place there. This was extremely evident during the January transfer window when, according to Deloitte, more than £250 million was spent by English Premier League clubs. This was in no small part aided by Roman Abramovich's acquisitions of Fernando Torres and David Luiz for £50m and £25m respectively, in an attempt to boost their already faltering title bid and rejuvenate their aging squad.

But the days of lavish spending by the English champion and other big

European champions are numbered. New regulations to be introduced by UEFA next year, will limit clubs' spending to whatever they generate annually. In other words, clubs such as Chelsea and Manchester City will have to start breaking even to avoid possible sanctions which could prevent them from entering European competitions.

Undoubtedly, the real beneficiaries of these stricter economic regulations will be clubs like Arsenal. Arsene Wenger's ability to spot and nurture young talent is extraordinary and will provide his club with a real advantage in the new era. In recent years, 'Gunners' fans have been quick to criticise the Frenchman's lack of activity in the transfer market

and his reluctance to pay top dollar for world class talent. Some may argue this is one of the key reasons they have not won any trophies since 2005.

Nevertheless, with prodigious talents such as Jack Wilshere and Aaron Ramsey coming through their ranks and regulations limiting the spending powers of clubs soon coming into force, the future continues to look brighter and brighter for Arsenal fans and their coach. All that eludes them now is that illustrious piece of silverware that their fans demand and crave. But surely that is not a matter of if but rather when.

WILL THERE BE A SILVER LINING?

Written by **Conor McGrath**

IN November 2009, the Springbok maestros Victor Matfield and Bakkies Botha were systematically destroyed by the well-oiled Irish lineout in front of the rugby world. The arrogant Matfield was given a timely lesson about words and how cheap they were

before an international test match. What has happened since that faithful day? Two weekends ago, Ireland's lineout coughed up possession to a grateful French pack akin to that of the Irish taxpayer and Anglo-Irish bank.

Ireland lost three lineouts to France's two but the outcome of the lost possession had a detrimental effect on the final scoreline. Medard's try came as result of Jerome Thion stealing possession from Donncha O'Callaghan two minutes before. As Ireland chased the game in the seventy-second minute, Rory Best's delivery missed everybody

resulting in a kick on from Sean O'Brien. Key phases which could have changed the outcome of the match. What needs to be done against Scotland? The Flannery, Hayes and O'Connell axis is clearly missed but Leo Cullen needs more time in the final quarter. His one minute appearance against France was ridiculous. Cullen hasn't played much this season but his uncanny ability to secure possession is greatly needed. Rory Best is an excellent scrummager but his deliveries also leave a lot to be desired. Kidney needs to realise that squads win matches, not teams.

Sport

FORGOTTEN FOOTBALLER, JOSEMI

Written by Eoin King

OH, to be the first of 76. At least, Josemi has the hope of never being forgotten by Liverpool fans should they attend a pub quiz where the question is 'who was the first player (disaster) signed by Rafael Benitez?' Actually, as Benitez's signings went, Josemi wasn't the worst in a bunch that comprised 76 footballers of every different level. Torres is the standout. Kuyt proved a smart purchase. After that, you can look at the list and find decent talent such as Agger, Crouch, Bellamy and Mascherano. More often than not, Josemi fits in with the flops, from Jermaine Pennant and Sebastian Leto to Alberto Aquilani. These are names that can just about be remembered. I'm afraid some Liverpool fans would relapse into depression on seeing the full list of players given an opportunity by Rafa to wear a red jersey. It is bad enough to still see Lucas and Babel in a team sheet.

The Spaniard was purchased for £2 million and started 15 games in his debut season at right back. After being sent off against Fulham on October 16, 2004 he lost his way as Steve Finnan re-established himself as first choice. Josemi made seven appearances (five starts) in the club's victorious UEFA Champions League campaign, but struggled to even make the substitutes bench in the first half of 2005-06. In the January transfer window of 2006 he went to Villarreal, in a deal which saw Jan Krompkamp move in the other direction. The poor lad never did settle in. As he said himself "My family and I suffered a lot. I was not a happy person. Every person is a different kind of animal and some people can adjust quicker and better to living abroad."

So how did Josemi fare in his native Spain after his troubled stint in the jungle known as Merseyside? About



In play: Benitez' first "disaster".

the same really. He started off brightly in his first season with Villarreal, before losing his spot and then moving to Mallorca in 2008. But to be fair to the lad, that season he did score his first goal as a professional footballer. He also contributed in 28 games for Mallorca who finished fifth in La Liga

and claimed a Europa Cup spot. So, as you would expect, this season it all got much better as Josemi found another new team: Iraklis Thessaloniki F.C of the Greek Super League, quite fitting for a player who Rafael Benitez envisioned as an aggressive compliment to Jamie Carragher.

SPORTS QUIZ

Written by Conor McGrath

1. How many different football clubs has Marcus Bent played for since his debut for Brentford back in 1995?
2. In the midst of English rugby's exuberant wing play, can you name the only current English squad member who has played in both the amateur and professional eras?
3. Can you name the only Taoiseach to have carried six All Ireland medals around in his back pocket during his thirteen year term in office?
4. Which legendary heavyweight boxing champion once signed for Liverpool FC?
5. Last month, Evander Holyfield tried and failed to become the oldest world heavyweight champion at 48. What was the age of the record holder and who holds it?
6. Can you name the only two players ever to compete] in three consecutive World Cup final matches?
7. Sir Alex Ferguson reached yet another milestone in recent times. Can you name what that record was?
8. Can you name the only tennis player who achieved the Golden Slam (all four majors plus the Olympic Gold medal) in one calendar year?
9. What record does Wayne Rooney still hold in Old Trafford?
10. Back in 1996, Wimbledon FC wanted to move out of London. Can you name which city the club very nearly base themselves in?

- ANSWERS
- 1: 14
 - 2: Simon Shaw
 - 3: Jack Lynch
 - 4: Joe Louis
 - 5: George Foreman: 45
 - 6: Lothar Matthaus, '82, '86, '90 and Cafu, '94, '98, '02
 - 7: His 2000th game as a United in, Manchester the scores in, 10: Dublin
 - 8: Steffi Graf in 1988
 - 9: Every league match
 - 10: Dublin

FANTASY FOOTBALL FAILURES: TIPS AND ADVICE

Written by Robert McNamara

ARE you the brunt of light natured banter from your mates as you languish at the bottom of your fantasy football league? Well, you'll no longer be the butt of the jokes if you avoid these Premier League turkeys.

In the last edition we took a look at the players that will rack up the scores for your team. This time around we look at the ones to avoid as you seek respectable mid-table obscurity in your league. These players are not necessarily the worst around but their points scores leave a lot to be desired.

1. Michael Carrick: Despite making appearances in more than three quarters of Manchester United's games in the league this season for Manchester United, Michael Carrick's points return is abysmal. He is unlikely to chip in with any goals and his pass completion rate has dipped considerably since he was demoralised by Iniesta and Xavi in the 2009 Champions League Final. It has been widely reported recently that he will leave United in the summer as part of a huge clear out. At 6.2m, he's not worth a punt.

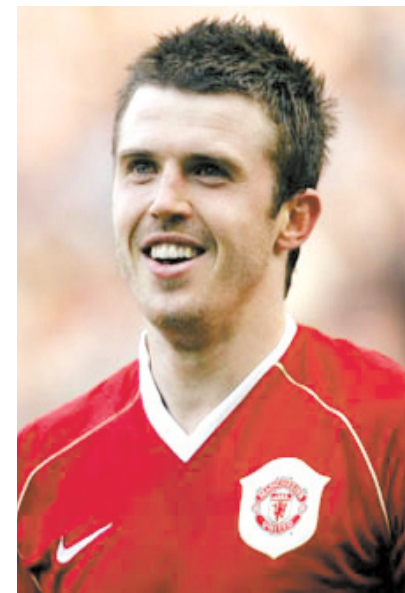
2. Benni McCarthy: For those of you who remember McCarthy as

a European Cup winner with Jose Mourinho's Porto, he may seem like an attractive proposition up front. But his form and fitness have been awful since he moved to West Ham last season in a really odd deal that almost certainly wasn't sanctioned by Gianfranco Zola. West Ham is currently trying to have his contract terminated.

3. Jermaine Beckford: This may seem an odd choice as he is almost ever present in the Everton team and is an exciting prospect. A return of four league goals so far this season is quite respectable but when Louis Saha is injured, a regular occurrence, Beckford

is often forced to lead the line by himself in a team devoid of attacking options. He fails to rack up the points in assists and goals you would imagine. At just 5m he may seem a steal but avoid if you want a regular points winner.

4. Joe Cole: There was much giddiness on Merseyside last summer when Joe Cole was unceremoniously ditched by Chelsea and signed by Liverpool. The midfield play maker has chipped in with just one goal all season and the reasons for him being discarded by the London club are now becoming apparent. He'll cost you 8.3m and you'll see receive little bang for your buck.



Left: Jermain Beckford. From top left, clockwise: Benni McCarthy, Michael Carrick and Joe Cole.

Sport

'FOR THIS TEAM TO REALLY MEET ITS POTENTIAL AT THE WORLD CUP, KIDNEY MUST GO'

Written by **Mark Connolly**,
Sports Editor

IN this country of ours, there have long been examples of a lingering dislike and in some cases hatred toward the English. Indeed this reliable fall guy for all our problems is truly the 'old enemy'.

But we should not be surprised if the persistent conquest and domination that the French have over us on the sports field, leaves a mark on this generation of Irish similar to that left by English domination almost a century ago.

They have, especially over the last decade, held a remarkable record against us in both rugby and soccer

which will make our give away on Sunday last all the more depressing. While military domination and an imbalance of firepower secured our place in the British Empire for so long, we can attribute our agonising defeat at the hands of the French to simply having an inferior general at the helm: Declan Kidney. This was infuriating and something which must be addressed ahead of the World Cup.

Ireland outscored the French by three tries to one and enjoyed parity of possession, circumstances which make the defeat difficult to fathom. But

not when one takes into account the territorial advantage held by the French who played the game in our half. They could do this because we refused to kick at almost any stage and instead opted to run everything. Under pressure from a brutal Gallic defence, we turned over ball and conceded penalties in kickable positions.

While the purists may applaud the Irish ambition and flair, there was a distinct lack of balance in our high risk game plan, employed against one of the world's best counter-attacking sides. Indeed the folly of the strategy

was exposed when we scored our third try which came from an intelligent kick by Ronan O'Gara and the error at the resulting French line-out.

Kidney must also take responsibility for his bizarre policy of not using substitutes to energise a visibly tiring pack in the second half. The one forward substitution he did make was equally bizarre, replacing Cian Healy, who did well against a strong scrum, with the sub international class Tom Court, whose only action of consequence, was to concede a kickable penalty in his first engagement.



While the introduction of Leo Cullen with six seconds remaining did not harm the team, I felt it summed up the coach's lack of clarity of thought and truly bizarre decision making. I wrote in advance of the tournament that the team's chances were predicated on Kidney rectifying the mistakes he made in the autumn but that has not happened. For this team to really meet its potential at the World Cup, Kidney must go.

MURRAY A VICTIM OF THE GREAT BRITISH SPORTING DISEASE: NOSTALGIA

Written by **Robert McNamara**

BRITAIN loves its sporting heroes and has produced many fine athletes throughout its sporting history. Rebecca Adlington won two gold medals in swimming events of the 2008 Olympics. Steve Redgrave won rowing gold at five consecutive Olympics between 1984 and 2000. Lennox Lewis is one of only five boxers to have won the world heavyweight championship five times. Fred Perry won three Wimbledon championships and was world number one for five years.

What makes these examples of British sporting accomplishments more astounding is the amount of pressure the media across the water place on the shoulders of their athletes. Even in the days before 24 hour Sky Sports

News coverage and the internet, Britain was building up its heroes and then discarding them as quickly as they met with failure. The Ashes series for example is named after media panic proclaiming the death of English cricket when beaten on home soil for the first time by Australia in 1882.

Colin Montgomerie may have claimed the Ryder Cup with Europe but his tag as the greatest player never to win a major will always be attributed to him by tabloid sports writers. Paul Gascoigne was once described as the most promising footballer since George Best yet he became an enigma ridiculed by the media and in turn jeered by society. Tim Henman will forever be referred to in the press as the nice public school

"The great British sporting disease is nostalgia. The press will not cease to compare past achievements against current contenders. They scrutinise closely, hype athletes up and then castigate them when they fail."

boy who failed miserably in his attempt to become the first player since 1936 to claim Wimbledon for Britain.

Andy Murray is only 23 yet there is a sense of foreboding surrounding his inability to win a grand slam tournament. The fact that he has been unable to claim a single set in three finals so far only increases the wheezy panic among the great and good of Britannia's punditry. Articles are written praising him one week and dismissing him as a non-entity the next. Comparisons to Fred Perry or Tim Henman are churned out depending on his form. If Murray doesn't land the Wimbledon title or a Grand Slam he too will soon take his place in the hall of British sporting failures.

The great British sporting disease is nostalgia. The press will not cease to compare past achievements against current contenders. They scrutinise closely, hype athletes up and then castigate them when they fail.

The British sporting press will grind Murray down until he fails repeatedly. It would be glorious if he triumphed at Wimbledon and hoisted a Scottish flag above his head as opposed to a Union Jack. Rusedski Ridge, Henman Hill and now Murray Mound, bloody Hell guvnor, it's a right old palava innit?

2011 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

Written by **David Prendergast**

AS the Football season starts in earnest with the dawning of the Allianz National Football League, An Focal Sport examines the credentials of the contenders for glory come September.

THEY say the hardest part of climbing Everest is the descent. Now that this Cork crop has finally harvested Sam all eyes are on them to see if they can be the first side to win back to back titles since Billy Morgan managed the Rebels to victory in 1989 and 1990.

Lack of recognition for their forwards at the All Stars should provide enough arrows in the quivers of Daniel Goulding and Donnacha O'Connor to cut down opposition defences when summer comes while Cork have the strongest panel and enough successful minor and u-21 teams in recent years to allow them dominate.

Kerry is still the thorn in Cork's side and until Cork manages to beat them when it matters they will not be considered a great side. Kerry may be the Kingdom but soldiers to defend it are scarce. They haven't landed a minor All-Ireland since '94 and they will still be feeling the bite from the loss of key players to retirement at the start of 2010. If 2010 proved anything it was their dependency on Paul Galvin.

Galvin turns them from lost boys into pirates and if they are to dethrone their near neighbours he will need to stay cool throughout the season.

In the eyes of Paddy Power, Dublin is third favourite to land Sam at 6/1. Dublin footballers are a lot like Lady Gaga. Everyone is always wondering whether or not they have any balls. I don't believe either have. The media hype which surrounds them each year

is unjustified and unwarranted. The only thing they prove each year is their inability to finish off opponents on the ropes with the annual implosion about as subtle as Sonny Corleone's demise at the tollbooth but any chance they do have will depend on Bernard Brogan's fitness.

In last year's quarter final, Tyrone shot themselves in the foot, misfiring seventeen times in front of the posts. With the untimely death of Michaela Harte, the Ulster Champions will have an added incentive to capture a fourth All-Ireland under the tutelage of Mickey Harte. No inter county side has had to deal with misfortune as much as Tyrone yet under Harte they are filled with strength and guile. He had a lot to say about the Qualifiers demeaning the Provincial championships last year so it will be interesting to see how they approach their season this year.

2011 could well be Kildare's year. McGeeney has reinforced the spine of this team and had Lady Luck not been menstruating during their semi-final against Down, 2010 might have been the year the Lilywhites won their first All-Ireland since 1928.

All-Ireland finalists Down excelled beyond expectations last year but I suspect their campaign will lack the same spark with an inevitable case of 'second season syndrome'.

Safe Bet: Cork = 5/2.
Worth a punt: Kildare = 16/1.



"Dublin footballers are a lot like Lady Gaga. Everyone is always wondering whether or not they have any balls. I don't believe either have."

AN FOCAL



Clubs And Socs Are More Vibrant Than Ever. From Sailing, Climbing, Dancing and Skydiving to Frisbees, Pool and Snowboarding. Read About These Activities And More. Pages 22 & 23.

22nd February 2011

Issue 10 FREE
Volume XIX

LOVE IS MERELY A MADNESS



VALENTINE'S Day. Bah humbug. Couples get herded onto a conveyor belt of set menus and overcrowded cinemas, singletons bemoan their dateless status while shovelling bucketfuls of Haagen Daaz into their faces. Meanwhile Hallmark count the millions they make from overpriced, red tat.

Written by **Róisín Peddle**

It was in this spirit that I rolled up to UL Drama Soc's production of *Love Is Merely a Madness*. The brainchild of Allison Prince, this brilliant compilation of Shakespeare's finest romantic moments would be a fantastic way to introduce hormonal teenagers to the Bard.

Anyone who had to endure a Shakespearean comedy for school exams will know how difficult it is to translate his funny moments to a twenty-first century audience. It is to Drama Soc's eternal credit that there were laugh-out-loud moments throughout.

Opening with a soliloquy from *As You Like It* in which we assured that "love is merely a madness," before cutting into Katy Perry's *Teenage Dream*, the half an hour production whizzed through tragic, comic and utterly romantic Shakespearean moments, interspersed with love songs, old and new.

The excellent Jared Nadin and Jules Deutsch recreated the eyes-meeting-across-a-crowded-room scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a testament to the pair that they managed to put their own stamp on the scene so beautifully done in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*.

We were then launched into Sonnet 116 where Deirdre Carey and Hugh O'Brien tell us that true love lasts a lifetime. It was then time for a change of tone with the outstanding Shane Vaughan as Parolles from *All's Well That Ends Well* extolling the virtues of sex and the drawbacks of virginity. Keeping with the comic vein, we had a scene from the *Taming of the Shrew* in which Petruchio (Conor

Gibbons) disastrously attempts to woo Katharina (Michelle Revins). This was followed by Elaine Keane giving us an impassioned monologue from *The Tempest* on first love. We were pitched back into comedy again with a fantastic scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Demetrius (Eugene Feeny) and Lysander (Shane Vaughan) are two lads in love with the same girl, Hermia (a great comic turn from Deirdre Carey).

Unfortunately for all concerned they fall under a fairy spell which makes them fall in love with the first woman they see: their foe, Helena (a luminous Karen Murphy). Much confusion and comedy ensues, and this was one of the many highlights.

We had a brief snippet from *Much Ado About Nothing* with Conor Gibbons and Michelle Revins, before the most tragic scene of the night. Hamlet (Hugh O'Brien) ripped up the stage as he dumped Ophelia (Elaine Keane) with the most magnificent of Shakespearean insult. Hamlet rails against womankind in general and Elaine Keane portrayed the woman shattered in his wake convincingly.

Eugene Feeny managed to make Sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?") sound fresh, before Romeo and Juliet returned to conclude the show. A fabulous idea, winningly executed, this was truly Shakespeare as he is meant to be appreciated. Somewhere I think the wise old Bard is smiling.

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Sun 27th

JOHN CARRIE

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Thurs 3rd

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Entertainment

MUCH MORE THAN A BOXER'S TALE



Written by Owen Hickey

WITH a title like *The Fighter*, you might expect a movie built on cliché: working class boxer overcomes personal hurdles to become a champion against all odds, etc. While this is indeed one of those stories, it's how it is told that makes director David O'Russell's work stand out.

Centred around the inspiring true story of 'Irish' Micky Ward (Mark Wahlberg), a welterweight boxer from a working class family in Lowell, Massachusetts and his half-brother Dicky Eklund (Christian Bale), *The Fighter* is an outstanding piece of film that maintains momentum from start to finish.

From the offset, the contrast between the two leads is apparent. Sitting and addressing the camera, Dicky is seen as a flamboyant figure. A fallen hero living off his past; his knock-out of Sugar Ray Leonard is what he prides himself on. Outspoken and almost loud in the way he describes himself, he still hopes to revive the boxing career he once had. Micky displays an altogether different personality. He's quiet, level-headed and almost uncomfortable in the presence of his brother.

While he is a tactically astute trainer, Dicky is too unreliable to help Micky achieve his aims, often missing training, mainly because of his serious crack addiction. This film is a character piece. Unlike other boxing stories, it doesn't focus entirely on action in the ring, but concentrates on the figures involved in

Ward's journey to becoming a world champion. Melissa Leo's portrayal of Alice (the boys' mother) is captivating. Alice desperately wants success for her sons but struggles against her own selfishness. Micky's new girlfriend Charlene (Amy Adams) helps Micky to relinquish himself from his loving, yet possessive family, who are preventing him from realising his full potential.

Bale's performance in particular is exceptional and he dominates the screen whenever he appears. Bale credits his performance on time spent with the real life Dicky Eklund.

Shot with the same cameras HBO utilises in the fights they air, the matches have the look and feel you might expect watching them in your sitting room.

The Fighter is an incredibly enjoyable film, filled with great performances. It's a movie that transcends the limited audience of the sport it covers thanks to a universal story brought to life by Wahlberg, Leo and in particular Bale.

GRAND THEFT EQUINE

Written by Ruairí Moore

IN my typical finger-on-the-beat fashion, I spent the first few days of 2011 playing last year's Game of the Year, *Red Dead Redemption*. We follow John Marston, onetime outlaw coerced into hunting his former brothers-in-arms by a ruthless government bent on purging the dying West. You'd be forgiven for assuming that Rockstar's *Red Dead Redemption* (RDR) is just another Grand Theft Auto clone lifted from Liberty City and placed in the questionable hygiene of the Wild West, and in many ways that's accurate. Hardly a bad thing, as RDR retains the blend of liberal violence punctuated by witty dialogue that has become Rockstar's trademark. But in many ways, RDR signals that Rockstar is growing up.

This is not to say that they've skimmed on the mature content in the past, but in GTA (*Grand Theft Auto*) it sometimes lacks compelling substance behind it, reminiscent of a drunk twelve year old swearing and clomping around in Daddy's shoes because that's what he's seen adults do. Where the ultimate aim of Rockstar's GTA titles seems to revolve around becoming the man with the biggest Uzis and the "nakedest hoes", RDR's Marston is different, a world-weary veteran increasingly out of place in a land overtaken by technology and civilized society. Great graphics, superb-voice acting and a fantastic soundtrack combine to create a unique atmosphere where even the quieter moments shine, so that sunset rides across the arid plains of New Austin become every bit as enjoyable as the action. Naturally, these gentler indulgences demand compensation in the form of blowing holes in some



Image Courtesy: Rockstar

drunk's kneecaps the next town over, but that very variety is the beauty of a Rockstar game.

RDR is not without issues. The slow motion aiming system which is initially such a great feature eventually removes the challenge from firefights, advancing to the point where players can practically pierce an opponent's ears from a hundred metres distance. The open-sandbox world becomes problematic as well. As in GTA, players are free to act as they wish in

gameplay, but RDR's more restrictive plot mean players often flash from homicidal maniac to gruff but honourable Marston in seconds.

But minor flaws aside, RDR is not only worthy of its Game of the Year title but is, for me, Rockstar's crowning achievement. So, much as I love GTA, you can keep your Lamborghini; I've a horse outside.

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MUSIC SOC ROCKS BAKERS UNDERGROUND



Return to Sender, who played Bakers on Thursday, 10 February 2011

Written by **Caitríona Ní Chadhain**,
Entertainments Editor

UL MUSIC Society took over Bakers' Underground on 10 February for a gig headlined by Time is A Thief. Five bands took to the stage with plenty of home-grown talent to be heard and banter to be had.

There was a good buzz about the place as the night kicked off with metal band Obscure Essence who put on a solid show with strong vocals from Steve Hall. Next to hit the stage were Astral Gardens, another up and coming UL band. The stand-out tune from these guys was 'Brian Boru', a hard-hitting rock anthem with a tinge of Celtic grunge

that got the crowd singing along. These guys know their way around a catchy riff. Return to Sender graced the stage next. Vonna Nolan's effortless presence and vocals had everyone watching. 'A Way Away' was a particularly catchy tune, with one of those stick-in-your-head choruses that I'm still humming away to myself a week on. Rogue were up next, giving it socks. The crowd was loosened up at this stage and there was plenty of head-bobbin' and booty-shaking to be done. Cork band Time is a Thief had the most established sound of the night. You can hear in their music

that they've been playing together for a while. These guys have the ingredients for success and know how to put a good song together and rock it out on stage. This was when the crowd really got going. The night played tribute to the host of musical talents flourishing from UL. This is only the beginning for these bands and I wouldn't be surprised to see some of these musicians on bigger stages in future.

"Astral Gardens' stand-out tune was 'Brian Boru', a hard-hitting rock anthem with a tinge of Celtic grunge that got the crowd singing along. These guys know their way around a catchy riff."

LITTLE SECRETS IN THE SCHOLARS

Written by **Brian Anglim**

DUBLIN ensemble Our Little Secrets are set to play a one off gig in The Scholars Club on 22 February. Support on the night comes from UL Music Society's own Bobby O'Keefe and Dan Comerford. Entry is free and a great night of music in an intimate venue is guaranteed. Our Little Secrets, whose debut album is set for release on 7 May, are the collective works of singer songwriter Rhob Cunningham and a merry band of like-minded cohorts. Cunningham has spent the last few years touring the width and breadth of Ireland and has supported some of the country's brightest stars including the likes of Mick Flannery, Villagers and Cathy Davey. He also provided backing vocals on tracks for Lisa Hannigan's album 'Sea Sew'. The album features the strumming, hitting and plucking of Cormac Curran (Villagers/Cathy Davey), Ross Turner (Jape/I Am The Cosmos), Shane Holly (Jennifer Evans & The Ripe Intent), as

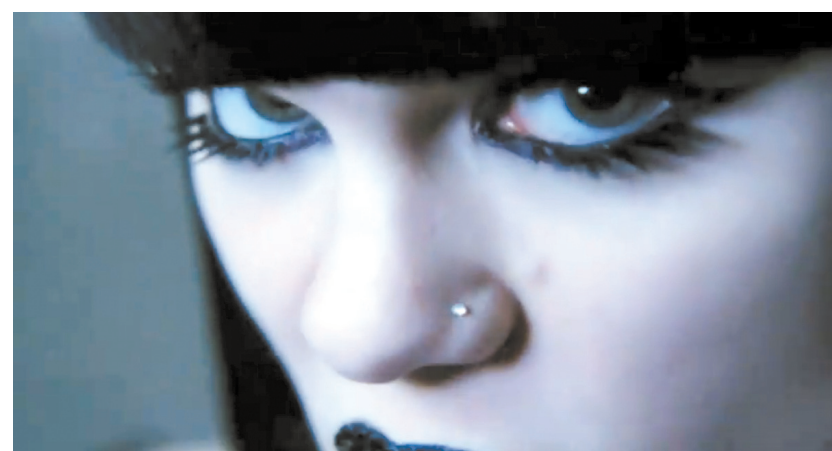
well as sporting the considerable talents of the likes of Lisa Hannigan, Cathy Davey and Jenny Lindfors and assorted family and friends. Produced by Keith Farrell and recorded in the late Liam Clancy's studio in Dungarven, it is one of the most anticipated Irish albums of 2011. Our Little Secrets will be supporting The Villagers on their tour in May, followed by their own national tour in June.



DOING IT LIKE THE OTHERS

Written by **Damien Ryan**

"STOMP stomp, I've arrived!" Jessie J certainly makes an impressive entrance on the hype-single-turned-hit, 'Do it Like a Dude'. Bursting with attitude, the song is the perfect entrance for one of the most hyped acts of 2011 as she barks over an aggressive guitar riff that she can, "do it like dude, grab my crotch, wear my hat low like you". After storming to number two in the UK charts, 'Do it Like a Dude' seemed to ensure that Jessie would live up to the heavy hype that has surrounded her launch. She was



recently named the BBC's 'Sound of 2011' and as the winner of the Critic's Choice Awards at the BRIT Awards. If you liked what you've heard so far, don't be fooled. Jessie's album sampler is made up of dreary ballads and faux-hip hop beamed in from the late nineties.

Lacking coherence or stylistic direction, the five-track sampler of Jessie's upcoming album, 'Who You Are', aims to cover too many bases at once and ends up an uneasy listen. The title track is a run of the mill ballad urging us to, "be true to who you are", but Jessie doesn't heed her own advice. The ultra-sleek fembot image she has presented so far is completely at odds with the cliché ridden RnB she delivers. Jessie certainly has a strong voice, but sadly, no idea how to use it. She has the potential to be one of the UK's best vocalists, but needs to learn that less is sometimes more and

that restraint can be more engaging than belting. 'L.O.V.E.' is the true low-point of the album sampler with trite lyrics such as, "I said I'd never write a song about love, but when it feels this good a song fits like a glove". The line is made even more cringe-inducing thanks to Jessie's exaggerated vocal runs, thoroughly sucking every last syllable she can out of 'glove'. Luckily, the laid back, reggae tinged 'Price Tag' ensures that there's at least one guaranteed chart hit on the album. The track is effortlessly commercial and accessible albeit somewhat of a downgrade version of the Jessie J penned Miley hit, 'Party in the USA'. The release of 'Who You Are' has been brought forward to 28 February to capitalize on Jessie's initial success, but it remains to be seen if there'll be anything to warrant the gratuitous hype surrounding Jessie J so far.

Entertainment

GAGA GOES FOR GAY VOTE

Written by Damien Ryan

"Born This Way" offers up everything but the kitchen sink, managing to sound over-complicated, yet still completely un-engaging."

LADY Gaga's latest song, 'Born This Way', is surely the single most highly anticipated pop release of 2011. High praise came from Elton John who proclaimed that the song is, "the anthem that's going to obliterate 'I Will Survive'." Gaga herself told Rolling Stone that she had created the, "anthem for our generation for the next decade", and that "God dropped it in my lap". God certainly does work in mysterious ways; 'Born This Way' is a cliché-ridden, mediocre survivor-anthem, lacking anything in the way of true musical artistry or innovation.

Lady Gaga has certainly never been anything but derivative when it comes to pop production, but the Fernando Garibay produced 'Born This Way' offers up everything but the kitchen sink, managing to sound over-complicated, yet still completely un-engaging. The song takes a liberal helping of Madonna's 'Express Yourself', cut-and-pasting much of its melody.

The similarity is so glaring that upon 'Born This Way's' release, 'Express Yourself' became a trending topic on Twitter and began to shoot up on iTunes charts globally. The generic production often threatens to completely drown out Gaga's vocals; it sounds almost as if two songs are playing at once.

'Born This Way' is too loud and too busy, it is most akin to an Ibiza club-anthem from twenty years ago and certainly falls far short of the euphoria we were promised. The lyrics, which Gaga 'leaked' via her Twitter

account recently, are mostly a blatant pandering to the gay community. She patronisingly half-raps the cringe-worthy lines, "no matter gay, straight or bi, lesbian, transgendered life, I'm on the right track baby. I was born this way". "Chola descent... you're orient", she continues on with her minority shopping. Hispanic and Asian groups have already criticised the use of these terms, claiming both are offensive and derogatory to their respective communities. She repeatedly chants, "don't be a drag, just be a queen", a nonsensical, vapid lyric which she attempts to pass off as some power-pop motto for the gay community. To say the song lacks subtlety is a severe understatement. 'Born This Way' isn't actually an anthem, it just insists that it is. Lady Gaga is a victim of her own self-aggrandizing hype. A walking marketing firm more than a popstar, Lady Gaga avoids subtlety or artistry in her flagrancy and instead comes off as almost offensive. She wants to secure a loyal gay fan base, like many a popstar before her. But she was incapable of creating a true anthem akin to 'I Will Survive', 'Vogue' or 'Beautiful'. In the end Gaga simply offered up a hackneyed retread of past pop anthems; a coldly designed attempt to be seen as a gay icon. 'Born This Way' isn't empowerment. It's exploitation.



J COLE: A STAR IS BORN

Written by Gary Whelan

2011 IS shaping up to be a return to form for Hip Hop with the emergence of a number of new acts, most of whom have been doing big things on the underground scene for the past couple of years.

One of those about to blow up is German born rapper J Cole, big things are promised from the newly signed RocNation artist. To be co-signed by Jay Z is not a bad start to a career, especially for a guy that has yet to release an album. Although born in Frankfurt he has spent 25 of his 26 years in North Carolina but the German Hip Hop scene will claim him as their own no doubt, and listening to the guys skills who could blame them.

The lyrics, wordplay and delivery in his first three mixtapes have been a breath of the freshest possible air for Hip Hop in 2010. He is one of a big number of socially conscious artists coming through this year and chooses to write about economic problems, abortion and politics rather than the endless songs about Bentleys, champagne and platinum jewellery.

The content of his material is obviously influenced by his education, it was only 2007 when he graduated from SJU in New York where he earned a degree in Communications and Business, a statistic we hope is more regular in the coming years from the new generation of emcee.

You can definitely also hear the influence of his hero Tupac Shakur in his rhymes and who better to emulate. In fact his respect for Tupac is so much that he has a tribute section in his live show which he dedicates to the greatest of all time.

His as of yet untitled debut album is scheduled for an April 2011 release. It's something true Hip Hop fans will look forward to. In the meantime, check out his three mixtapes 'The Come Up', 'The Warm Up' and 'Friday Night Lights' which are completely free and legal to download. They are available on www.jcolemusic.com



*Photo's from last year's Ball

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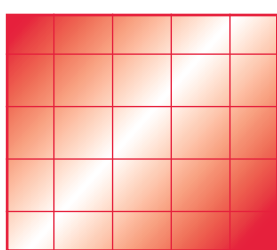
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Let Your Good Time,
Help Others Through The Bad



The Grid

Exclusive communication for Clubs and Societies.

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

<h2>Clubs</h2>	<p>Handball No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Rowing No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<h2>Societies</h2>	<p>International Friday Week 5: Film Night, Jonathan Swift Theatre (B1023) at 9pm. Drinks, craic after at the Stables. Friday Week 6: European Music night at the Stables - we play YOUR requests with music from around the world.</p>
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Do you think The Grid is a useful tool for your Club or Society?

Email: sucommunications@ul.ie

<p>Young Fine Gael Anybody interested in joining? There's no better time! If you'd like to canvass, please search our Facebook Page "ULYFG".</p>	<p>Anime and Manga Thanks from ULSU to Sophie O'Gara for designing the front cover illustration of Pulse Magazine 2011.</p>	<p>Poker Tournaments Mondays in the Sports Bar. Check the UL Poker Soc Facebook page for more details.</p>
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<p>Soccer Training continues as normal. Congratulations to Men's Freshers on their performance at the Harding. All info and details on the soccer club website: http://ulsoccerclub.webs.com/apps/blog/</p>	<p>Debating Union Speaker Development every Monday at 7pm in SU Room 3. Debates every Thursday in the Swift (B1023) at 7pm. Email uldebu@gmail.com for more details.</p>	<p>ULTV ULSU would like to thank the guys at ULTV for the great video coverage and smooth editing of the Lifesaver Project in the Plaza in Week 3.</p>
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<p>Athletics No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Handball Training Mondays at 7pm and Thursdays at 8:15pm in the PESS.</p>
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<p>Badminton Grade Four (Advanced Level) team had mixed fortunes in Limerick League, narrowly losing to Mungret, but beating Foynes. Grade Four and Grade Six (Club Level) teams are strong contenders for semi-finals.</p>	<p>Kayak Pool sessions are on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights from 9:45pm to 10:45pm. Outback training is ongoing. See boards or Facebook page for details.</p>
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<p>Basketball No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Ladies Hockey No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>
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<p>Boarders No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Ladies Rugby Training is every Monday 6:30pm and Wednesday 6:15pm in Annacotty. Lifts from East Gate car park 5:55pm Monday, 5:45pm Wednesday. Next match Wednesday Week 6 against UCC in UL KO at 3pm. Email ulladiesrugby@hotmail.com for details.</p>
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<p>Capoeira No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Men's Rugby No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>
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<p>Chess No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Tae Kwon Do Three training sessions a week in the PESS Building on Monday: 6:50pm-9pm, Wednesday: 9pm-10:30pm and Thursday: 6:50pm-8:15pm. Generally, members pick the two sessions which are most convenient for them to attend.</p>
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<p>Dance UL Classes run Mondays: Salsa 6:30pm-7:30pm, Irish Dance 7:30-8:30pm. Tuesdays: Beginners Hip-Hop 6:30pm to 7:30pm, Advanced Hip-Hop 7:30-8:30pm. Wednesdays: Jazz 6:45-7:45pm. All classes in Dromroe Village Hall. Check our Facebook or visit www.danceul.com.</p>	<p>Tennis Munster Cup is around the corner! We are currently looking for people with good skills. Don't be shy, show your talent solo or in groups. Training is every Monday and Wednesday from 2pm-7pm.</p>
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<p>Fencing Congratulations to the men and women who competed in the Duffy Competition last weekend. Good luck to those competing in UCD this weekend. Also, beginner lessons Thursday 6pm to 7pm in PESS.</p>	<p>Pool & Darts Pool tournaments every Monday at 7pm, SU Common Room. Darts tournaments every Tuesday a 7pm, in the Sports Bar. Pool sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:45pm-10:45pm. Outback training ongoing. See boards or Facebook.</p>
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<p>GAA No submissions received. Visit registercs.ul.ie.</p>	<p>Ultimate Frisbee Beginner training Wednesdays at 6pm in PESS Gym. Outdoor training Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:15pm at Maguire's Pitch. Curious spectators welcome! Training weekends with skills workshops in next few weeks. See www.ulninja.com.</p>
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FREE-BEE LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVE

Written by **Cian Daly, Owner**

FREE-BEE is a new driving school in Limerick with a new business model. As a part of O'Mara Motors on the Tipperary Road, Free-Bee offers its clients the opportunity to recoup the cost of their lessons if they buy a car valued at €8,000 or more from O'Mara Motors, Main Toyota Dealer. I have passed the Approved Driving Instructor test required to certify driving lessons. From this April, all learner permit holders must have completed mandatory driving lessons with an ADI before taking their driving test. For more information on the test, our lesson plans or our money-back deal, check out our website www.free-bee.ie or like "Free-Bee" Driving School on Facebook. For Road Safety Week (Week 3) O'Mara Motors and Free-Bee sponsored six driving lessons. Three were raffled at the Lifesaver project seminar (winner: Cormac O'Neill) and the remaining three will be raffled by ULSU this week. Raffle will be advertised via Facebook.

C&S

SAILING CLUB IN SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Written by **Cian Gallagher,**
Sailing Club PRO

SAILING is not a sport many are familiar with, but UL's sailing club is one of the best around. We've taken part in competitions from France to Cork.

On the last weekend of January, the club sent two teams to Kenmare, Co Kerry, to participate in the Cork IT-hosted Southern Championships. Blue skies and sunshine greeted 28 teams from all over the country to the beautiful landscape early on Saturday morning. But racing was postponed until 12pm due to a lack of wind. When it finally got underway, light winds meant conditions were tricky for the teams. That day, UL Team 1 won two of four races, and UL Team 2 won three of five. The round robin of over eighty races in total had to be finished in order to continue to quarter finals. But when the teams turned up on Sunday morning, the forecast of no wind came through, once again leading to a postponement of racing. Some of the teams were sent out in the hope that the wind would pick up, but at 11:30am, the organisers pulled the plug and cancelled further racing. The rest of the event will be sailed at a later date,

although with provisional results, UL2 had finished third in the silver fleet. The teams will travel to Crosshaven, Co. Cork on 12 and 13 February to take part in an Invitational event for all Munster Colleges. UL, UCC, CIT and one other team to be decided will take part. Following that, UL1 will travel to Dublin to a UCD-organised event in Dun Laoghaire the following weekend. This will be the final chance to practice before defending the Varsities title, which UL have held since February 2009. The Varsities take place in Sligo in March.

Teams from Kenmare:

UL1 Billy Clarke, Pa Hegarty, Conor Martin, Rachel Cronin, Elspeth Keating, Maddie O'Connell

UL2 Cian Gallagher, Shane Newman, Ross Murray, Catherine Finn, Peadar O'Sullivan, Emma O'Sullivan



Light winds and clear skies over Kenmare.

CAN YOU CLIMB?



Written by **David O'Connell**

DO you think you are stronger, more flexible and have better stamina than others? Do you want to test yourself against others? How about trying a new sport? The Outdoor Pursuits Club (OPC) has just the competition for you; an indoor rock climbing competition for people who have never climbed before. There won't be any 7am trainings; no rigorous training regime and nobody beating you into taking part. Simply, a competition to find the strongest beginner climbers in the college. The OPC's climbing wall in the PE building opens at 7pm and closes at 10pm every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday which gives you nine hours to complete your task. What is the task? All you have to do is complete five to six different climbs each week for seven weeks. The person who completes the most in each category wins the competition. There is a separate competition for girls and guys. Each climb is different and the competition suits so many different people. You could have the biggest

strongest arms in the world and may be a rubbish climber. Climbing isn't all chin ups and pull-ups. Balance and centre of gravity plays a large part too. The person who can walk along a curb or wall without falling off might be a stronger climber than the person who can bench press two cows.

Of course, as the OPC isn't just going to throw a bunch of different people up and down the walls with no idea what they are doing. We'll get you started and give you hints and tips along the way. There is no binding requirement which says you must finish the whole competition. But why not give it a go? It is open to everyone to come down and enter. Everyone discovers something different while they are in college and this very well may be your thing. Nobody is asking you to climb Everest, just give it a lash! The competition has a €5 entry fee for UL students, which covers your membership fee and any insurance for the whole semester. Good luck!

UL DANCE UPDATE

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

IT has been a busy couple of weeks for us and we'd like to thank everyone who took part in classes and auditions over the past while.

We hope you've had fun! We have a new and improved timetable this semester, including some brand new classes like Salsa and Irish Dance. We've had a great response but don't forget there is always room for more. You don't need previous experience, you just need comfy shoes and enthusiasm!

Our timetables are plastered around campus. If you can't find them, check our Facebook page for updates, visit our great website or read a bit of our new blog! We update them regularly with class and intervarsity information and our show in UL (which will be great!) and some thoughts and comments from our class members and competitors! The auditions for our Intersvarsity competition, which will take place in UCC in March, set an excellent standard of dancing. We have squads for Hip-Hop, Alternative and Jazz to send to Cork and we hope to knock their socks off with the routines our brilliant teachers are working tirelessly to create. We'll upload videos soon to show you exactly what Dance UL members can do!

The next few weeks will be tough for everyone involved but the end result will definitely be worth it. And we'll have a brilliant night out after!

In other news, there will be no classes in Week 6 since it's both Charity Week and the week of our Intersvarsity competitions, so you'll get a week off from popping and locking to relax!

See you then!

POOL TEAM DOES UL PROUD AT INTERVARSITIES

Written by **Shane Barrett**

FOR the most committed pool enthusiasts, all roads lead to Dundalk for the annual HESPC pool Intersvarsities. This is an All-Ireland competition and UL was represented by two teams. Each team comprised of five members and the selection process was related to performances to our weekly in-house pool tournaments. With our bags packed and our Sat-Navs set for Co. Louth, we set off for a long journey. The event included both individual and team contests. Competition was fierce.

UL's A Team was drawn in the proverbial group of death which contained two favourites for the overall title (DCU and NUIG). The A Team did UL proud and showed off the high standard of our players by qualifying from their group to the shield competition. They were successful in reaching the semi-finals where their progress was halted by eventual champions DIT. The B Team was also drawn in a tough group and their lack of experience was capitalised upon by seasoned campaigners. They gave a good account of their ability and despite their nerves, they showed UL's fighting spirit.

In the second session of play they began to win some matches and just narrowly missed qualifying from the group. The singles competition was also successful for us with Eoghan O'Keefe making it to the last 64. Selection for next year's team will be based on performances in tournaments this semester. So if you would like to represent your college, meet new people and enjoy a weekend away, join us every Monday at 7pm in the SU Common Room. A Team: Thomas Fitzgerald (capt), DJ Gleeson, Paul Kelly, Keith Massey and Eoghan O'Keefe. B Team: Shane Barrett (capt), Aidan McCarthy, Stephen O'Brein, Barry Quaid and Colin McLoughlin.



UL's Pool teams, who visited Dundalk to represent us.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW FOR UL KAYAKERS

Written by **Mark Barrett,**
ULKC PRO

ON Wednesday, 2 February UL Kayakers held their AGM, electing a new committee. Once nominations were taken and votes were counted the celebrations began. Congratulations to new committee members. The club has been very busy with preparations for the Intersvarsities in the last few weeks.

With the mornings getting brighter and brighter, dedicated kayakers can be seen on the Shannon at the break of dawn. 2011's Intersvarsities take place in Cork on 18 to 20 February. It promises to be a great weekend. ULKC are the current holders and hope to do just as well this time around.

HIGH WINDS HAMPER NINJAS' STYLE

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

UL ULTIMATE Frisbee travelled to Waterford for Intervarsity League Saturday, 5 February. Matches started at noon on Sunday in persistent mist and strong, swirling winds. Luckily, the tournament ran on WIT's all weather facility.

Our 16-strong squad were facing into a challenging three-team group, the top two qualifying for the semi-finals. First up was UCD and with the conditions so unfavourable, both sides were forced to work different tactics. Each team made the opposition try and move the disc quickly and ultimately, drop it. UCD

edged ahead early on, but UL clawed it back to level pegging with some great upwind points. Both teams traded points for a period, but a desperate UL became sloppy. UCD remained steady in front. Despite glimpses of a UL comeback, UCD got the last point, downwind, to win 7-5. Despite a bigger gap in the scoreboard, the Trinity game was well-matched. Both teams adopted similar tactics, namely defending hard and hucking the disc downfield for position on the turnover. Unfortunately for UL, more of Trinity's hucks were caught, gaining vital field

position and disrupting our defence. Again, UL fought strongly but Trinity ended up winning 6-2. Aside from the tournament, we organised a crossover game with NUIG Panteras. We decided in this game to open up and play our own game. This paid off with the final score being 9-7 in UL's favour. Playing a key role for UL throughout the day, Pat Hayden was voted MVP for UL. Meanwhile UCC won the final easily over Trinity. They are now the team to beat in the Open IVs in April.



SKYDIVE FOR CHARITY THIS CHARITY WEEK!

Written by **Jenni Murtagh,**
Skydive UL

FOR the first time ever, your SU and Skydive UL are offering skydives for Charity Week. It's a great opportunity to face your fears, have a laugh and an incredible experience, and most importantly, raise some money for charity.

Participants will do tandem skydives which will take place at Galway Airport on the Wednesday of Charity Week, 2 March, and more dates depending on demand. If you can't make these dates, just contact Skydive UL and we'll book you in for another day. The minimum you need to raise is €440. There is also a €10 registration fee that includes insurance and membership to Skydive UL. Training for the tandems only takes 15 minutes and takes place on the morning of the jumps. You must fill in a charity skydive registration

form and return it to obtain a collection card. The registration form is available for download from a link on the Facebook page or from any Skydive UL committee member.

In these recessionary times, you might think that €440 will be near impossible to raise, but it's entirely achievable. Last year, Sligo IT jumped 50 people over the course of three days, raising €13,500 for their version of Charity Week. That's more money raised through skydives than UL managed to raise all together last year. There's huge potential in using skydiving to boost the amount of money raised by UL this Charity Week. Remember to tell people that it's all in the name of charity. All you need to do is drastically exaggerate your fear of heights, planes, and perhaps Galway. Immediately

you'll become the hero who is hurling his/herself out of a plane in the name of people in need. For those of you who develop a thirst for more, Skydive UL offers the opportunity to learn to skydive solo. Students can train and progress in the sport for a fraction of the money it would cost elsewhere. There's also the France Progression Trip 2011, where skydiving students spend two weeks in the south of France, rapidly progressing to a maximum solo freefall of 14,000ft in the most blissful of environments, with the coolest people you'll ever meet.

For more information on any of these activities, email info@skydiveul.org or enquire at your SU. Blue skies!



BOARDERS VISIT ITALY

Written by **Lorcan O'Connell,**
Boarders' PRO

THE second UL Boarders surf trip started on 15 January at 6:30am on the plane and off to embark on our adventure of snow. We landed at 9am Irish time, 10am Italian time.

There was great skiing during the week, miles of blue and red slopes but nothing too challenging. Even the absolute beginner boarders and skiers were flying at the end of every day. At the slopes there was a boarder park there. This consists of kickers (jumps) and rails. There also was a boarder cross, this is an array of bends and jumps that are designed to make you go really fast and not to lose speed. The objective of the boarder cross is to go down it as fast as you can. Back at the house there was a lot of rooms, to board the boarders. Downstairs in the house there is a common room. That's where

groups of new friends formed. There was the usual signing that you get in groups, songs like "Old McLynn he ain't what he used to be" and "heads, shoulders, knees and toes" there was a dance off to this song with two of our members.

One of the highlights of the trip was on Tuesday night, when members got the chance to participate in the night ski. Over the course of two hours, the boarders got the chance to test their skills on the freshly groomed, floodlit slopes of Passo Tonalé where the infamous "Morphsuit Boarder" made his/her one and only appearance of the trip. There's much more to talk about but it would have to be censored. We wait in anticipation of next year's trip.

TAEKWONDO: A FUN WAY TO STAY FIT

Written by **Fionnuala Corbett**

SO spending hours going nowhere on a treadmill doesn't float your boat or you don't fancy being soaked to the skin as you attempt to power walk around Castletroy? Look for a way to stay in shape without the gym or step aerobics? Then how about taekwondo?

Taekwondo is a martial art that originated in Korea. It refers to the 'Art of Hand and Foot Fighting' and is the most practiced martial art in the world.

The Taekwondo club is now an institution of UL's Clubs and Societies and Michael Johnson, an active member of the club explains why.

"It's fun! It's a great way of getting fit or staying in shape, as it's an all-round workout every training session, self-defence and fitness are the main reasons people take it up." Michael explains that learning a martial art boosts self-confidence and discipline. The self-defence aspect may appeal particularly to girls who might feel safer walking city streets knowing

they are able to defend themselves if necessary. Michael says that the social aspect of the club is important: "We also try to meet socially every other week for drinks, outings etc., so people can get to know one another outside the training hall." Membership costs €5 for undergrads, €10 for postgrads, €15 for alumni/staff and €20 for people outside the college. Beginners may train in tracksuit pants and t-shirts but must purchase a 'dobulk' (a white martial art uniform) for their grading.

What can one expect to gain from joining the Taekwondo club? "A bit of craic, improved self confidence, a grounding in the martial art, a touch of self-defence (and knowing when to run) and some new friends," according to Michael. So if you're determined to keep your New Year's fitness resolution beyond January 2011, the UL Taekwondo club is just what you're looking for!

Charity Week 2011



RUBBERBANDITS

The Big Gig This Charity Week.

At The UL Arena.

8pm, Thursday, 3 February 2011.

Tickets € 12 At Your SU Reception.

Pick Up *Pulse* Magazine For More Info
Or View Online Via ulsu.ie

