



Sabbatical Team 07/08 elected



BY ALAN OWENS
CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT

AFTER a gruelling campaign and subsequent count that went on into the late hours of last Thursday night, the Student's Union officers for next year have been elected. In an election that featured 2,200 students voting on a ballot featuring 8 candidates, some races were closer than others.

With voter turnout up from the 1,800 students that voted last year, coupled with a referendum that was carried

by just over 94%, the count was not completed until after two o'clock last Thursday morning.

The officers elected were, St.John O'Donnabháin, returning as President with 72.63% of the vote; Judith Lynch, elected Deputy President/Welfare with 72.27%; Alan Higgins returning as V.P/Education with 55.09% and Seamus Ryan, elected V.P/Publications and Publicity with 56.78% of the vote. Patrick McHugh was elected unopposed as V.P/Campaigns and Services.

Despite the fact that the count went on well into the night, An Focal finds Alan Higgins at his desk first thing Friday morning. He admits to being tired from the late night and gruelling campaign, but believes it is important to be 'straight back to getting the job done after the election'.

When asked about the

year to come he tells An Focal he is 'looking forward to continuing the work already started'. Alan continues, 'Education is a very technical position, there is a steep learning curve. I think I can benefit from the experience of having already made my mistakes and now have a second run at getting things right and continuing to campaign on issues important to students'.

Returning President St.John O'Donnabhain points to the improved voter turnout as an extremely positive aspect of the election. 'We are very happy, it's the best turnout in years, and I'm very pleased to see a greater interest in student issues and politics' he says.

I think there were some extremely well-run campaigns this year, not least the Alcohol Policy campaign. When I was first elected I said I would tackle this issue, and as a

result of the inaction of the University we decided to hold this referendum' says St.John.

With regard to his personal goals, St.John says 'I decided to run again to provide some continuity, to run bigger and better campaigns and to improve student academic life as much as possible'. Paramount to this he believes is having a good group of officers capable of working together successfully.

Patrick McHugh tells An Focal he 'put his name in to make a difference'. 'I'm delighted to see such strong candidates in the Union, and feel this will be a time of great change for the University, the Union and the Students' he says. Patrick adds that he thinks 'the students will be in for a treat next year'.

Both Judith Lynch and Séamus Ryan were unavailable for comment last Friday morning.

President

Total valid poll:	2145	
Eoin Kelly:	582	(27.37%)
St. John Ó Donnabháin:	1544	(72.63%)

Deputy President/Welfare

Total valid poll	2123	
Jim Heneghan	576	(27.73%)
Judith Lynch	1501	(72.27%)

Vice President/Education

Total valid poll	2120	
Eamonn Gardiner	931	(44.91%)
Alan Higgins	1142	(55.09%)

Vice President/Campaigns & Services

Patrick McHugh - elected unopposed

Vice President/Publications & Publicity

Total valid poll	2112	
Niamh Clowry	892	(43.22%)
Séamus Ryan	1172	(56.78%)



Victory for students as the Alcohol Referendum is passed by a landslide majority. Photo: Eoin Stephenson, UL Photographic Department

Overwhelming support for Referendum

AOIFE BREEN, NEWS EDITOR

A remarkable 94.92 per cent of votes cast in last Thursday's referendum regarding the University's Alcohol Policy demonstrated a undeniable support for the Students' Union's motion which issued an ultimatum to UL's authorities regarding their responsibilities outlined in the Policy. The referendum, which was passed with 2073 'Yes' votes to 111 'No' votes, implies that unless the University fulfils its obligations listed in the document before 28 November, the Students' Union will withdraw its support for the Policy.

Patrick McHugh, an active member of Clubs and Societies and incoming Campaigns and Services Officer, proposed the referendum because of the general sentiment among students that the University

had failed to keep its commitments. Speaking about the outcome of the voting, Mr McHugh told An Focal, "The result is a true indication that students are aware and affected by this Policy. Apathy is now coming from the University."

The Students' Union now calls on the University to implement the provisions of the Policy before Week 12 of Autumn Semester of the next academic year. Under the Policy, the University is obliged to keep Wednesday afternoons free from classes to foster participation in alternative activities, to provide €60,000 to Clubs and Societies annually in place of the sponsorship that could have been sourced from alcohol companies, and to provide a late night non-alcoholic venue on-campus as an alternative to the pub. The University has not carried out any of these commitments during the five years that the

Policy has been in place.

The referendum came about after a statement from the University that claimed it has been "very active in its implementation" of Policy. Sinéad Hickey, SU Welfare Officer has refuted this allegation saying, "Over the past number of years the University authorities have shown their negligence towards not just the students but their staff also. The Alcohol Policy Review has indicated that the Students' Union's have been the champions of the policy, while the University has failed to live up to its responsibility".

She went on to mention that the University's sudden

decision that the Ulster Bank Enablement Fund is in line with its financial commitment to Clubs and Societies is "a desperate attempt to disguise their own inadequacies in providing for their students". She explained that the link between the Fund and the monies outstanding has never been made and the University cannot claim that they are one and the same.

Mr McHugh pointed out that the future of the Alcohol Policy lies with the University and stated, "A great majority of students have shown their dissatisfaction with the University. Everyone knows what needs to happen".

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SUPERQUINN

EDITORIAL



BY DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

THIS edition of An Focal concentrates largely on issues very close to home - the elections, the referendum, clubs and societies, the union's new anti-fascist policy, etc. This is because the past two weeks have been the most hectic of this academic year to date!

A major protest against Campbell's by both staff and students, prompting a visit from Campbell's HQ, a ground-breaking referendum in which students for the first time raised their voices against the failures of the university on the Alcohol Policy, and of course, at this time of year, the annual sabbatical elections.

The sabbatical elections herald the end of our time here in the Union... once rash election promises have been made by eager candidates, nothing we can do will ever be good enough again! There is never anything personal in this - pity the poor candidate who insults his/her predecessor and then has to undergo a three-week training period side by side! However, it does leave the outgoing officers with a strong feeling of being redundant.

As Philip Murphy said in an article in the last edition of this newspaper, there are strong arguments for extending the sabbatical term of office to two years. Continuity, confidence and knowledge of the issues involved are just some of these, and they seem to be the ones which contributed to the victories of both the sitting President and Education Officer.

However, there are some things that nobody could do twice, and editing this newspaper appears to be one of them! Perhaps my successor Séamus Ryan will prove me wrong, and run for a second term, but if he does, he will be the first. There are many factors in this, the constant deadlines and pressure being the main one, but nonetheless it is a rewarding and challenging position which I'm enjoying (and will until June!) immensely.

On behalf of the rest of the An Focal editorial team, and of the outgoing sabbatical officers, I'd like to wish Séamus, Paddy, Alan, Judith and St. John the very best of luck with the coming year. Here's hoping they can continue and improve on the work that has been done this year and over the last number of years to make UL Students' Union the best it can be.

It was mistakenly stated in the last edition of An Focal that no Jerry Cronin was not available for comment regarding the coop of humanities students. Due to an unintentional technical mistake the email that was intended to be sent to Jerry Cronin did not send and saved itself in drafts. This did not become apparent until after the article had come to print. An Focal apologises for the error and would like to invite Jerry Cronin to contact the author of the aforementioned article, Aoife Finnerty, with any comments he may have.

Quotes of the fortnight

- **'We're all about censorship** .Paddy McHugh, CSO-elect.
- **"Ye people are like a box of hamsters!** Patrick Buckley, former An Focal editor, speaking to the current PPO about her friendship with former President Fintan Breen.
- **"No thanks, I'm off sweets for Lent.** Student, in response to a campaigner for presidential candidate St John Ó Donnabháin offering her an orange. Maybe a few more healthy living campaigns will enlighten her.
- **"I mean, who would you back in a fight?** Unsuccessful Presidential candidate Eoin Kelly highlights his strong points at the hustings.
- **"YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES!** Alcohol referendum campaigner Patrick McHugh gets a little repetitive in the course of the campaign.
- **"De, wake up!** Returning Officer Karen Ryan McNamara wakes up the Chair of the Electoral and Referenda Board during the election count.
- **"We're all very active here on campus.** Welfare officer-elect Judith Lynch goes a bit far with the sexual health campaigning.

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Holly Johnson
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DAVID KITT

NOT FADE AWAY

Dublin Discs (Ireland) / Rough Trade
(UK and Europe)

Q - Magazine - Top 100 albums of the year

BBC Radio 1 - (Up To You) Top 25 tracks of the year

Nominated for The Choice Music Prize (Ireland)
Nominated for 2 Meteor Awards (Ireland)

AN EVENING WITH DAVID KITT SHOWS (below) FEB.2007

Not Fade Away has offered David Kitt a freedom from the constraints of distracting themes and encouraged a much broader approach to the songs that make up the album.

The album was recorded largely in Kittser's own home studio in Dublin, produced and mixed with assistance from Karl Odum, and acclaimed Swedish producer Tore Johansson (The Cardigans, Franz Ferdinand) in Stockholm. Kittser handled the majority of instrumentation himself: guitars, drums, programming, bass, synths, samples and even some banjo. Many Irish friends contributed to the record including singers Lisa Hannigan and Annie Tierney, David's younger brother Robbie, and members of The Redneck Manifesto. *Not Fade Away* also features the talents of Romeo and Michelle Soddart from much-loved folk-pop quartet The Magic Numbers who after a chance encounter at Glastonbury last year revealed themselves to be big David Kitt fans. All of these components have a place in his most detailed and crafted mix yet.

In the past Kittser has freely admitted that writing lyrics has been the most trying aspect of making music. The Big Romance looked to elemental themes and warm, sensual feelings, but *Not Fade Away* is wholly emotional - expressing doubt, darkness and defiance, and even moments of anger and aggression. There are also vivid snapshots of Dublin at night - parties, soul-searching chats, bleary-eyed comedowns, and whiskey fights.

With Kittser in full control of his studio, he finds the perfect balance between lushness and space, allowing his instruments to breathe, and his melodies to shine. Check out the fluid bass of "Leaving Home", the perfect clarity of every beat and pluck on "Grey Day", the pop ambience of "Up To You", and the Neil Young meets Dr. Dre antics of "Wish And I Won't Stop".

On "Guilty Prayers, Pointless Ends", he takes a simple down-home folksy chant-a-long and laces it with ghostly string snippets. The first single, "Say No More", is big and bold, a pop song driven by snappy guitars, cute organs, and a rowdy singer. And "Don't Fuck With Me", synthesizes J.J. Cale's Tulsa Sound with Money Mark funk and Kraftwerk computers. The closing "With You" is so simple, yet so lush, it would make Sean O'Hagan's toes curl.

Not Fade Away was greeted with great acclaim on its release in both Ireland and the UK. In Ireland it entered in the top 5, in the UK it was a Sunday Times album of the week, got a 4 star review in Q magazine and led to sessions for both Bob Harris (BBC radio 1) and Colin Muarry (BBC Radio 2) shows.

Bio.

David Kitt's talent has evolved from the exciting embryonic ideas of Small Moments and The Big Romance and he's still setting new standards. *Not Fade Away* is his latest installment for your pleasure.

In the summer of 2001 David Kitt released his second album, The Big Romance - a melting pot of the sounds and styles he had consumed in his formative years. The focus of the recording was on texture, rhythm and melody. His style of creative mixing found a harmony between art-rock guitars, Germanic synthesizers, hip-hop patterns and sweet electronics, and was accentuated by impressionistic lyrics and a natural, unaffected voice. It became an influential record at a time when genre was becoming less specific and a new modern and adventurous breed of artist was emerging. In the middle Kittser made an album of loved-up soul and guitar-pop [Square One, 2003] and a tender homage to his own record collection [The Black & Red Notebook, 2004].

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Sirius Arts Centre, Cobh, Co.Cork - Monday 12th Feb

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Cyprus Avenue, Cork - Tuesday 13th Feb

Tickets from tickets.ie, ticketmaster.ie, The Old Oak and Plugd Records.

www.davidkitt.com
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UL wins race for medical places



BY DEIRDRE O'SHAUGHNESSY
EDITOR

THE University of Limerick has been chosen to become Ireland's first college offering postgraduate medical education. The new medical school will be headed by Dr. Paul Finucane, who has been working on the project since UL first became involved in the proposal in 2003. University authorities have welcomed the decision, with University President, John O' Connor, saying that the

decision to establish a Graduate Entry Medical School at Limerick 'will be welcomed by prospective medical students everywhere and will for the first time facilitate access to world class Medical Education through a process other than the points system.'

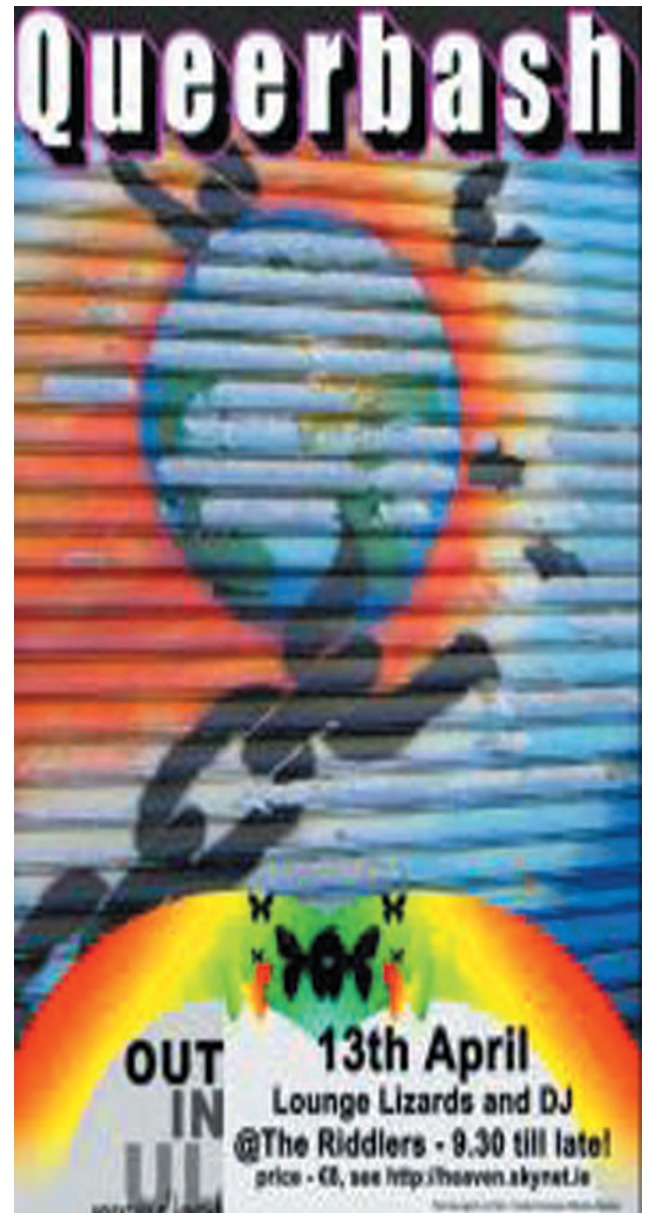
Amid questions about whether the course is fully ready to go, Professor Finucane is confident that students beginning in September will not be disappointed, although he admits that it is a 'tight deadline', and that there are sure to be teething problems. Only thirty students will enrol this year with an eventual full capacity of 120 students when each year is fully enrolled. A new building will be constructed to house the school but in the meantime it will be located in the Health Sciences building.

The Department will, according to Professor Finucane, have a skeleton staff of fourteen senior academic appointments, with the next largest medical school in Ireland having sixty. 'A fairly intensive' recruitment phase will soon begin, with the programme being highly dependent on part-time teaching staff. He believes that 'The model of medical education that has been developed over many decades is unsustainable and more and more medical schools internationally are finding the model unsustainable'. Professor Finucane calls the UL model, 'revolutionary, even by international standards' with regard to its teaching staff and its structure of two directorates.

The new UL medical school will have almost ten teaching hospitals here in the Mid-West (including the

Regional hospital, St. John's and Ennis and Nenagh hospitals), in the Midlands and in the South East, in areas where 'there is capacity to develop new roles in medical education or to expand small roles in medical education'. UL's medical students will also have a large amount of on-the-ground training in the area of general practise, which is almost unheard-of in current medical education.

Professor Finucane has been involved in medical education for over twenty years, having studied in Cardiff and worked in Flinders University in Australia which introduced the first graduate medical education programme in Australia. This is providing the basis for the UL curriculum, which is also used by St. George's in London and other colleges in Australia.



Staff and Students Join to Fight Campbell's



BY AOIFE BREEN
NEWS EDITOR

STAFF and students joined forces recently in the battle against the price hikes being implemented by Campbell's Catering during a lunchtime boycott of the company's catering outlets on campus. The staff trade union, AMICUS, and the Students' Union encouraged their members to 'bring their own' lunch on Thursday of Week 6 (22nd March), and to eat it in the University's refreshment areas, which are operated by Campbell's, including the main Restaurant.

Robert Hutchison, secretary of AMICUS's UL

Branch, told staff members before the protest that, "it was decided that the Trade Union should immediately withdraw its support of the catering committee. This is a protest at the rise of the charges recently imposed. This is just one action we will be taking, in a progressive campaign against the unfair price rise".

At a similar time, St. John Ó Donnabháin informed the Chair of the Catering Committee, Linda Stevens, that that the UL Students' Union and Postgraduate Student Association representatives "are withdrawing from this Committee in protest at the unreasonable price hikes which have been recently put in place by Campbell Catering".

The lunchtime boycott of the company proved to be successful, with a number of staff and students choosing instead to bring their own lunch from elsewhere to eat in the Main Restaurant, while others chose to stay away altogether. The Restaurant

was notably quieter than other days at what would be the busiest time of the day.

Staff member Maureen Kendall told An Focal, "I'm here to support this initiative because I feel the increase is outrageous". Her colleague, Roland Tormey, continued on to say, "I think a lot of people will realise how much they've saved today and how easy it is to bring in their own lunch instead of paying Campbell's for it".

Mr Hutchison commented on the staff participation in the protest noting, "The campaign against unfair pricing seems to be successful so far because of the enormous amount of staff support, whether or not they are members of the trade union. When we looked for lunch time action [Thursday, 22nd March], the staff area in the canteen was very quiet".

There were a number of students who gathered at the protest also in an effort to show their dissatisfaction with the catering company. "I brought my lunch here to spite Campbell's after they imposed

ridiculous price increases," Dave Hennessy, 4th Year BBS told An Focal.

An Focal has learned that Campbell's Head Office has contacted the Students' Union with a view to a meeting. At time of going to print the outcome of this meeting was unknown, with Students' Union President St. John Ó Donnabháin saying, however; "This campaign will continue until such a time that Campbell's see sense".

Mr Ó Donnabháin

continued to say, "[We have to] make it clear to Campbell's that their unreasonable price hikes are not going to be acceptable to students or to staff" and promised that protesting against the increases would continue until a suitable solution could be arranged between the involved parties.

The AMICUS secretary went further to question the role of the University in the prices of catering on campus, asking, "What role does

Plassey Campus Centre have in the pricing of services such as catering on campus? Does the University not have a role in setting a climate for fair trade on campus?"

Until such a time that these questions have been resolved and Campbell's revoke their recent price increases, the Students' Union, the PSA and AMICUS will remain fixed on their position in opposition to the catering company.



Students eating SU rolls in the main canteen last week. Photo: Paudie Scanlon

UL gets BA degree at last



BY ALAN OWENS
CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT

MARCH has been an extremely good month for the University of Limerick in academic terms. As reported in An Focal, the announcement was made last week that UL was finally getting the go ahead for a postgraduate medical school. The past few weeks have also seen the announcement of a new Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours) degree programme, which will help to raise the profile of UL both in Ireland and around the

world.

The new programme, available to current Leaving Certificate students for commencement in September 2007, consists of 16 subjects, allowing students a wide range of subject combinations, many of which have not previously been available in the programme, such as Politics and Economics or Criminal Justice and Sociology.

The new BA (Joint Honours) now being launched by UL builds on the existing suite of courses and allows for a wide-ranging set of choices and maximum flexibility for the individual student. The subjects available include: Criminal Justice; Economics; English; Japanese with English Language Teaching; French; German; History; Gaelic; Irish Traditional Music and Dance; Mathematics; New Media with Cultural

Studies; Politics; Psychology; Public Administration; Sociology; Spanish.

Speaking from the Launch Professor Pat O'Connor, Dean of the College of Humanities, said that 'The development of a BA has iconic status and is important for the strategic development of the University of Limerick, marking a small but significant change in the definition and perception of this University. Whereas the University of Limerick has built a strong reputation with targeted programmes in the Arts/Humanities/Social Science area, such programmes by their nature cannot provide the same degree of choice to students as an Arts Degree.'

Through the introduction of a broadly-based first year, the programme allows learners to explore their interests and competencies in a range

of areas before moving towards greater specialisation with two major subjects from the second year onwards. The broad subject choice offered in the first year of the programme will be particularly attractive to the growing constituency of mature students wishing to avail of a BA Arts programme.

This newer, broader course is to be welcomed here in UL. The study of Arts is an extremely important area, and students will reap the benefits of some of the new subjects on offer, particularly things like political science or criminal justice. This newer course will also hopefully help to draw in new students, both Irish and International, and to help UL to continue to grow and flourish

Clubs and Societies Hustings

NIAMH MADIGAN

HUSTINGS for the Clubs and Societies awards were held on Wednesday 21st March in FG042. The event was well-attended, with the majority of the university's Clubs and Societies sending representatives to vie for votes or to chose who they felt most deserved commendation.

There were eight categories - Best New or Improved Club, Best Club Event, Club Person of the Year, Best Club of the Year, Best New or Improved Society, Best Society Event, Best Society Person, Best Society of the Year - to be voted on, with a shortlist of three nominees for each already chosen. The results will be announced and the awards presented at the Clubs and Societies Ball, taking place Wednesday 4th April in the Raddisson Hotel.

In the running for Best New or Improved Club were Ultimate Frisbee, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Shotokan Karate, while Music, Drama and Ogra Fianna Fail's Cumann Con Colbert were up for Best New and Improved Society. Sinead Doyle of the Sailing Club, Marian Hall of Shotokan Karate and Tony Ryan of OPC were nominated as Best Club Person of the Year, and Cian Davis of the Computer Society, Paddy McHugh, the

current Clubs and Societies Council Chair, and Stephen Carmody of the Poker Society were nominated for Best Society person of the Year.

In the Best Club Event category, the Rowing Club's Irish Championships, Shotokan Karate's Martial Arts Festival and Kayak and OPC's joint venture, the Lisnagry Respite Charity Collection, were put forward. The Palestinian Solidarity Society were nominated twice in the Best Society Event category for their Peace conference and the Al Quds Project, along with the Computer Society's Skynet Conference. The nominees for Best Club of the Year were Athletics, Mountain Biking and the OPC, while the Debating Union, the Computer Society and Young Fine Gael were nominated for Best Society of the Year.

The standard of presentation at this year's hustings was very high, with powerpoint presentations, video clips, live music and even a mock swordfight and poetry reading used to try and win votes. Each of the nominated Clubs and Societies had three minutes to make their case. The event lasted roughly two hours. Food and refreshments were provided in Stables afterwards for all those in attendance.



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Arson attack on Plassey car

FINN MCDUFFIE

A Garda forensic team investigated a burned out vehicle in Plassey Village last Monday, 26th March. First year Music and Media student, Ivan O' Mahony, was shocked to find his car badly damaged on Monday morning. The vehicle suffered severe smoke damage with sooty windows and a melted front passenger seat, door, dash and ceiling. The car's upholstery has been

damaged beyond repair. Plassey security and Gardaí inspected the vehicle around mid-day, prior to the forensic team's examination. There was no sign of breakage or theft. However, the front passenger window had not been rolled up leaving just enough room for someone to insert a burning object. One bystander stated, 'this was a malicious act. There's no need for that type of thing.'

Later in the day, forensics took scrapings and gave a

provisional verdict of arson. The official forensic results will be sent to the vehicle owner at a later date. There were also reports of another vandalised vehicle being found nearby the same morning. Though the damage was not extensive, the vehicle's spoiler was removed. It is thought the two acts of vandalism are related.

These events have urged calls for higher security in the on-campus villages and across the campus. Though



Police investigate the scene of the crime in Plassey last week. Photo: Finn McDuffie

vandalism is rarely an issue in Plassey Village, some residents have called for the placement of security cameras in key locations in the village, to help prevent vandalism and identify offenders, therefore increasing security. Already,

the ULSU has been campaigning for security increases this year and has done so very effectively. New ideas include CCTV cameras in bus shelters. With luck, the union will continue its current policies and continue fighting

for a safer campus next year.

Plassey Village security have urged anyone who saw anything suspicious on the night of Sunday 25th to contact Gardaí.

Union adopts anti-fascist policy



BY DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY
EDITOR

AT Class Reps Council in Week 6 the members present voted in a policy which could have wide ranging effects on the type of promotion which is allowed on the campus. A first year class rep, who does not wish to be named, proposed the policy after seeing leaflets and posters on campus which he felt constituted hate speech and should not be circulated.

Voting on the policy was, surprisingly, straightforward and without much debate. One student did question whether the policy would go too far in limiting free speech, but it was generally agreed that material such as this was outside the category in which free speech would lie, as it was believed to constitute hate speech.

The leaflets and posters in question were distributed on behalf of the 'Movement to save Ireland', which claims on its website, <http://saveireland.blogspot.com>,

that 'Ireland will never be united except through Whiteness'. It claims to have recruits in Scotland in a sister group, but appears to be run by one Limerick-based individual. Among the comments on the website are racist attacks directed at Asian and African people, as well as a comment that 'Woman's primary wealth creating activity is child production. Anything else is essentially a waste of her time.'

Hate speech is defined by jurist Michael Rosenfeld as "speech designed to promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin". Asked whether the content of the Movement's website constituted hate speech, Professor Paul McCutcheon of the UL Law School was non-committal, saying that it was a matter of personal judgment; "Do you think that the words are designed to promote hatred on the basis of race, ethnic origins, sexual orientation or whatever? Does the fact that it is poorly written and incoherent (the author is no Josef Goebells) affect your judgment?" He added that it is far easier to regulate hate speech in this country than in others such as the United States, as the right to free speech is not cast-iron in this country's Constitution.

ALAN OWENS

THE decision to set up a new postgraduate medical school in UL, as reported on the front page of this edition, has drawn an angry response from the four Universities who have lost out as a result. The four Universities, UCD, Trinity, UCC and NUIG, which already have undergraduate medical schools, and as such are seen as traditional medical educators, are said to be 'outraged' at the decision taken last week.

240 graduate medical places are being added to existing training at undergraduate level to ease the shortage of Irish doctors and also to act as an alternative to the points race that takes place at undergraduate level. Of these places, UL has been initially awarded 30 places for September 2007, which will eventually rise to 108 places.

This decision, seen as awarding the 'lion's share' of places to UL and as a result, allowing UL to take a lead role in graduate medical education, was described in the furore last week as 'nothing less than astounding' by one senior academic. The heads of the four Universities involved were said to be 'outraged' and seeking a meeting with Minister for Education Mary Hannifin

early this week to demand an explanation.

Wild accusations of political favouritism were rejected last week by UL president designate Professor Don Barry, and founding head of the new school, Professor Paul Finucane, who pointed to the fact that the recommendation on the share out of the 240 places had been made by an international assessment team.

Professor Finucane, who has been working on the bid for the past three years, said 'They were very thorough and rigorous and questioned us closely about our ability to deliver'. It is believed that cost per graduate place was €25,000 in UL's bid, whereas the other four universities, who had combined their submission and set up the Irish Universities Medical Consortium (IUMC), had projected the cost per graduate at €32,000.

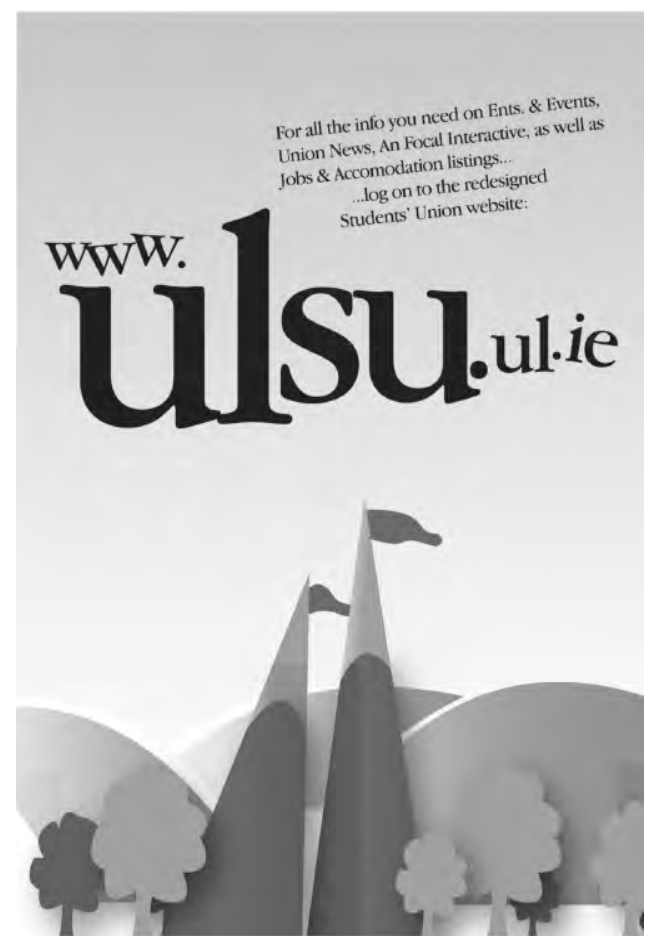
This joint submission, which also intended to claim all 240 graduate places, has been sent back to the four Universities with a request for a revised submission. In the breakdown of places these institutions are to get just 92 of the places on offer, but only after this revision has taken place. This is said to have particularly annoyed the Universities.

Also, as part of the submission, the Universities

had agreed to unprecedented levels of co-operation, something the Government had previously urged. One academic was quoted last week as saying 'I cannot understand how the Universities lost out. We had agreed to co-operate as never before and we have an outstanding track record in medicine. But we lost out to a college with no Irish partner

and no track record'.

However, it is believed that the UL medical school will have a far greater community orientation than existing medical schools. It was also pointed out, in the face of this outrage that in formulating its proposal UL had closely studied the best practices in medical schools throughout the world.



UL Clubs 'a credit to the University'

DEIRDRE O' SHAUGHNESSY

STABLES proprietor Michael Fagan has succeeded in his quest to raise €250,000 for the Lisnagry Respite Fund, in which he was assisted by members from UL's Kayaking and Outdoor Pursuits Clubs, whom he has called 'a credit to the University'. These clubs together sold over 5,000 Santa hats before Christmas. The hats also formed part of the ticket price for the Christmas Ball. Mr Fagan also thanked 'all the staff and students of the University' for the support they had shown in his fundraising efforts.

Mr Fagan's daughter, Elaine, who suffers from Edwards' Syndrome, a rare genetic condition, last week celebrated her 21st birthday by presenting the cheque to Sr. Sheila at the Lisnagry Centre. Elaine is one of the world's oldest survivor of Edwards' Syndrome. The cheque

was presented during a ceremony to mark the end of the Lisnagry Respite Fundraising Campaign. The fundraising took the form of a Singles Valentine's Ball, the sale of 'Love Munster' baseball caps, Santa Hats (sold by UL OPC and Kayak Clubs), a golf classic and a New Year's Ball. A special Mass was said in Lisnagry to celebrate the occasion, with a function afterwards in the Castletroy Park Hotel at which members of the Fagan family thanked the local community for the support given to them and to the charity over the past twenty-one years.

Speaking to An Focal, Mr Fagan added; 'I am glad to report that we hit our target, set a year ago, of €250,000, and my daughter Elaine, on her birthday, last Wednesday the 21st, presented Sr. Sile with a cheque for this amount, which will establish the very first adult respite house in the Mid West Region.'

Queerbash IV

KATIE HARRINGTON

FRIDAY, April 13th will see Out in UL, the University of Limerick's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender society host Queerbash IV. Queerbash is a fundraising and social night out for the LGBT community and the wider student population. It has been hugely popular in recent years, and this year promises to be bigger and better than ever. The Lounge Lizards from Cork will be playing in Riddler's Bar followed by the resident DJ bringing us into the early hours. Out in UL's Christmas night out 'Santa's Big Gay Christmas Snowball' was a huge success for the society with a packed venue and festive atmosphere; if that is anything to go by Riddler's is definitely the place to be on Friday night.

'Queerbash' operates on an Outreach basis and its whole premise, is to bring together all

communities, gay and straight, in a safe, controlled and fun environment. Out In UL, provides support for the LGBT students on the campus of UL, as well as an active awareness programme of LGBT issues, chief among which lies the concept of violence and discrimination towards the gay community, hence the name "Queerbash". The Society is also involved with other LGBT's across the country, many of whom will be in attendance at this event which is one of the longest run & most prominent student-run LGBT events in the country. Out In UL also runs 'Coming Out Workshops', which can be a huge help to students having problems dealing with their sexuality or how to approach telling others about it.

Tickets for Queerbash cost 8EUR and will be available on the door on the night. For more information please contact outinul@yahoo.ie or go to <http://heaven.skynet.ie>.

Latin Love in UL

KERRI MCGUINNESS

LORDS, Ladies, Lecturers, Presidents, Post-grads, Under-grads and anyone else I've left out... put the panama hats on, sharpen your salsa moves and have the Cuba Libres on ice as Latin American Week is only around the corner - week 10. Aside from the host of activities in store, every €raised will go directly to The Children's Hospital in Lima, Peru. Its sixth year in action, it promises to be bigger, bolder and better than ever. Last year €3,300 was raked in; this time round we hope to raise the stakes. Let's double it?!

Pounce on this invaluable opportunity to take your first leap into the wild world of Latin America - believe me, it is a world of its own! If you've already made the leap, then, no better chance to go a few steps further. Be warned that before long, you won't turn back. Furthermore if you are planning a trip or a co-op placement there then this is your break to get under its skin and discover where might appeal to you best! If you're not planning a trip, you soon will be.

Raising € is the aim of the game, Toyo and Nancy Serrano (the organisers) have put their efforts into including a wealth of activities, talks, films, sing-songs, plays, exhibiting and selling of craftwork - all nearly as diverse as the Latin American World itself! This year's theme is; "Thirsting for Justice"; some activities are geared towards promoting awareness on

defending the global water commons. On Tuesday April 19th, Marco Llanos, a Bolivian community activist is kindly coming to enlighten us on some alternatives to water privatization. Do yourself a favour by ditching the usual lunch arrangements and coming to C0071 (UL campus- Main Building) @ 13.00 for an insight into how little changes can make a big difference. The sauciest session of the week will be The Salsa Party - Thursday April 19th @ The Sports Bar @ 21.30. Filled with surprises, snacks and... funnily enough, salsa! Tickets (available from canteen) are selling like hot cakes @ the rock bottom price of €5. Grab yours, before it gets cold!

Everyday we'll have an info stand in the main canteen from 13.00 where handcrafts, jewellery and party tickets will be on sale. All of your "when's", "where's" and "what's" regarding the rest of the week's activities can be answered there, too. Attending and participating in as many of these as you dare will give you an insight into such a culturally rich and ever changing world, and a taste that will give you the appetite for more.

This 'week' relies on people like us to keep The Children's Hospital in Lima up to par and meet the needs of its patients. Let's keep up tradition and support this credible cause...

Donations can be made to: Bank of Ireland, UL Branch, Account N- 10445257

» 4 TO THE FLOOR «
HOUSE MUSIC EVERY TUESDAY AT THE GREENROOM

20TH: LAUNCH NIGHT- SHANE MARCH LINEHAN AND BARRY BROSNAN
27TH: ADAM DUNBAR- GLOW-MARCH STICKS FOR ALL

FREE BEFORE 10 30 5 EURO AFTER, INCLUDES ACCESS TO MAIN ROOM.

TRINITY ROOMS
 ROAR

What you've been talking about this week

- Next Year's Sabbats
- UL Medical School
- Student Apathy
- USI

See for yourself on www.ulsu.ie

Presentation of SOC Bursaries at University of Limerick

MR Sean Donlon, Chancellor, University of Limerick, presented Bursaries (valued at €1,500 each) to two First Year students on the Degree in History, Politics, Sociology and Social Studies to Louise Donovan from Kilkenny and Linda Gormally, from Ballinasloe. The awards - the SOC's - were created by Professor Pat O'Connor in 1997 in memory of her mother and to celebrate her own appointment as the first woman at full Professorial

level in the University of Limerick. Speaking at the presentation, Pat O'Connor said that ten years later, it was a pleasure to recognise that there were now four women at Professorial level in the University. However, the proportion of women at Professorial level nationally (at 10%) is not very different from what it was in the early 1970s, when the Marriage Bar was still in existence. The proportion of women in all universities has increased since the early 1990s - with women now mak-

ing up more than one third of the faculty. However, such a change could not be taken for granted; the most recent figures showing a decline in the proportion of women faculty. There is still a very great distance to go before we reach a situation where men and women were equally involved in the creation and dissemination of knowledge - a very important issue in view of girls' excellent performance at Leaving Certificate level.

Speaking at the presentation, Pat O'Connor, Professor

of Sociology and Social Policy, and Dean of the College of Humanities said that these young women, as students of the Social Sciences, were uniquely placed to understand the changing nature of our society. As a woman, and as a frequent beneficiary of Bursaries herself, Pat O'Connor said that she was delighted to applaud the academic excellence of these young women. Her own home discipline - Sociology - was flagged up in a title - a discipline that had given her a very good living

for over 30 years. The initials SOC were those of her late mother, a graduate of University College Cork at the time the Marriage Bar was introduced in the 1930s. Pat O'Connor said that she looked forward to a day when the loss to society, consequent on the perpetuation of a University system that still remained hierarchically and numerically male dominated, would be recognised.

Pat O'Connor said that it was encouraging that the UL Chancellor, Mr Sean Donlon

was making the presentation. It was inconceivable that the virtual absence of women at senior level as creators of knowledge could continue - all the more so because women now made up more than half of the undergraduates and postgraduates nationally. However, in the event that these trends did continue, she asked the two young recipients, to remember this day, thirty years on, and to try to find some way of encouraging a new generation of young women.

Greens Set Roots in UL

EOGHAN READE

WITH the help of some organic, fair trade food, a walking, talking tree and a pink dinosaur, the UL Greens made a humble start on their mission to become an official UL society. In just two hours they more than exceeded the membership quota for new societies, without the use of violence or blackmail. Enthusiasm and environmental spirit was in the air with their very own tree on hand to share the love with the eager new members. With an invite to participate in the Environmental Society's Annual Green Fair, the UL Greens already seem to be making their mark on University life.

The UL Greens will strive to encourage the simple principles that the impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive, the conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society, that all political, social and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level and that society should be guided by self-reliance and co-operation at all levels. In order to aid co-operation, the Greens societies and Young Greens nationally set aside time learn to work together, leaving bias by the camp-fire and bonding over common goals. They also believe that as caretakers of the Earth, they have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state,

with the current media attention on the issue of global warming, this duty is central to the future plans of the Greens. They insist that the need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests. The issue of third world suffering is dealt with in their firm belief that the poverty of two-thirds of the world's people suggests a need to redistribute the world's resources. The UL Greens stress their willingness to work with other groups in order to achieve these aims. Similar groups in Trinity College, NUI Galway, UCD and UCC to name but a few, have

in the past worked with organisations such as the World Aid Society and, if successful in their bid to be recognized as a society, the UL Greens will follow suit as well as promoting green issues in the University itself.

It will not all be as heavy hearted for the Greens, they also hope to run fun events such as, turning trash into fashion, movie screenings and even a camping trip or two.

Anyone interested in the UL Greens can email them at ulgreens@gmail.com or check out their bebo page at <http://ULGreens.bebo.com>



Greens set roots in UL


UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
 OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Postgraduate Research Opportunities in the College of Humanities

Applications are invited for masters and doctoral research degrees and associated funding opportunities in the following subject areas for the academic year 2007/08:

History

A scholarship - €12,700 per annum plus fee waiver - will be offered for full time PhD research in the field of either Modern Irish or Modern European History.

Languages and Cultural Studies

Two scholarships - €12,000 per annum - will be offered for PhD research in the following subject areas: Applied Language Studies; Cultural Studies; English Language Teaching; English Studies; French Studies; Léann na Gaeilge; German Studies (including Irish-German Studies); Spanish Studies; Linguistics; Utopian Studies.

Politics and Public Administration

A scholarship - €12,000 per annum plus fee waiver - will be offered for full time PhD research in one of the following areas: comparative politics, international relations, public administration, European politics, or political theory.

School of Law

Two scholarships will be offered for research to be conducted in the Centre for Criminal Justice and/or the International Commercial and Economic Law Group. For further information contact Eoin Quill, School of Law, eoin.quill@ul.ie

Sociology

A scholarship is available for either a PhD or MA by research on one of the following areas: print/broadcast media and new racism; family formation and dissolution; labour market dynamics and the welfare state; masculinities; migration and cultural diversity; gender, technology and the labour market; health systems performance for health and social gain; education and social exclusion; the sociology of health and the body; the sociology of risk; the sociology of culture; alternative lifestyles; historical/cultural geography of Ireland; geography and identity; spatial inequalities.

Women's Studies

Scholarships - €15,000 per annum plus fee waivers - will be offered for PhD research in Women's Studies which spans the disciplinary areas of sociology, literature, history, and cultural studies. Our particular research strengths are in the areas of: feminism(s), diaspora and multiculturalism; feminist literary studies; women and migration; women's history; gender and memory; mobile lives, globalisation and women; gender and popular culture.

Doctoral scholarships are normally tenable for a year, and renewable for a further two years subject to satisfactory progress.

An application form and further particulars can be obtained from:
 Niamh Lenahan, Foundation Building, College of Humanities, University of Limerick.
 Tel: +353-61-202945 Email: niamh.lenahan@ul.ie

Closing date for receipt of scholarship applications is Friday 18th May 2007.

www.ul.ie

Turnout up for elections this year

DANIEL SULLIVAN

ON campus last Thursday March 29th the 2007 ULSU sabbatical elections were held in conjunction with the referendum on the alcohol policy. The turnout was up on previous years with just under 2,200 votes approximately being cast for each of the positions. The following were the successful candidates deemed elected **President: St John O' Donnabháin Deputy President /Welfare: Judith Lynch Vice-Pres / Education: Alan Higgins Vice-Pres / CSO: Patrick McHugh Vice-Pres / PPO: Seamus Ryan.** The referendum on the Alcohol Policy was passed by 2073 to 111 or 94.92% to 5.08% in favour of withdrawing from the policy.

The resounding verdict for the proposal on the Alcohol Policy means the new executive can go forward into any exchanges with the university authorities with full confidence that they have the complete backing of the student

body for a complete withdrawal from the policy starting in November 2007.

The lead up to these sabbatical elections had promised a number of keen contests and while at least on the surface it may appear that like many things in life the real fun may have been in the anticipation, in two of the races the results were relatively close and the total number of votes in favour of all candidates was very high. This is to the credit of the candidates and their respective campaign teams. The PPO and Education positions in particular saw quite close contests which ran down to the wire.

The Presidency saw a contest between Eoin Kelly self described sole founder of the Laughing Soc. and outgoing president St John O' Donnabháin. St. John stood very much on his record, noting what he had done and what he had yet to do. Eoin Kelly started his campaign

with a Youtube ad that had to be removed, and even Eoin himself has admitted that he is still waiting for the punch line for his campaign. It remains a valuable contribution to the democratic system that there was a contest for this most important of SU positions.

The Results: Eoin Kelly 582 (27.37%) St John O' Donnabháin 1544 (72.63%)

The position of Welfare and deputy president was contested by Judith Lynch and Jim Heneghan. Both campaigns focused on a number of common issues around diversity, sexual health, accommodation, and bus service provision. The Lynch campaign, ably managed by Liam Quinn, appears have been successful in reaching the greater number of students and getting them to come out and vote. Jim Heneghan with more assistance and some more lead in time might have done his intentions and ideas

more justice.

The Results: Jim Heneghan 576 (27.73%) Judith Lynch 1501 (72.27%)

The Education position was contested by Eamon Gardiner and outgoing holder of the office Alan Higgins. Higgins focused primarily on his record over the past year and those remaining issues he felt it. Eamon sought to highlight a number of issues including treatment of those on Co-Op and Erasmus positions.

The Result: Alan Higgins 1142 (55.09%) to Eamon Gardiner 931 (44.91%)

For Publications and Publicity Officer we had Niamh Clowry and Seamus Ryan contesting. Both candidates appeared on the surface that Ryan was more the clubs and societies campaign but it was hard to be sure. Again their campaigns were slow to get out of the blocks

and the confined time period might that the efforts were very intense.

The Result: Niamh Clowry 892 (43.22%) Seamus Ryan 1172 (56.78%)

The position of CSO was won unopposed by Paddy McHugh. An early declaration of interest from William (Ger) Dineen for the positions didn't materialise.

The result was Patrick McHugh - UnOpposed

It should be noted by all concerned that such contests are more about degrees of success rather than simply winning or losing. Getting several hundred of your peers to come out and vote for you is an endorsement of their hard work that should not be lightly cast aside.

What St. John has promised you...

Getting more people involved in an active, relevant Students Union- then we'll have real power to improve students' lives.

Getting the University to fulfil the Alcohol Policy! Improving the craic on campus, helping clubs and socs and getting more events happening regularly and bigger ones!

Fighting Campbell's against their crazy price hikes: a student canteen has to have fair prices.



What Judith has promised you...

I firmly believe we should withdraw from the Alcohol Policy. Its paternalistic approach has destroyed the social atmosphere on campus. It completely ignores the real issues surrounding alcohol consumption. A responsible approach to alcohol should be encouraged and moving drinking off-campus is not the way to do this.

I'm passionate about equality, that all persons should be treated equally regardless of race, age, religion, sexual orientation. That is why I would be actively campaigning against discrimination in UL.

There is a real need to provide support for students in difficulty, whatever the reason may be, and I would really like to see the recently instituted Peer Support Network grow and develop and cater for more students in the future.



What Alan has promised you...

Quality: It's a bit of jargon, but if there was a focus on improving and assuring UL was great and EVERYONE was involved in that process I believe so much could be achieved. At present the University is not getting a full picture of what can be achieved.

Discipline Process: Fortunately it's something that most students don't have to deal with, but for those who do it is a big deal. Training of those involved in the process and the retention of Community Service is fundamental to ensure a fair system and that students are unfair treated having to face it.

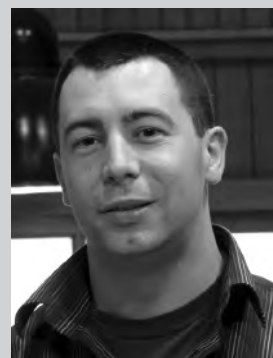
Student Engagement: I wish I was constantly bombarded with issues to deal with-unfortunately this isn't the case, and I hear them through rumours. If the Union had dedicated researchers to help officers get the information we could focus on what you want.



What Séamus has promised you...

Killing apathy. It's central to the job and it's central to my campaign!

Clubs and societies have always been the heart of UL's social life, I believe they need to be promoted like crazy. There are great events being run that people don't even know about! Further improving the standard of writing in UL - it's a place full of untapped writers that don't even know they can write. My mission is to find them and make sure they're with An Focal by the end of the year.



What Patrick has promised you...

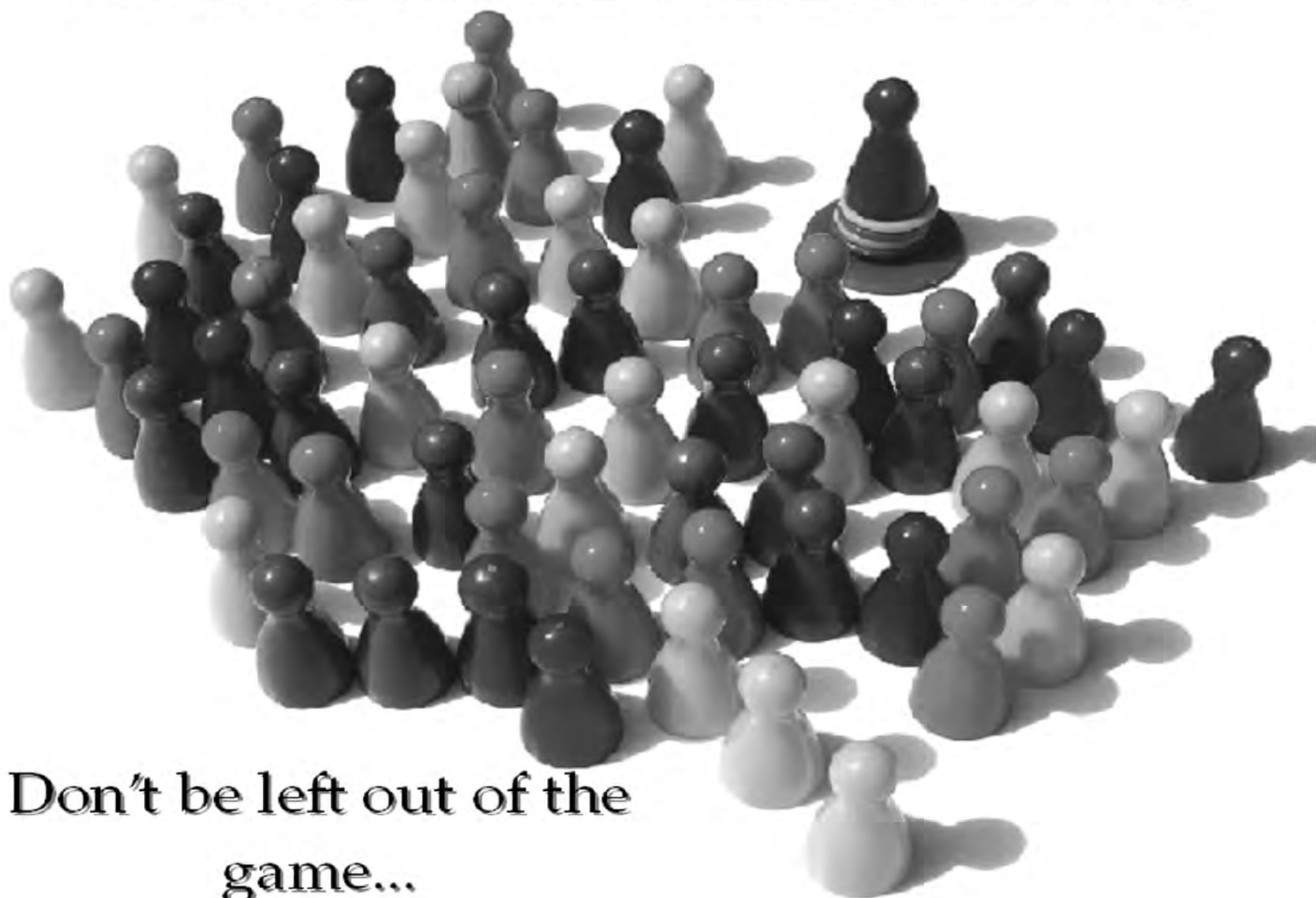
Diversity on campus with respect at its core

Student Empowerment

Student Safety



UNION GENERAL MEETING



Don't be left out of the
game...

Stables, Tuesday
Week 8, 6pm.

Food and refreshments provided.

AONTAS NA MAC LÉINN

—  —
ULSU
Ollscoil Luimnigh

STUDENT SPEAK

This week Thomas Dee asks ULians, where's the best grub on campus?'

Darragh Walshe, 1st yr Law & Euro, Niall Dreivers, 1st yr New Media & English - 'That's breakfast, lunch and dinner right there!'



Sinead Lucey 1st yr English & History, Gerarda Hawkes, 1st yr Law & Euro, Sarah Dromey, 1st yr Law & Euro, Stacey O Sullivan, 1st yr Sci Ed., Amy O Conner, 2nd yr Mental Health Nursing, - 'St John makes a great breakfast'



Tadgh Hennessey, 3rd yr Nursing - 'The paddocks is good, but a little steep'

Luke Casey, 1st yr Metalwork Teaching - 'The stables do a lovely curried tumour'



Maeve Mc Cormac, 2nd yr Law & Euro, - 'I wouldn't know, I'm on the Kate Moss diet; a fag and a laxative'

Niamh Seery, 1st yr Economics & Sociology - 'The new shop is good for an auld breakfast roll'



Katie Smith, 1st yr Applied Languages - 'The Stables is f**kin delish man!'



Kev McAulliffe & Brian Joyce, 2nd yr Woodwork Teaching - 'The stables are slack, wicky waa waa!'

Tomas McCarthy, New Media & English - 'The Paddocks is the best place. Probably'



St. Andrews Win €600 at ULDebU Inter Varsity

AOIFE FINNERTY

THE weekend of week 6 saw the UL Debating Union host its annual inter varsity (IV) competition. The competition boasted a prize fund of €1,500 and was co-hosted with DCU Debating Soc. It was the final IV on the Irish circuit and the only IV to boast such a large prize fund.

So what goes on at a debating IV? Basically, teams come from all over (as far as Oxford, the London School of Economics, Galway, Cork and Dublin) to argue with each other in the hope of gaining notoriety and possibly a heap of cash! The debates are always riveting. There's always lots of free food laid on by the host University and of course, free 'beverages'. Further, the host University generally arranges crash for all teams, venues for the debates and venues for after-parties. Another thing about debating IVs is the formality. Committee members are expected to dress in formal attire. The convenor and auditor are generally the most prominent members. Visiting teams also do their best to look snazzy for the event too.

Months of planning went into the competition. Sponsorship, invitations, venues, food, 'beverages' and crash had to be organised for the event to be a true success. The main sponsors included Ulster Bank and Arthur Cox. Spar, the Stables, the Sports Bar and O' Mahony's also had a hand in the weekend. With the aid of these sponsors, the IV was an unprecedented success. As a young society, ULDebU did a fantastic job organising a seamless IV.

I'll try not to name-drop, but UL hosted some rather big debating names at the IV. All IVs must have an external Chair Adjudicator. Diarmuid Early presided as Chair Adjudicator with Sarah Carew, (UL, Law and European Studies graduate of last year, and ex-auditor of ULDebU) as the Deputy Chair Adjudicator. So what's their job? Essentially, they decide the motions for the IV and oversee the 'tab' -

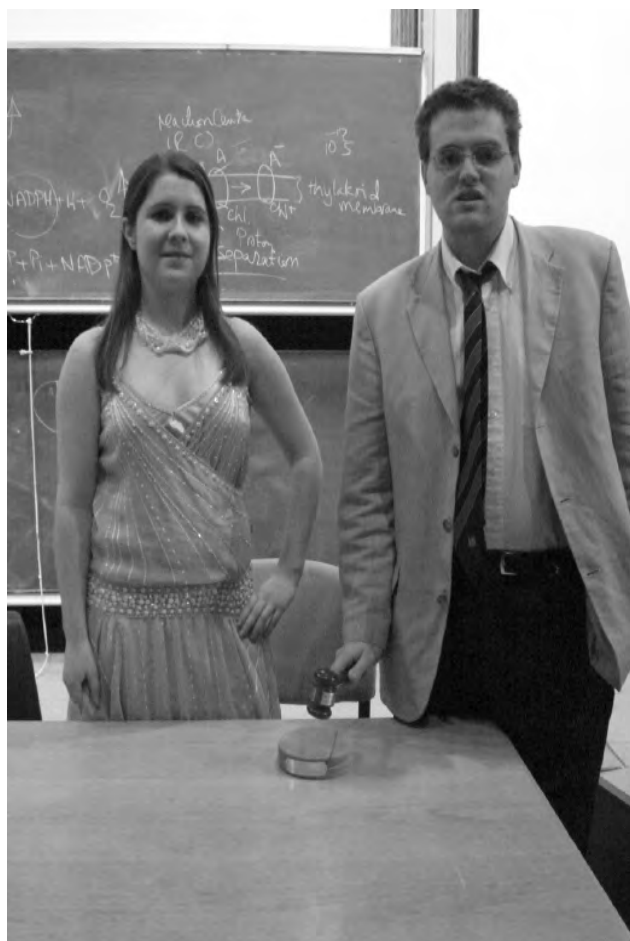
the arrangement of teams and judges into high or low standard rooms, depending on their ability. So where did it all take place? Debates were held in the Jonathan Swift, the C1 corridor, the Jean Monnet and the ULSU. Of course, the Jean Monnet was reserved for the final.

The final boasted a highly controversial motion - a debate around whether or not the state would offer assistance to homosexuals wishing to be cured. Motions such as these are designed to spark shock and are not meant to be offensive. They lead to some extremely riveting argument and with some of the best speakers this side of Europe, the final debate was fantastic! The winning team from St. Andrews walked away with the top prize of €600. The best speaker on the tab, a UCC debater, won €200. Other awards were given for best novice speaker etc...

As I've mentioned - it's not all about debates. The socials are also a high point.

The Stables and the Sports Bar rose to the challenge and delivered a fantastic night for all. By a stroke of luck, the UL Trad Soc happened to be playing on the Friday. They're really excellent! Go see them! Also, when the debaters aren't debating, home-made videos are generally shown by the host Universities. Usually a good laugh, they depict the host committee members getting up to some ridiculous nonsense.

With such a lot of work put in by all, we could all see the weekend taking shape as possibly one of the best IVs on the Irish circuit this year. Though UL's is always a smaller IV than the likes of UCC's and NUIG's, next year will probably bring more teams than ever purely on this IV's success. DebU is steadily raising its head as a prominent society on the Irish debating front and with such a dedicated, talented committee, we can only see massive progress for the society in the future.



Emma Kerins, DebU Convenor and Greg Bowler, DCU Debating Convenor

UL Ógra presents energy policy to Bertie

DEREK DALY

AT an environment workshop on Friday evening of the Fianna Fáil Ard-Fheis; members of the Con Colbert Cumann, nominee for best new/improved society, presented An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD with a policy paper on sustainable energy sources for the future. The policy was formulated during the national policy workshop held at UL on March 10th. An Taoiseach was suitably impressed with the document and commended the initiative and hard work that went into formulating the ideas and compiling the policy document with those ideas in mind. Dick Roche TD, Minister for Environment and Local Government took an interest also and requested that a copy of the policy be emailed to him. Dr. JJ Leahy of the Environmental Science department at UL and other experts in the environmental field addressed this special Ógra environment workshop which gave plenty of food for thought.

It has been hinted that the General Election will be held

on a Thursday to combat the falling turnout experienced since Friday voting was introduced in 1997. If this turns out to be the case; the Con Colbert Cumann would urge students to travel home instead of attending lectures. You can attend lectures any given week; a general election is not as frequent as the series of lectures we attend over the course of the academic year, and it is certainly important that you have your voice heard.

The policies announced by An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern at the party's Ard-Fheis show how committed Fianna Fáil is to serving the people of this country. Over the course of the next Dáil; Fianna Fáil in government; will if elected: deliver 100% more hospital consultants; 2000 extra Gardaí to patrol the streets ensuring among other things, that attacks on students returning from nightclubs and youth cafés are avoided and that drink drivers across the country are put off the road where they belong. Speaking of roads; networks across the country will be completed and

the Western Rail Corridor from Ennis to Claremorris will re-open during the next 5 years as part of Fianna Fáil's ambitious Transport21 plan.

We can stand by our record and with over 50% of the Leaving Cert cohort now entering 3rd level, thanks to 10,000 new teachers in the system during Fianna Fáil's term of office providing them with the education up to that point. Add to that the 45,000 new 3rd level places for you, your friends and neighbours, and the huge increases in grant aid for those who need it most.

You; and we in Fianna Fáil dream the same dream, we want the same thing. We want a country that will provide not just for us, but also for future generations. Fianna Fáil; having made Ireland the most successful nation in Europe, shares your ambition to make Ireland the most successful nation on the planet. The only thing that you need to do is give us that chance. Together we can lead Ireland forward.

Niamh O'Donovan, Eamon Quinlan and Derek Daly of UL's Con Colbert Cumann at the Environment Seminar with an Taoiseach Bertie Ahern.



Exciting Times in chess

UNA MULVEY

THE U.L. Chess Club had a flying start to the spring semester, sending a record number of players to the Bunratty Chess festival. The atmosphere was fantastic with an amazing diversity of talent on display. Our own Una Mulvey was credited with a merit award for outstanding play in her division. Unfortunately she did not get to win out her level, with defeat snatched from the jaws of victory. It was a good weekend in terms of the team in general, where some of our seasoned players moved up divisions. While in the minors section, we settled a number of novices into their first competitive tournament.

The Irish chess intervarsity was held in Belfast this year. The annual event carried a more prominent note than usual, as we saw the creation and ratification of Irish University Chess Association. The U.L. Chess club played a significant note in its inauguration. We would like to congratulate our own President Teresa O'Rourke

who was voted in a treasurer also our founder and former president, Tom Cooper who graciously took up position as Public Relations Officer. As well, news of the 2008 World University Chess Championships was released. The venue will be a town in Siberia, called Novokuznetsk. Discussion and debate followed this announcement. Previous attempts to enter the competition by the manager of the Irish University team have faced crippling difficulty. This has been due to red tape surrounding the recognition [or lack of] of chess in Ireland by our own government and sporting bodies. The U.L. Chess Club has two members eligible for team selection.

U.L. has been represented in every intervarsity since its commencement 10 years ago. We were able to boast the highest number of female players at the event for the last three years. The victors at this year's intervarsity were Queens, followed closely by Trinity. The final was considered a cracker and the highlight had to be the tough match between former French International Fanny Gaudron

representing Trinity and John Masterson from Queens. The game ended in a fantastic showing of blitz chess, the ultimate nail biter was when both flags of the game timer fell at the same moment. As a result draw was declared.

The U.L. chess club is not just all about competitions and

tournaments. We also have a weekly chess meeting in EM010, from 19.00 to 21.00 every Thursday. There you can play swap chess [four or more players] suicide chess, blitz chess, add spark to the game with Nightmare chess and for excitementChess!



Skynet Events: Wavehunt, Guitar Hero Competition & Talks

Week 6: On Wednesday Skynet hosted a game around campus called Wavehunt (UL). It consisted of a Carrier carrying a Wireless Access Point and players tracking and identifying the target with Laptops, PDAs or Nintendo DS's. The games lasted for 30

minutes and were held in the Library, Foundation Building and Main Building. Once Players had identified the Carrier they had to return to base and their time was noted. The winners' times were taken over the three rounds with the fastest time winning.

The winners, in order, were Paul O'Flaherty, Brendan Sheehy and Matthew O'Flynn.



<http://game.skynet.ie/>

What have you done in the past 6 weeks?



Rockclimbing, Caving, Hillwalking and Mountaineering?

5 Day Trips, 1 weekend trip and 1 Mystery weekend?

Visited Belfast, Fermanagh, Clare and Kerry?

NO? What are you waiting for?

The Outdoor Pursuits Club is always going somewhere and doing something!

Come along! 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Years, Postgrads and their grannies welcome!

Climbing Wall, old sports building: 7 to 10PM Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Email opc@csn.ul.ie

Visit <http://www.skynet.ie/~opc/>

IT COULD BE U!!



UL Society of St Vincent de Paul

invites you to attend

The Haiti Bug Exhibition

Students' Union rm.2

all day Wednesday, April 4th.

Caving Craic in Fermanagh!

MANDY SMITH

WOW what a weekend! Why you might ask? First answer these questions. Ever abseiled off a rock into a dark cave unknown to you? How about even being tied up in ropes and a harness and having people tell you "It's okay. You're safe." If this has never happened to you then you obviously have never been caving before!

This semester I had the opportunity to travel to Co. Fermanagh, with the Outdoor Pursuits Club for a weekend of caving and it's been one of my best experiences during my time here in UL. When I thought of caving I didn't know what to expect at first. I knew we would be underground and that we would have some caving gear on, but I didn't know the half of it!

The group met up at the Stables Arch with our mountain of gear, piled in the back of a mini-bus and spent 5 fun-filled hours on the 'highway' to Fermanagh. I was told it was going to be cold and damp in the caves and to

pack as many changes of clothes as I could for layering and spares to have once we were out of the cave. I had on four tops and two pairs of pants, while others had the same if not even more on than that. On top of the layering we had an over suit to complete the outfit. Once the clothes were on we had to put on harnesses and other different types of safety equipment that were foreign to me on that day, (its all in the accessories don't you know!) but I knew how to use all these pieces really well once the weekend was over.

We explored the Marble Arch Cave on Saturday afternoon. This was not your typical cave. It has been a show cave since the 1980's, but we were not tourist on this day. We were explorers! We were lucky enough to explore the cave the way the original founders of the cave did, abseiling down a tight opening. We crawled on our hands and knees though parts of the cave and at other times we admired the magnificent calcium formations that the caverns had to offer. There were even parts of the cave

where the water was so still, you had no idea you were even looking at water. There were many times I was really looking at a reflection of the ceiling when I thought it was the ground.

On Sunday I was able to use Single Rope Technique (SRT) to enter the mouth of Arch Cave that was about a 40ft pitch. I was terrified at first because I am not a fan of heights, but as soon as I looked around me as I was going down my whole attitude changed. The sights around me were absolutely beautiful. On one side I saw rocks piled everywhere with water flowing all around and on the other I saw the greenery of the forest outside the cave. It is so hard to describe everything I saw while caving because it is something you have to experience for yourself to truly appreciate. I cannot wait to go caving again because there is so much more I would like to learn. Plus it is a great way to see Ireland in all its glory. Visit the OPC website for more information and view pictures, www.skynet.ie/~opc/caving

Sailing Intervarsities

HOLLY JOHNSON & THOMAS NAUGHTON

SA I L I N G Intervarsities.....are to the folks of the sailing world like Christmas, birthdays and rag week coming together! Four days of intense team racing (most importantly) followed by equally as much good clean fun with a dash of partying and a hint of absolute insanity thrown in. It's an opportunity to go head to head with all the other college sailing clubs in the country which is great experience and guaranteed competition. At the same time it's a good chance to let your hair down and have a laugh. All work and no play make U.L. a boring team!

On Thursday morning, the teams gathered at Western Yacht Club, Kilrush to rig the boats and get onto the water. 24 teams in total were present including a team from Scotland! Once all the usual greetings had been made, the boats were launched and the racing got underway. It was a good day for team racing with a steady breeze blowing but it wasn't too strong as to disrupt communication between team members.

UL1 won four races out of five, losing only to UCC1 in

the round of the day. UL2 unfortunately didn't do quite as well. They sailed six races, losing to UCC3, UCD2 and WIT.

Following the shock of a U.L. member being kidnapped by an obviously jealous rival team, Thursday night saw the invasion of Kilkee Bay Hotel by G.I. Joes and Barbie Hoes, fully camouflaged, face painted and armed for battle. The Barbies put up a fight in a myriad of pinkness, pigtails and were equally as made-up. The weather Friday morning turned out much lighter than the day before. Fortunately these conditions favoured the UL teams after having trained for a weekend in Schull, Co. Cork, in very similar conditions.

UL2 went on to win five races out of six, losing only to UCD2 and ending up second in their group when the day was out. UL1 lost two races that day to UCC1 and CIT which left them ranking second overall at the end of the day.

The winds picked up on Saturday meaning more extreme conditions to sail in. The teams were divided into their appropriate fleets based on their results from the previous two days and racing started with the quarter finals.

UL2 lost to UCD2 in the semi-finals after beating DIT in the quarters which knocked them out of the racing. UL1 did much better. They made it into the final after beating UCC2 in the quarters and CIT in the semis. The final of the competition took place between Trinity1 and UL1. It was a best of five final. Trinity managed to win the first two races. UL then put up a fantastic fight in the third race and managed to beat them. Unfortunately, after a very exciting race, Trinity came out on top in the fourth race to steal the gold medal from UL. Everyone scrubbed up on Saturday night for the finale of the event, the Masquerade Ball. Following a ravishing meal, riveting awards ceremony and rampant stint on the dance floor most sailors were ready for bed. The fantastic Sinead Doyle, secretary of ULSC scooped up the coveted award of IUSA Woman of the Year. A force to be reckoned with is Sinead, and she definitely deserved this hard earned title.

The intervarsities highlighted UL's strength and dedication as a team who work together because of their passion for the sport. There is no I in U.L.!

Nautical antics - firefiles before race start. Photo: Conor Byrne



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THE sabbatical elections are done and dusted for another year. And given the tremendous lack of excitement on campus can I say thank whatever God you pray to when you find a weeping sore in a tender place. At this point we've only got the general election to look forward to. And big Bert's promising us each €10,000 for one of our votes or something along those lines. That seemed to be the gist of things; I really don't follow these matters in too much detail. Anyway onwards friends, these things don't get read by themselves.

Class Reps Council (CRC)

The wording for the Alcohol Policy referendum was approved rather tamely, there were one or two voices opposed but most people on the day reckoned the college has done the dirty on us, and we weren't in a forgiving mood. And boy does it seem like the folks in the CRC know the mood of their classes as the referendum was passed a week later with a whopping 95% in favour of the adopted wording. Those are the kind of numbers that ould Saddam would have been proud of. Seriously, Martin Cullen even if we had gone for E-Voting couldn't have pulled off those sorts of numbers off. While due credit has to go to the entire exec, the bulk of it has go to Alannah. Paddy McHugh - Where are you (see the Scooby Doo thing I did there, isn't it lame) for all your talk about filling her shoes and how they cut your insteps. Fact - she is going to be a hard act to follow.

CRC also passed a motion (not that kind you dirty minded filth mongers) and we're all one big anti fascist collective now. It is worth noting that the organisation this is aimed at is, what we in back in the day termed, racist in tone than fascist. Fascism has its appealing side, you get to wear a lot of unnecessarily tight leather, and there is a lot of satisfying ordering people about, and you got to have loads and loads of big parades with fires and loud speeches. OK, perhaps it isn't all that appealing but the tight leather is always worth keeping in mind. Apparently, this motion all stemmed from folks purporting to want to save Ireland (and this was before Stan was playing the poor boy on the right wing before moving him inside) coming on campus handing out materials of a less than savoury nature. When I say savoury I don't mean it tasted bad, though even with some butter and parsley it doesn't make for a good omelette. I don't know about you but I've never found the fact that I'm pasty faced so and so who needs to avoid the sun whenever it makes an appearance much cause to feel superior to anyone. Other than that CRC gatherings have all become quite a routine really. We're winding down. The air is coming out of the bean bag, people are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

Sabbatical Elections

They fight and bite, and bite and fight. It's the Chiefy and Lynchy show! The elections started slow, stopped for day and didn't get much faster. It was lacklustre, and beyond the lustre lackatude there wasn't much glamour either. Lads, you've got 4 days to campaign, taking the Monday off because you had an exciting weekend is no way to go about doing this sort of thing.

Campaigns - Seriously, I know they meant well but God help us the campaigns were dull enough. I'm surprised anyone voted at all, you know maybe Alannah didn't get that wrist injury from massage classes. If it weren't for the referendum (note to SU, have a referendum every year even it isn't some big issue like St. John's hair real or out of a bottle?)

We had the usual Power Ranger line up of colour with Niamh as the Yellow ranger, Seamus as the Green ranger, Judith as the Pink ranger...hang on ...word just in it was Purple with a hint of Silver and Alan as another Yellow ranger and Eamon and Jim were both in monochrome. One aspect that struck me is that year in year out many of the issues raised and promises made are the same. Now it has to occur to someone at some stage that the reason they are not solved is that they may be beyond the power of the any of the offices of the



the throat - thethroat@gmail.com.
Telling the truth so you can go on lying to yourself.

exec. For example, people frequently suggest that we can solve delays in Student Services by getting some Co-Op students in there. Yet year after year it doesn't happen because no college is going be so nuts as to allow students access to confidential information about other students. I must admit to a slight weakness for one member of a particular campaign team but true to my vow of impartiality I have done them no favours in my coverage.

Hustings - Apart from Judith Lynch suggesting that when it comes to sexual health we are all pretty active on campus and Jim have a little too much detail when it came to the clinic out at the regional, it was devoid of real innuendo material. Eoin Kelly couldn't make up his mind if the joke is on him or on us or even if there was a joke. In my own personal view, I've been funnier when woken at 6am with a hangover by a cold caller from an insurance company. The joke wasn't funny, the timing was all wrong and it was told badly. And for the chair's future considerations ladies at UL are more than able

to ask questions, such as who are you again and what cheap tat shop did you buy that in? Alan told us about his record (who knew he was interested in music?) and campaigned with the naked ambition (or was that a man's rear on his posters?) of someone who might even run again for something else later in life! Niamh was nervous, and Seamus sang about the good ole days. Jim and Eamonn tried, oh how they tried. And oddly St. John was an improvement on last year.

I ask myself, and you come to think of it since you have nothing to do than read this, where was the colour, the glitz, the razzamatazz (I spelt that word in one go without using a spell checker, I'm not sure how and it worries me a little). It was a soundless campaign; no music came to be really associated with any one candidate. In future, if there are only two candidates for a position, the union should randomly select 3 other students who get €50, a photocopying card and some magic markers and told to get at least 200 each or they're expelled. That will get them going.

Results

It could be an omen but the reign of the new exec began by a descent into darkness as the bulbs right over the count table failed. There were no huge surprises bar the turnout being as high as it was. Who know so many cared about being

forced into getting sloshed off campus. The contests for PPO and Education were close enough as these things go. The campaigns appeared to be very underground with the traditional high profile canteen focus being abandoned for a wider ranging door to door effort. While the victory of Lynch over Heneghan was widely anticipated, at least it didn't decay into a precession. The margin of victory for Mr. Higgins was strangely reminiscent of last year. And evidently most people didn't get the joke that Eoin Kelly was trying to tell but that apparently is not unusual.

One minor item but I suspect that even if the Alcohol Policy hadn't been quorate that the ULSU exec could have just have chosen to withdraw from the Long Boring Good Friday Treaty since it wasn't a referendum that approved the policy to begin with. Perhaps, what we need is a President who does not need to consult the student body to know what it is thinking. You know the sort. They should be able to look into their hearts and know that cutting open their chest with a rusty carving knife is a really, really bad idea.

Cheap Food Campaign

The great lunchtime of inaction was called for the week before last and dozens, nay, hundreds of real people (staff) and students turned up. Well they were going to anyway as it was in the canteen. Last week it escalated to a full day of action. And yet more quite different people were in attendance. Oddly many of them

were looking for votes for something. Give it a month and we might just boycott the whole damn place. Like holding the UGM in a place that people frequent, holding a protest in a place that was always going to get a crowd. Just whether or not Campbells take any notice is the problem. As the protest was held in the canteen the sensible action was for people to eat their own lunches. The campaign is all

about ensuring we get cheap food at expensive prices. Right?

In breaking news we've got the head of Campbells Catering no less coming all the way to UL to meet with the ULSU and the staff union to tell them to shove the protest up their . We reckon he is here anyway, and has just scheduled the guys in for 5 minute roasting while he has his fondue. I bet you he brings his own packed lunch when travelling to outposts of his empire like this place.

We have offers on the forum for organising fully fledged food fights from some quarters but I have my doubts about their real willingness to get sticky toffee pudding in their hair. I'd be interested in seeing that though only if they were up for wearing the appropriate attire. Leather dungarees and muck there's nothing like it.



CSO Alannah Turner fell asleep, the count went on for so long



Campaigns in the canteen were quiet.
Photo Paudie Scanlon

El Presidente

Food Prices Rip-off Campaign

WE'VE been working hard behind the scenes since Campbell's announced they're pushing up their prices - this Campaign will run and run. We've made a great partnership with the trade union in the college, AMICUS, and they're totally with us. We had a very successful 'Eat-In' protest last week, where people brought their own roll or sandwich with them and ate it in the Main Restaurant. Loads of people dotted around the place, and much more empty spaces than usual - lots of people just decided to do their own boycott! The staff dining area was also almost completely vacant too.

This is only the start of this Campaign - it's going to get bigger and bigger. Next week we'll be doing a full day protest, and giving out free tea and coffee to people in the public space.

Campbell's head office in Dublin have come crawling looking for a meeting - they know that if the campaign continues, that it will seriously affect them here on campus. What we want is fair prices for students and staff, a canteen which provides reasonable food at a reasonable price - which is what we had until recently. Just see attached table for what our friends in other colleges have to play - this is just ridiculous!!!

And things will keep growing until Campbell's stop this unfair, unjustified price hike - JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!!!

**St. John Ó Donnabháin,
UL Students Union President**



Letters to the editor

An Focal, UL Students' Union, UL, Castletroy, Limerick.
Phone 061 202363, Fax 061 213476, Email deirdre.oshaughnessy@ul.ie

*An Focal will endeavour to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible.
All parties have a right of reply to letters printed herein.*

Madam,

I wish to express my distaste at the vindictive and gloating tone adopted by Derek Daly in his recent article in your paper, while also pointing out several flaws in his argument that Fianna Fail deserve another five years in power.

1) Enda Kenny may not have Bertie's charisma, but he is a man of enormous wit and great personality, honest and scrupulous to boot, with over 30 years of Dail experience behind him. He has never come under investigation by any tribunal, nor have members of his own party termed him as cunning, devious and pragmatic, as Charles Haughey once described Ahern. As an Irishman who appreciates diligence and good diplomacy, I would be proud to have Enda Kenny represent this country as Taoiseach.

2) As pointed out in our submission, Fine Gael/Labour coalitions have a history of cutting taxes. Fianna Fail have a history of raising them. Enough said.

3) If I may be so bold as to ask the question; does Bertie Ahern actually give a damn about the health service? We have TB, MRSA, the winter vomiting bug and numerous other nefarious diseases running rife in our hospitals, and it is an absolute disgrace that Ahern and Harney are doing as little as they possibly can to counter-act this crisis. Dr Liam Twomey of Fine Gael has outlined our health policies; check www.finegael.com to read

these.

4) Equitable? Oh yes, the people of Ireland are treated equally by the current government, maybe in Mr Daly's fantasy world they are. I'd love an explanation from Fianna Fail for the rising costs of living over the last ten years that are crippling young couples who try to maintain work, home and family. An analysis of the new-found wealth of many of the higher figures in Irish society would also be appreciated, not to mention a detailed rationale for the blatantly obvious two-tier health system that we have in Ireland.

5) Fine Gael, Labour and the Greens are incompatible according to Mr Daly. We share the same fundamental goals: cut taxes, create jobs, improve the health service, reform the transport, legal and education systems and end wasteful government spending. Let each party worry about their own campaigns; we in Fine Gael have an agreement with Labour, one that they will honour after the election. Don't dream of a Fianna Fail/Labour coalition Derek, all current opinion polls assert that it's not in the pipeline and Labour have learned from their mistake in allying themselves with your party in 1992.

This is a response; not an attack
You bash us, we bash back

Sincerely
John Condren
Chairman
UL Young Fine Gael

Madam,

In a letter to the editor, it was brought up in the last issue of An Focal that cervical smears are not available free of charge to those on the GMS. However, it should be noted that some GP's do in fact provide the smear and sample processing in laboratories absolutely free of charge, my own GP included. There is no pilot scheme where I come from, therefore the Irish Government must in some part be covering the cost. I suggest patients check with their GP before assuming otherwise.

Yours etc

(Name and address withheld)

On behalf of the Management of the Stables Club, we would like to sincerely compliment the members of the Club for a highly successful RAG week in the Club this year.

This was our 20th year managing the event and without doubt this year's atmosphere, behaviour and general goodwill was the best we have seen over the years.

We wish to also thank the Students' Union, Keith Pigott and Ber Angley for their help and assistance in running a professional and well organised week of events.

It is unfortunate that some of the behaviour off-campus in the community did not mirror the behaviour and goodwill of our members that we witnessed in the Club. We sincerely hope that lessons will be learnt that will eliminate this type of conduct in the future.

Yours, etc
Management of the Stables Club

What do Postgrads think about the PSA?



Maja Niebrzegowska

THE answer is NOTHING or rather I DON'T KNOW. Unfortunately, none of the Postgraduate students are interested in the future of the PSA as I have received only two responses to the article in An Focal. Both of them from former PSA Presidents opposed the idea of the reaffiliation.

Dear Postgrads,

Last Friday, Alan, SU Education Officer and myself, organized a meeting for You to discuss our vision of the PSA and give You a chance to have a say. We were disappointed that only two people came. Again only two and two more that emailed me earlier that week. Thank you to those who made an effort and emailed me and those two that came to the meeting.

It is really sad to see a complete lack of interest. I do realize that there are many mature postgrads who don't live here therefore they cannot fully participate in campus life. However, there are so many postgrads coming to the PSA Centre for their lunch. There also those who bought tickets to the Ball. I wish I could see them getting involved in the PSA activities. There is so much that we can do together. You may not realize how important you are and how valid your opinion is. As a taught postgrad I didn't know much about research postgrads issues but I learned a lot throughout the year. However, I was disappointed that research postgrads didn't take opportunity to make a difference and very few participated in the focus groups. I was very

interested in your problems and needed to get that information from you. I appreciate the input of those that found time and participated in the focus group. I was hoping to have them on more regular basis; however it will not be possible due to lack of interest. I know that some of you have tried to address different issues but felt disappointed with no or little reaction from the University.

I am not sure how many of you know that the PSA President is your representative on various committees within the UL. At least that's what the PSA Constitution says. However, at the moment the PSA President has many roles such as the President, the Welfare Officer, the Education Officer, the Accountant and the Publicity Officer. As mentioned above the President is responsible for the finances, and as a sole employee of the Association, has the responsibility of declaring and paying all taxes of the PSA, as well as book keeping and preparing accounts for the Auditors. These and other administrative tasks including day-to-day running of the PSA are extremely time consuming and detract the President's focus away from the main and the most important job which is the representation of the Postgrad

issues. The reaffiliation will would reduce the administrative workload like accounting thus would bring transparency to PSA financial matters through scrutiny by others. I would be inclined to say that at the moment the PSA President is perceived as the Entertainer and someone who takes care of tea and coffee in the common room. There are so many more important problems that should be taken care of like duty of care - supervision, improving working conditions or tutorials - paid or not-paid.

The reaffiliation would give the PSA President a chance to make a real change. However, to do all that the President needs your support. Take this opportunity to voice your opinion, make yourself heard. Come and bring your friends to the Extra-ordinary General Meeting this week. It is up to you to decide what the responsibilities of the PSA President will be.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the General Meeting.

*Maja
Your President*

The size zero debate

PAULA O' SULLIVAN

IN a nation of people who are allegedly gaining one pound per decade, the adoration of super-skinny celebrities and peers is abundant. These 'size zero' models are increasingly finding their way into our magazines, our screens and our minds. It is this precisely that causes problems with those already emotionally fragile. Our society has seen a shift in the concept of beauty, and while we discuss how awful it would be to have your ribs showing, the majority of well photographed celebrities do. This must be, therefore, implanting a subconscious message into the minds of the vulnerable. The reality of this is that we are not even sure why some of these 'celebrities' are famous in the first place. Is it for being 'size zero'?

As I surf through web sites like 'Pro Ana' and 'Pro Mia' I am horrified to see that there are over 55 others accessing the site at the same time. These sites, standing for pro-anorexia and pro-bulimia respectively demand that they do not promote eating disorders. What is evident from the 'guest book' entrys is that there seems to be a support network between suffers to one another, but perhaps surrounding yourself with negative, like minded people if in this situation is not productive at all. It may be therefore to say that these sites and similar sites are may thus be adding to the issue.

It is worth noting that in this country, there are only three public beds available to those needing hospital admissions for eating disorders, and these are in Dublin. In fact, there are no beds available outside Dublin for

this treatment, including Northern Ireland, and with an estimated 200,000 suffering in this county, it is possible that people are dying needlessly.

The primary and secondary school curriculums do not include any class or any time dedicated to healthy living or nutrition, which could be beneficial to this growing problem. Implanting good eating habits and actual scientific knowledge in the minds of children, pre teens and teens alike could have major advantages in the fight against eating disorders. Deteriorating mental health and increased vulnerability and self consciousness undeniably contribute also, and are major issues that need to be address with today's pre teens and teenagers.

Are eating disorders something our growing and changing society will have to become more familiar with in coming years? Perhaps society needs to take a long hard look at itself and decide what action to take and refuse to simply lie dormant on the issue. These 'size zero' waists and hips and are on every magazine stand and entertainment programme could do us all a favour keep their super skinny selves away from the camera.

For further information on eating disorders and how to treat them, please contact the UL counselling service, Dr. Declan Aherne, at room CM070. The counselling service is always confidential and always free of charge.

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No Phone for a Week!

S. B. REEVES DOES WITHOUT AN ESSENTIAL OF MODERN LIFE

I'M sure you remember the hype that surrounded a study announced last October which claimed that men who frequently use mobile phones face an increased risk of infertility. The controversy that always seems to haunt mobile phone studies is an indication of how much concern there is amongst the general public. In the US in 2002 a register was set up whereby the public could lodge details of ill-health effects they experienced through exposure to electromagnetic radiation. Since 2002 the register had received over 30,000 reports. Several research reports such as the UK Stewart report have maintained that children should not use mobile phones yet in Ireland we can see that this is for the most part being ignored.

Most of us have probably read these statistics and felt that it would be better to limit mobile phone use, but feel that we can't really survive without it. So I made the decision not to use my phone for a whole week. I would consider myself a moderate phone user, yet still the week was by no means easy!

Day 1: Monday

I left my phone at home so that temptation was well out

of reach. I previously agreed with my friend to meet at 8:45. There was no sign of her, then or when I checked again. Later I learnt that she had spent time looking for me too and that "I did try to ring you but..." Later I told the rest of my friends of my decision. I'll never forget the looks of complete incredulity on their faces!

More difficulties: my lecture notes are now dated incorrectly as I couldn't check the date on my phone. I also couldn't put reminders on my phone.

Day 2: Tuesday

Today was much easier, though I didn't see as much of my friends as we couldn't ring or text to meet up. A funny episode happened tonight. My boyfriend and I had agreed that he would ring me at home at 8:00pm. Come 8:00, and there was no call. I sat by the phone for twenty minutes wondering had he forgotten, feeling hurt and upset when finally at 8:25pm the phone rang.

"What took you so long?" I demanded.

"What do you mean?" he replied. "I've been waiting for you to ring! You said you would ring."

"What a waste of time!" I returned. "Why didn't you text?"

"Well, I would have if I could have..."

I was suitably abashed.

Day 3: Wednesday

I planned to go to the cinema tonight, so mum insisted that I take my phone with me in case of emergency. However I kept the phone off - strictly not for use. Alas for good intentions; an emergency did arise. I forgot that RAG week tickets went on sale today! I eventually had to take out my phone to ring my friends and ask them to get the tickets for me as they were already inside the building. Once again I was informed that "they had tried to ring me but..."

I was tempted after this to say that I had failed and give up. But remembering the jeers of "You'll never survive" I was determined to continue. Yet it was still with some reluctance that I turned my phone off again.

Day 4: Thursday

My friends and I arranged once more to meet at 1:30. Needless to say, I waited: I came back 10 minutes later; I came back again 15 minutes later, and gave up. Almost half an hour later in the library one of the lads came up to me. They had missed me narrowly and had split up to search for me, asking everyone they knew had they seen me! I was so touched!

Day 5: Friday

Astonishingly I feel almost a sense of freedom! Freedom from worrying about it being lost or stolen, grimacing when

it goes off when you're busy, or worrying about your low credit.

I decided to ring my boyfriend on a payphone. I was surprised how many there were on campus presuming we all have mobile phones. It cost €3 to ring a mobile for 14 minutes and 59 seconds, which I thought was reasonable.

Day 6 & 7: Saturday & Sunday

I knew the weekend wouldn't be as bad as I would be at home. I had ruled out any going out over the weekend, I didn't want to risk anything happening to me when I wouldn't have a mobile phone. This was probably the greatest disadvantage. Seeing others text really got on my nerves, I felt it was like drinking alcohol in front of an abstaining alcoholic!

But the next morning I got my phone back!!

Conclusion:

I calculated that I had saved about €5 in credit. And though I slipped up on Wednesday, I feel I have learned that you can survive without a mobile phone. I don't recommend the extreme option of doing away with it altogether! But I do feel it's proven now that we can limit our use of mobile phones considerably. It might be a good idea to get a tracking device though so your friends can still find you!

An Focal briefs

David Kitt in Glór

David Kitt will play Glór, Ennis on Wednesday April 18th. The gig will kick off at 8pm and An Focal has three pairs of tickets to give away. All you have to do to win is email deirdre.oshaughnessy@ul.ie with the answer to this question: David Kitt is the son of what TD?



Scott dances for Trócaire



UL graduate, Ruth Scott BA European Studies '96 will take part in this year's "Celebrity Jigs & Reels"

<http://www.rte.ie/tv/jigsnreels/> programme on RTE. In support of Trocaire's work in the developing world <http://trocaire.org/>, the popular RTE 2FM radio DJ will appear live on television in the

company of professional dancing partner Glen Simpson from Derry who is 5-times All Ireland Champion and who has danced for many years with the Riverdance show. Ruth Scott travelled with Trócaire to the Philippines last year. Justin Kilcullen, Director of Trócaire says "Ruth has travelled with Trócaire and has seen our work in the Philippines, so it is a great that she thinks so much of the work we do to pick Trócaire as her charity. Everyone in Trócaire will be cheering her on and I hope our supporters will get behind her too. We wish her the best of luck with the show! Roscommon-born Ruth is asking the UL community "to please vote for me and help to raise funds for Trocaire". Ruth is a Radio DJ on RTE 2FM and hosts 'The Saturday Show' each Saturday from Middy and 'The Frequency' Monday to Thursday 7 - 9.30 pm.

LASU fashion show raises €2,000

The inaugural LASU fashion show in aid of Milford Hospice was held in the Trinity Rooms during Week 6. The show raised over €2,000 for the charity. It was hosted by Miss Limerick Elinor Fitzgerald and showcased designs from Tippe Canoe, A wear, Dunnes, Brown Thomas, students from the college of Art and Design and others. See www.ulsu.ie for pictures of the event.

Crisis of Today's Generation

PAULA O'SULLIVAN

WHAT constitutes the term crisis? Do we address this locally, nationally, by continent or globally? Perhaps ones concept of crisis reflects their values. My peers have suggested many ideas of their own crisis; peer pressure, carnage on our roads, low youth morals in today's society, global warming etc., but all of these, and the majority of others, could be identified under one heading.

The world recognises that it is under threat from greenhouse gasses which lead to global warming and gaps in the ozone layer that encircles our atmosphere. This is a global crisis, but remains somewhat distant from the average student in Ireland. Nationally the death toll on our roads is rising by the month, and with this we are hitting closer to home. As a

continent, people rely on the SMS service and email systems to communicate; direct speech and warmth is soon becoming a thing of the past. Does a crisis directly signify death, or do we consider something like a breakdown of communication in today's generation a catastrophe also?

The headings which I propose to enclose all of these predicaments is globalisation and rising population numbers. The increase in deaths on Irish roads must definitely directly relate to the growing number of motorists driving on those roads. The increase of drugs in small communities and among youths reflects the globalisation of today's society and the ease with which these people can access these once scarce concoctions. The increase of the global population is undeniably affecting the production of carbon dioxide and therefore contributing to the

global warming issue. The increase in industry, the rise in air travel, the availability of cars to practically everyone from every class ; have all been seen as advancements in today's world. Has this progress ultimately brought about our doom, and are we willing to give all of this up?

Some would argue that the real crisis lies outside Europe and in truth the rest of the world should address the one true emergency; starvation and the deprivation of basic human rights to those in undeveloped countries. We attempt to force our society upon them because we recognise that theirs simply doesn't work. Ultimately we agree that this would be better than the starvation and drought that these people face, but if our developed world were to achieve our goal, this would add to the problems we already face. Perhaps this is not the crisis of today's generation at

all because of famine's tendency to survive. We may need to ask ourselves which is more important on a timescale of implications, and perchance there is no solution to any of these predicaments.

Ultimately we need to question if there is anything we as a generation can do to fix ourselves. Life itself and the world we have this life upon is possibly just a fossil fuel that burns more and hotter as time goes on and will eventually quench. Worrying about global and national crisis' must be made for specific people and others are born to take action against these issues. More of us are simply born to make sense of the crisis in our own lives only. Priorities are a major factor in this, the time and circumstances in ones life are also central. One thing is for certain; action speaks louder than words.

Students' Unions and Political Candidates: An Ideological Renaissance?

BY PHILIP MURPHY

WITH 'Green' SU presidents elected in NUI Galway and Trinity College Dublin, as well as the dominating victory for Fianna Fáil in the UCD SU elections, Philip Murphy considers the implications of party influence on student politics and wonders if this is a healthy development.

With the current debate on global warming prevalent in the societal mind-set and its impact ploughing ever onwards, it is, perhaps, a sign of the times that students in NUI Galway and Trinity College Dublin have elected Green Party members as their SU President. Understandably, the Green Party is very

happy with this development. In response to their electoral success, Green Party Chairman John Gormley TD said: "I welcome the recent election victories of James Hope in Galway and Andrew Byrne in Trinity and I wish them the best of luck in their respective presidencies. It is great to see those at the forefront of student life also being involved with the Greens."

The Green Party is not the only group to have achieved great success in student politics of late, however. UCD have elected an Executive which is composed entirely of Ógra Fianna Fáil members or former members.

While student apathy is still a problem, the youth wings of the mainstream polit-

ical parties, such as Young Fine Gael, the Greens, the Young PD's, Labour Youth, Ógra Fianna Fáil and Ógra Shinn Féin, are experiencing an upsurge both in interest and in membership. This is an encouraging sign that there may be a re-engagement of students' interest in politics and is, of course, to be welcomed.

On some campuses these groups are contesting and winning positions on the executives of their respective campuses. This is by no means the case in all universities, however. NUI Maynooth, DIT and others have always tended to elect non party candidates in SU elections, with candidates affiliated with political parties reluctant to run in recent

years.

Historically, there have been strong links between political parties and students unions; Pat Rabbitte, the current Labour leader, SDLP leader Mark Durcan, Labour Seanad candidate Ivana Bacik, all served as an SU President during their college careers. And the involvement of Charles Haughey and Garret Fitzgerald, both active in student politics in the 1940s at UCD, is well known - indeed some argue that their rivalry during their political careers began at this time.

The ties between political parties and student politics, on the surface at least, appear to benefit the organization and commitment of student unions. If political parties

compete for union positions, in theory at least, it should lead to strong leadership and a more impassioned commitment to further student politics.

There is always the danger, however, that political parties may take advantage of the students union to further their cause, rather than student affairs. In recent years, the struggle between left and right wing parties in universities such as Trinity or UCD over issues such as the ban on Coca Cola products has led some to question whether the student agenda is becoming upstaged by ideological considerations.

In truth, there's a great deal to say for and against the involvement of political parties in student politics. The

election of Green candidates as the new SU Presidents in Trinity and NUI Galway, and the whitewash by Fianna Fáil in UCD demonstrates that there is support for party candidates in these universities. And there is certainly merit to the argument that party candidates generate greater discussion of issues and encourage a higher caliber of candidates to run for office. It is to be hoped, however that they remember that their first duty is to the students and to student issues, and that ideological issues do not interfere in their responsibilities to us, the students.

Student Nurses Speak Up

EMMA FITZGERALD

AMID the Irish Nurses Organisation fair pay campaign, student nurses have also been hard at work airing our dissatisfaction with the Health Service Executive and An Bord Altranais. Many issues have arisen concerning our clinical placement which has resulted in a general feeling of despondency amongst those out in the health science building.

While being put through our paces working a 35 hour week in the clinical setting as well as holding down part time jobs, we have come to find many injustices placed upon us. Many of us are sent to out of the way clinical areas which require paying for local accommodation, for which we are re-embursed a mere €50.79 per week by the HSE. Numerous displeased students find this allowance less than adequate when, in reality, expenses incurred can reach €200 plus. The Dept. of Health and Children clearly state that our so called "allowance" is not intended to meet the full cost of our accommodation; however would it not be fair to say that the HSE should perhaps dig a little deeper into their miserly pockets to secure the budding future of their already crum-

bling health service?

It doesn't stop at disregarding our full and unavoidable expenses. Since 2005 the HSE has reduced student rostered (paid) placement from 52 to just 36 weeks, with the remaining 16 weeks left to work for absolutely nothing. As a response to this, 2nd Year Student Nurses (Mental Health, General, and Intellectual Disability) joined forces in February 2007 and issued the HSE and An Bord Altranais with an ill-tempered letter voicing their displeasure with student nurse management, asking for a reasonable motive for such unfair treatment, and ending on a very unsatisfied note - "We feel cheated and unappreciated with the lack of care or consideration with which the HSE is giving to its future foundation of healthcare". We are still eagerly awaiting a reply.

SU Education Officer Alan Higgins notes the absence of communication between governing bodies - "The Students Union...would call on the HSE to engage with our students to address these issues and asks the university departments to support them on this"

An Bord Altranais also have a part to play in arousing great unhappiness by ignoring the option of sick days and

compassionate leave. For an undergraduate nurse to register with the board, every single hour of placement MUST be completed regardless of the situation, no matter how difficult circumstances are.

St, John O' Donnabháin, president of the SU expresses deep concern on these issues, agreeing that "Student nurses have a hugely important role in the country's future, but this is far from reflected in the way they are treated... the downgrading of their vitally important responsibility on work placement undermines their ability to do their job properly"

These are but a few of the many problems faced by student nurses who generally try to work with a sense of honour and duty to individuals who fall under their care in the face of a challenging and unyielding health service authority. We completely refuse to accept the situation as it currently stands and efforts will continue to be made in order to achieve more satisfactory conditions for student nurses.



UL's growing security problems



BY ALAN OWENS
CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT

READERS of An Focal will be familiar with some of the articles that have run in previous editions over the course of this semester and last relating to growing issues of anti-social behaviour, vandalism, break-ins and general security issues on campus in UL. The question that must be asked in response to this is, is there a growing security problem in UL, and is

enough being done about this?

Let it be stated first off that this article is not intended in any way to be one of finger pointing, or accusing UL students of being rampaging vandals, or, likewise a heavy handed criticism of campus security. Rather the intention here is to seek debate or responses from staff and students alike, on whether there is a growing security problem, and if this is recognised and being dealt with.

Firstly, it must be recognised that there is huge competition between Universities, other institutions, and the lure of the workplace in the recruitment of prospective students. So much so, that this year has seen UL advertising on national television for prospective students, whether

or not the ad was any good is of little concern to this article. Therefore, one can assume that everything possible is being done to ensure UL is cast in the most positive of lights, and to keep UL a safe and happy place. Well, this writer is not so sure that this is the case.

Previous editions of this newspaper have documented vandalism of vending machines in the various student accommodation villages, with damage done totalling thousands of euro. Also reported have been instances of anti-social behaviour in the Plassey Village which was being proudly displayed by students on BEBO.

There have also been reports in previous editions about cases of repeated break-ins to cars on campus, lap-tops

being stolen, and in one case, several plasma televisions being stolen from classrooms on campus. It is also well documented that students, particularly girls, should not walk home alone on some of the paths from UL to the housing estates, in fear of possible attacks.

Again, it should be stressed that UL students are not being accused of any or all of these instances, rather they are used to highlight the fact that security issues are growing in and around the campus of UL.

However, in the case of the on-campus villages, there is reason to believe that not enough is being done to combat the actions of a few who are seemingly intent on causing damage and disturbing their fellow students. An Focal recently

spoke to a student resident of Cappavilla, who agreed that there is a problem with some students in the village, who have repeatedly caused damage to property, vending machines, and have in general, made life not too comfortable for many of the people who live there.

Eleven vending machines have been damaged in the student villages. Each machine costs in the region of 2,500 euro to fix. There have also been reports of walls being kicked in, and personal property stolen from apartments. An Focal has also learned from conversations with student occupants, that some of the people in positions of authority in these villages are perhaps too close to the students living there, and as a result are possibly unwilling to discipline them.

This is surely a worrying situation, and one that may spiral out of control before anything is done about it. With regard to the rest of the campus, should there be an increase in security provisions? Where are the CCTV cameras promised for the car parks?

UL prides itself on being an open campus, and so it should. There is no suggestion that there should be any massive increase in the security presence on campus. However, the question must be asked, to preserve UL's reputation for being a safe and fun place to study, is there enough being done to ensure that this remains the case?

Stop, Look, Listen:

DARRAGH BOURKE

AFTER countless road related deaths, hundreds of injuries and a lot of heartache and pain, its time for something to be done about the carnage on Ireland's roads. For this reason the Students' Union is this week launching a new Road Safety campaign in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority. An Focal looks into some of the major road safety issues affecting students.

The campaign will focus more on pedestrian safety and will highlight the need for pedestrian crossings especially in the area surrounding the Groody roundabout and also the Hurlers pub. An Focal spoke to Alannah Turner, Campaigns and Services officer in ULSU who told how they had been looking for these crossings for ages. 'We have been campaigning for a crossing at the Hurlers pub and one at the Groody roundabout for over a year now'. 'There are hundreds of people crossing that road every day of the week and it is badly needed'

There has already been an accident at the Groody

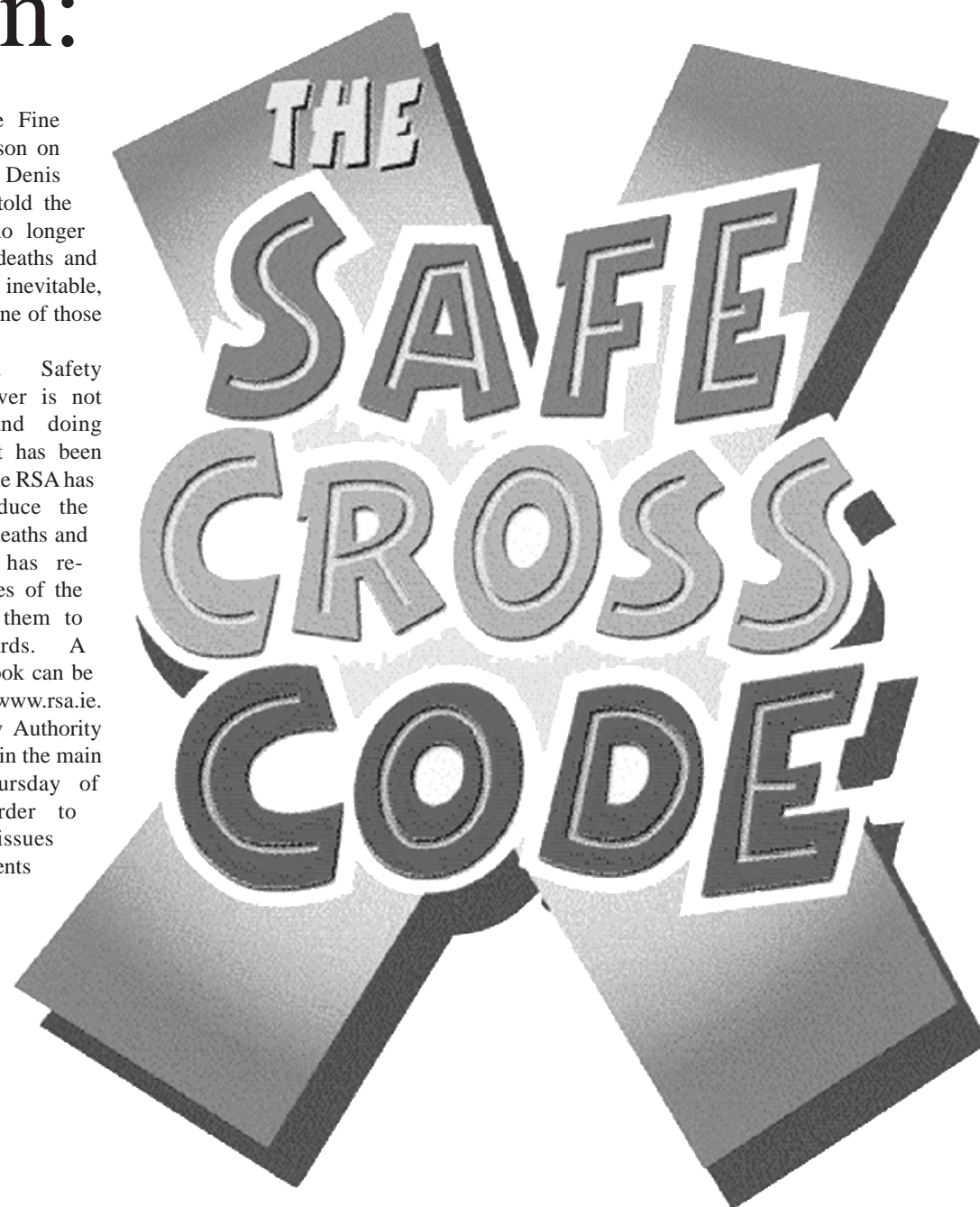
roundabout. This happened in week 5 when a fourth year business student, Deirdre O' Connell was knocked down crossing the road on her bike. She too called for a crossing to be put there. Ms O' Connell was hospitalized but did not have any serious injuries.

Another incident occurred last year also in the proximity of the university where a girl was knocked off her bike by a truck leaving a construction site on the grounds of the Castletroy Park Hotel. The girl, who was not a student, died from the injuries she sustained in the accident.

Although the campaign will focus on pedestrian safety it will also look at other aspects of road safety. It has become a well known fact that as a motorist, you will see crazy things on the road every single day of the week. Ten years ago if you saw a car overtaking on a solid white line you would be shocked, but now you just look on and wonder what pole you will see that driver wrapped around. However as Fine Gael have pointed out, Ireland's attitude to road safety has got to change. At a public

press conference Fine Gael's spokesperson on transport, Denis Naughton T.D., told the press 'We can no longer claim that road deaths and road injuries are inevitable, unavoidable, or one of those things.'

The Road Safety Authority however is not sitting back and doing nothing. Since it has been formed in 2006 the RSA has managed to reduce the number of road deaths and now the RSA has re-launched the rules of the road to update them to today's standards. A sample of this book can be viewed online at www.rsa.ie. The Road Safety Authority will have a stand in the main canteen on Thursday of week 8 in order to highlight the issues surrounding students and road safety.



Anti fascist policy

THE policy's proposer explains his rationale. The recently passed anti-fascist policy was drafted in response to the recent vigorous spate of wheatpasted flyers in the city, by a group known as MSI, the Movement To Save Ireland. This group is not just a fascist political unit, but is, in fact, a white supremacist trio. They wish to "save Ireland from the evil of multiculturalism". However, one of the three is Italian, they are pro-Polish, and their blog makes absolutely no sense at all. They are also intensely homophobic, and believe that any action on the part of a female which is not reproduction is a waste of her time! I take massive offence to this kind of hate speech, and believe that there should be no platform for fascists, or worse, in a multicultural and inclusive university such as our own. There are students and staff from many countries,

cultures, and of every skin colour and sexuality (and sex!) and it is reasonable that they should be able to go about their day unmolested by such bigots, either by printed word or verbal abuse. The verdict at Class Reps Council was unanimous, though some concerns were voiced about the right to free speech. It was pointed out however, that such hateful speech denies others of their rights, and as such, the rights of the perpetrators of such actions can be fairly and rightly limited. I will not publicise their blog for them, but I will say it can be easily found. There are only the three of them posting, as is blatantly obvious from their sub-tabloid use of English. The poster campaign in the city is certainly consistent, as there are new posters up every day or two. Some recent examples include a picture of what appears to be a body, with the label, "Another Victim Of Multiculturalism",

followed by an explanation, stating that the victim was white, and murdered in South Africa. (South Africa is an originally Black nation, being a part of Africa!) These people make no sense. Another states that "free speech" must be protected from "left-wing freaks". I will not even respond to that one. Another flyer, in Polish, was so poorly written that a Polish friend stated that it was not really even Polish! They love to use the words 'protect' and 'save' in nearly every sentence, indicating that their propaganda methods (and vocabulary) are in need of a degree of refinement. However, from the frequency of the wheatpasting, it may be gathered that they have no jobs or social lives. It is pretty clear that these people are fringe lunatics, and pose very little real threat. One of their (three!) members is an outcast from the other fascist groups, and apparently his own family

have disowned him. The other fascist groups, Celtic Wolves and Stormfront, will have nothing to do with this group, so arbitrary is their ideology. It is important for everyone on campus to keep an eye on literature, posters and such on campus, and if offensive material is discovered, that it be brought to the attention of the Students Union at once, and furthermore if there is racist or otherwise unacceptable material being disseminated by individuals that the Union be informed immediately, so as the removal of both material and distributors may be effected without delay, in accordance with the new policy. I would also add, on a more personal level, that if you see the aforementioned posters about town, remove or deface them, but dispose of them in a bin, not the ground, offensive as they are!



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
COLLEGE of HUMANITIES

Postgraduate Research Opportunities in the College of Humanities

Applications are invited for masters and doctoral research degrees and associated funding opportunities in the following subject areas for the academic year 2007/08:

History

A scholarship - €12,700 per annum plus fee waiver - will be offered for full time PhD research in the field of either Modern Irish or Modern European History.

Languages and Cultural Studies

Two scholarships - €12,000 per annum - will be offered for PhD research in the following subject areas: Applied Language Studies, Cultural Studies, English Language Teaching, English Studies, French Studies, German Studies, German Studies (including Irish-German Studies), Spanish Studies, Linguistics, Utopian Studies.

Politics and Public Administration

A scholarship - €12,000 per annum plus fee waiver - will be offered for full time PhD research in one of the following areas: comparative politics, international relations, public administration, European politics, or political theory.

School of Law

Two scholarships will be offered for research to be conducted in the Centre for Criminal Justice and/or the International Commercial and Economic Law Group. For further information contact Eoin Quill, School of Law, eoin.quill@ul.ie

Sociology

A scholarship is available for either a PhD or MA by research on one of the following areas: print/broadcast media and new racism; family formation and dissolution; labour market dynamics and the welfare state; masculinities; migration and cultural diversity; gender, technology and the labour market; health systems performance for health and social gain; education and social exclusion; the sociology of health and the body; the sociology of risk; the sociology of culture, alternative lifestyles, historical/cultural geography of Ireland; geography and identity, spatial inequalities.

Women's Studies

Scholarships - €15,000 per annum plus fee waivers - will be offered for PhD research in Women's Studies which spans the disciplinary areas of sociology, literature, history, and cultural studies. Our particular research strengths are in the areas of: feminism(s), diaspora and multiculturalism; feminist literary studies; women and migration; women's history; gender and memory; mobile lives, globalisation and women; gender and popular culture.

Doctoral scholarships are normally tenable for a year, and renewable for a further two years subject to satisfactory progress.

An application form and further particulars can be obtained from:
Niamh Lenchon, Foundation Building, College of Humanities, University of Limerick.
Tel: +353-61-202945 Email: niamh.lenchon@ul.ie

Closing date for receipt of scholarship applications is Friday 18th May 2007.

www.ul.ie

What the Movement to 'Save' Ireland really means

KATE NOLAN

A new and dangerous political faction has emerged in Ireland in the last year. They are a group of white supremacists, going under the name 'The Movement To Save Ireland' (MSI). Last week, the hateful and disrespectful material disseminated on MSI's website was found to contravene the Students' Union Equality Policy, specifically the article: 'No-one should be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, or any other grounds'.

In light of this, the Class Reps Council of week 6 unanimously passed the Anti-Fascist Policy, to restrict the

ability of fascist groups to promote on campus. The Union has now resolved to deny MSI entrance to the campus, and will instruct University security staff to remove them from the grounds if necessary. Finally, any material distributed by this group, or indeed any other material, which is in breach of the Equality Policy, shall be removed. It was universally agreed that the UL campus should be a safe space for both students and staff, and that any such defamatory material would undermine the longstanding work and commitment to anti-racism and equality at the University.

The group in question, MSI, exhibits overtly racist, homophobic and fascist tendencies. As an ideology, fascism is characterised by an extreme form of

nationalism, which more often than not, lends itself to racism. The fascist vision for the future is a strong nation-state, free of all forms of internationalism and multiculturalism. The statements made by MSI on their blog are eerily similar those made by Nazi Germany at the height of the Third Reich in the twentieth century. The fascist movement in Germany explicitly reproduced a notion of German nationalism, which was biologically based and excluded the Jews as an allegedly distinct and inferior "race" which threatened biological extinction if allowed to remain. Admittedly not quite on the same scale, the so-called Movement To Save Ireland disseminates some of same hate-inducing propaganda. MSI spreads what can only

be described as frighteningly ignorant assertions regarding everything from race, gender, politics and sexual orientation. Not only are MSI's ideas fundamentally flawed, they are also blatantly incorrect.

Despite what is thought about MSI's ideology, there are obviously still questions to be addressed with respect to the group's right to freedom of speech. However, I am personally of the opinion that anyone who knowingly and willingly spreads false and deplorable messages of hatred negates their right to freedom of speech. This is a right which MSI themselves take for granted, skewering any person who dares contradict their racist views. Furthermore, the Students' Union believes in the inalienable right of all

students, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or gender to live their lives to the fullest, without any fear of discrimination. Every student deserves to go about his or her own University without being exposed to potentially harmful and damaging material. UL prides itself on being a diverse and multicultural campus, and the new Anti-Fascist Policy along with the existing Equality Policy will see that it remains that way.

Unfortunately, the defeat of the fascist powers in World War II has not led to the elimination of fascist movements in Western society. It is all too easy to think of fascism as being confined to the history books or something which is 'out there', instead of right on our own doorstep. We need to be vigilant regarding signs of racism,

and not fall prey to the deadly illusion that fascist groups such as MSI are the manifestation of a momentary fleeting phenomenon, soon destined to sink into oblivion as economic, social or political conditions change. Without wanting to sound preachy or over-dramatic, it is impossible to over-emphasise dangers of passivity and public apathy, which can only lead to catastrophe. In saying no to MSI and their racist views, the students of UL have yes to equality and reaffirmed their belief in the individual worth of every human being, and that is truly commendable.

Kate Nolan is the ULSU Equality Officer

Campus Sport

Freshers Fall At Final Hurdle



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

THE UL Fresher 'A' hurling team were narrowly beaten by WIT in the final of the All-Ireland Shield competition on March 21.

The match was played here in UL on Pitch 1. It was a bitterly cold day with a swirling wind and it wasn't ideal conditions for hurling. The game was delayed for an hour as the referee was late in arriving to the game.

The first half was a scrappy affair. Scores were hard to come by and the game was riddled with frees. UL got off to the perfect start with a goal from lively corner forward Martin Walsh. But

after that there was little to choose between the sides with both teams exchanging scores. Colm Mackey was accurate from frees and Martin Walsh also added to his tally from play. But at the other end the WIT full forward line was causing problems and they won frees which were converted. UL goalie James Norris also made some vital interventions. The WIT forwards dished out some punishment to him with some late challenges but Norris was also willing to dole out some punishment of his own and duly earned himself a yellow card. UL went in at half-time 1-4 to 0-5 ahead.

The second half was a big improvement on the first. The commitment on both sides was never in question and the exchanges were hard fought. WIT got off to a flyer grabbing three points in a row to put them ahead. UL responded though in fine fashion. Inspired by Seamus Hickey at centre half back UL were now on top and got some marvellous scores. Colm

Mackey found the range from frees and wing forward Ryan O'Dwyer struck the score of the day from the left wing to put UL back in front. With only minutes remaining the title appeared to be safe with UL 1-10 to 0-10 clear. Then WIT got a lifeline. They earned a free on 21 yard line and Brendan Kenny stepped forward to drive the ball to the UL net. This was a sucker punch for UL but worse was to follow. In the dying moments the ball broke to WIT's Daniel Keogh who rattled over the winning score and secure the title for the Waterford men. The final score was 1-11 to 1-10.

It has to be said the Fresher team put in a huge effort here, they just didn't get a bit of luck. Fair play to Ger Cunningham and the rest of the management team for their preparation of the team. Best on the day for UL were James Norris, Quinn and Hickey in the half back line, Colm Mackey at midfield, and also Ryan O'Dwyer and Martin Walsh in the forwards.

Magic Numbers

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

- 1** Point scored by Waterford U-21s in their Munster football clash with Cork in Dungarvan. Cork managed 2-17. Must have left the kicking boots at home.
- 4** Points separated Ireland and France at the end of the Six Nations. It really is a game of inches.
- 26** Points scored by Galway against Tipp in their enthralling game at Pearse Stadium. The Tribesmen are back on track after the disaster against the Dubs.
- 19** Wides for Limerick footballers in their League clash against Tyrone at the Gaelic Grounds. What are they doing in training?
- 82** Points by Ronan O'Gara in this years Six Nations. Top scorer for the third year running.
- 33** Seconds Stan spent with the media on the Monday before the Slovakia game. Understandably the journalists were left bemused and confused. They didn't even get the chance to ask pose one question.
- 74,000** Supporters packed into Croke to watch Stan's Ireland defeat the Welsh. Not for the first time a goal in Croke Park was worth three points.

Hurlers Joyce And Egan Honoured

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

UL hurlers Kieran Joyce and Alan Egan have both been named on the Ulster Bank Higher Education Allstars for 2007.

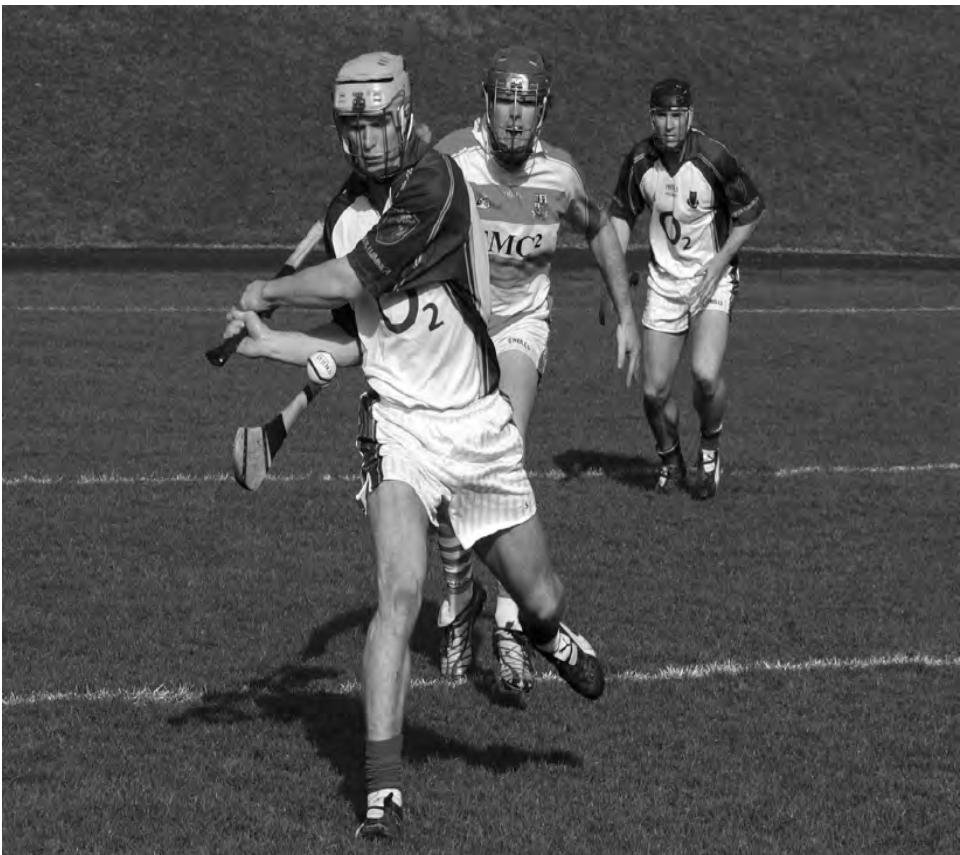
Kieran Joyce is currently in first year and plays at full back on the Fresher hurling team. He hails from the Rower Instioige club in Kilkenny. He has won U-21 All-Ireland and Leinster medals with the county. He played at corner back on the Fitzgibbon Cup team this year. His highlight of the year was his tight marking of Joe Canning in the semi final.

Alan Egan hails from the Belmont club in Co Offaly. He has been on the senior county panel for the past couple of seasons under John McIntyre. This year he played corner forward on the Fitzgibbon team. His scores from play and his accuracy from frees were pivotal in UL winning the League and getting to the Fitzgibbon semi final. Well done to both Alan and Kieran. I was surprised that only two UL players made the cut. LIT the Fitzgibbon winners have six

representatives on the team.

James Skehill (LIT), Martin Ryan (NUIG), Jackie Tyrell (LIT), Kieran Joyce (UL), Shane McGrath (LIT), John Lee (NUIG), John Walsh (DIT), Stephen Molumphy (NUIG), Jonathon Clancy (LIT), David Barrett (NUIG), Eoin Ryan (IT Tralee), Iarlaith Tannian (LIT), Kevin O'Reilly (DIT), Joe Canning (LIT), Alan Egan (UL).

UL v CIT earlier in the Fitzgibbon cup. Photo by Paudie Scanlon



Fresher B footballers miss out on All-Ireland title

MAIRTÍN LALLY
University of Limerick 0-15
NUI Galway 0-17

WHILE the Fresher A football team found difficulty to materialise their efforts into medals, UL's fresher B footballers breezed through the league since October. They beat the likes of UCC, CIT and WIT to qualify for the league semi-final vs. Jordanstown of Ulster University.

UL stood their ground against one of the major footballing colleges in Ireland, winning by a margin of 2 points less than a week before the final vs. NUI Galway. UL trailed behind by no more than 3 points at any point of the match thanks to multiple scores from Shane McCarthy, Joe Kinsella and Steve Lonergan.

Galway got off to an impressive start with early breaks which were well defended by Kevin Smith and Alan Sanker. Eoin Hearne broke the ice for Limerick neatly catching a high-ball, hand-passed it onto Joe Kinsella who scored the first point of the match, putting Limerick in the lead for the only time for the duration of the match. Galway answered swiftly with a point, and a strong shot at goal which was blocked down by Kevin Smith. The margin between the teams was opened by NUI to give them a two point advantage. Limericks Shane McCarthy left his corner-forward position to help out in the mid-field area, made an encouraging break but, uncharacteristically, failed to find the goalposts with a long distance kick. Steve Lonergan made the most out of Shane's effort, putting another point on the scoreboard from the kick out. Joe Kinsella also pulled his weight delivering a clean ball onto Shane who clocked up another point for UL. But Galway managed to answer with 3 more quick scores.

Eoin Hearne showed great athleticism jumping fearlessly for high kick outs creating repeat attacks for Limerick on NUI Galway's home pitch. Galway scored

another point in the 1st half, and Limerick got two with Shane McCarthy popping a late point from a free just before the half-time whistle.

The 2nd half looked very promising for UL as Galway were only ahead by one point at half-time, 0-7 to 0-8. This hope didn't last long as a result of Galway's powerful start to the half, scoring two more points within the first 5 minutes. UL's Paul Larkin and substitute Derrick O'Brien replied to the attacks with a point each, mostly thanks to pressure on Galway's forwards from UL's tightening defence. Namely: Alan Sanker, John Scully, Martin Moran, Kevin Smith, Brendan Walsh and Luke Casey who all deserve credit for holding Galway off from scoring for over 15 minutes. This breathing space gave midfielder Paul Larkin a chance to make a powerful run from midfield to deep into Galway's defence, laying the ball off to Steve Lonergan who narrowly missed a shot on goal. Limerick's McCarthy and Kinsella continued to chip away at Galway's lead but Galway proved too strong breaking it open again by a further 2 points.

Galway's defence rarely made any major mistakes but James Byrne, David Ward, and Eoin Hearne took full advantage when they could. Both teams looked more evenly matched on the pitch in the 2nd half compared to the 1st, with UL creating impressive answers to all of Galway's attacks. There were 3 points between both All-Ireland finalists, to Galway's favour with 10 minutes left, which was brought down to a 1 point difference thanks to accurate kicks from Joe Kinsella and the match's top scorer Shane McCarthy. Unfortunately Shane's 60 yard free kick landed in the box along with two UL players, giving Galway a free for the "square-ball" decision by the referee which could be questioned. Galway's goal keeper drove the ball to mid-field and found an un-marked team-mate who capitalised from Limericks miss-fortune giving them another point just before the full-time whistle.

UL Clubs In Brief



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

Rowing

On the weekend 17/18th March the UL rowing club took part in the Galway Head of the river competition. 5 crews were sent to compete in atrocious weather conditions. The crews were Womens Senior 8+, Mens Novice 8+, Mens Novice 4+ , Womens Inter 4+ and Womens Novice 4+. UL came away with three victories with the Womens Senior 8+. the Mens Novice 8+ and the Womens Inter 4+ crews all gaining success. This was the first Senior win (men or women) for ULRC at the Galway Head. Credit

must be given to Women's coach Peter Neville and Men's coach Brian O'Connor. Well done to all involved.

Ultimate Frisbee

The annual 'Ultimate Frisbee Intervarsity' was held in UL on the weekend 24/25th March. All the best teams from around the country took part with a few also from overseas.

Dave McCullagh Gala

On the 23-25 March the National 50m swimming pool here in UL hosted the Dave McCullagh Long Course Meet. This event was used as a qualifier for the European Junior Championships and the British Youths Meet.

Poker

The UL Poker Club will play host to an Intervarsity during the month of April. If you would like to get involved in

this club you should head down to UL Sports Bar on Monday nights.

Pess Triathlon

It's that time of year again so, grab your runners, get on your nelly and make a splash for charity at this year's Pess Triathlon. The event starts at 11 a.m. sharp on the 4th April with a quick dip in the Arena pool (500m) followed by a cycle around the University Campus(20K) and finish with a run (5K). As is the tradition of the triathlon, the money raised will be donated to local charity Milford Hospice. It will be the seventh annual run of this event and we are hoping that more people than ever will take part this year. You don't have to conquer this mean feat on your own though, if your strength is swimming then rope a few friends in and share the load. Teams of three are also allowed to participate but if you think you are fit enough try it on your own. Supporters

and spectators are also welcome on the day to cheer on the participants.

This will give you a great opportunity to get fit, detox after RAG week, do something new, meet new people and raise money for charity. So instead of sitting at home twiddling your thumbs be proactive get active and give it a go.

The circuit starts in the Arena pool where you will do ten lengths of the pool followed by the cycle which will take you from the running track at the side of the arena out the main gate and back in the east gate and the final leg is a run around the university campus.

If you're looking for more details on how to get involved, for inquires and registrations forms log on to <http://pesstriathlon.blogspot.com/> TRI-something new, AT-UL Campus, a-LON-g with some friends

UL ladies triumph against Queens

NORITA KELLY

UL: 5-12
Queens: 0-3

UL displayed some brilliant football against Queens on Wednesday the 14th March to qualify in superb fashion for the O'Connor cup weekend in CIT. There were fiercely determined to get to the weekend and banish the memories of the previous two years and bring the only silverware back to the UL GAA clubs.

In the opening half they were playing with a slight hill at their backs and UL took full advantage of this and they put constant pressure on the Queens backs. The UL forwards had to put up with a lot of grief from the Queens backs and unfortunately did not get much sympathy from the referee. This did not stop them piling on the attacks and two early points from UL's lively half forward Fiona McHale quickly settled the team. UL began to notch up a

number of wides and were not making use of all the possession they had. Centre forward Mairead Kelly was dominant throughout and was the quickest to react to the ball off the post and she blasted the ball to the back of the net. This settled the nerves for UL. Despite having worked the ball well up the field Queens were lacking up front and were unable to put points on the board. UL sometimes over played the ball in the opening half and as a result the move broke down. However they did create some very good openings and the right half forward Laura Walsh showed great composure notching over three good points. To finish up the scoring before half time Kasey O'Driscoll put over a free and Fiona added to her tally with another point. However Queens did get a point from a free just nearing the end of the first half. UL went in at half time with a 1-7 to 0-1 lead.

UL did not take it easy in the second half and they started the second half the

same way they finished the first with a flourish of scores. Two early goals from Kasey and the corner forward Aileen O'Loughlin made sure that UL were headed for CIT on the 24th of March. The UL forwards were much more structured in the second half and this was evident when corner forward Sile Burns who displayed great composure throughout the hour and Mags O'Donoghue bursts through the defence for two fine scores. Sile and Mairead quickly added two more scores while Fiona and substitute Aoife Herbert finished proceedings with two wonderfully taken goals.

The half back line of Brid Stack, Angela Walsh and Sinead Kelly were very solid throughout. Sinead made some dazzling runs up the field which created an overlap which led to some wonderful scores for UL. The ball rarely got past the midfielders of Mags O'Donoghue and Geraldine O'Flynn and the half back line but when it did it was mopped up by the ever

reliable Michelle Glynn, Ann O'Dwyer and Jenny Johnston. Catherine Foley made her championship debut in goals and she pulled off a top class save in the opening half when UL were struggling to get organised. UL displayed some fine football and but have a lot to work on before the O'Connor cup weekend in Cork.

UL: Catherine Foley, Ann O'Dwyer, Michelle Glynn, Jenny Johnston, Sinead Kelly, Angela Walsh, Brid Stack, Mags O'Donoghue, Laura Walsh, Mairead Kelly, Fiona McHale, Aileen o'Laughlin, Kasey O'Driscoll, Sile Burns. Subs: Clare Rooney, Aoife Herbert, Sinead Egan, Maria Kelly, Jacinta Murphy, Jackie Mulligan, Norita Kelly (injured).

UL Women triumph in 2007 Rugby IVs

DARRAGH BOURKE.

THE UL Ladies Rugby club is arguably the most successful in the University, having retained their league title for the last five years and they are undefeated champions of the Intervarsities competition since its commencement nine years ago. In week 5 this extraordinary team traveled to Maynooth for the 2007 college Intarvarsities. An Focal spoke to the captain of the team Ms Gillian Bourke.

The first day saw the ladies unrivalled in every single match. Gillian told us 'The score lines of those matches reflect those of a cricket score'. The ladies tore the other teams in half and managed to score eight to ten tries in every match. Two attacking players really stood out, Mairead Kelly and Nancy Ferris, who were both absolutely outstanding in attack. The first day saw great communication in both attack and defence. With the strongest team fielded

including three Irish internationals, Day one was a walk in the park.

Day two however saw the loss of 3 internationals who flew out to Italy for their final six nations match. 'No offence to our superstars but their departure did not exactly affect the strength of the team' laughed Gillian. The semi-Finals were next and this match saw UL take on NUI. NUI were just not up to the test as UL took a 24-5 victory over them and progressed onto the final. And so the final countdown was on. It was University of Limerick up against Waterford IT. This was undoubtedly seen as the toughest match of the entire tournament but in the end the depth and determination of the squad proved too much for WIT with UL grinding out a 10-5 victory. The match saw Nancy Ferris scoring two tries. This was through excellent linking up in the back line after the forwards had made the hard yards. The captain showed great pride in her squad after this fantastic

victory 'The tournament saw a wholehearted effort from every member and the passion displayed on the pitch was admirable' As if winning the tournament outright was not enough, Irish international Mairead Kelly also won 'try of the tournament' which the ref could only describe as 'pure brilliance'. Try scorers in the tournament also included Laura Guest, Nicole Fitzgearld, Gillian Bourke, Oliva Vaughan and many others. The celebrations took place in the Lodge and it was safe to say that a good time was had by all. The team is now looking forward to the league semi-finals against DCU which is to be held in UL Wednesday of week 7. The team is once again looking to retain their title and their confidence is building from their successive victories in the league and intervarsities.

UL has been a starting ground for many of today's Irish internationals including Sarah-Jane Belton who has been captain of the Irish team for two years and Fiona



The UL ladies rugby team. Photo by Darragh Bourke

Coughlan who is currently the Vice-Captain. Many former and present students have represented the college at College, Club, Provincial and International levels. This season the girls were very excited by the prospect of a very strong senior team which includes two current members

of the Irish squad who traveled to Canada in September to take part in the Women's Rugby World Cup. In comparison to other less successful clubs in UL, sponsorship is non-existent for a team, which has dominated its sport for the last eight years. Bank of Ireland

kindly sponsored the team's jerseys last year but the girls still struggle to scrape by on a minimal budget. It is absolutely scandalous that such a team should be treated as if they are at the bottom of the food chain.

Mulqueen Confident of Success

Aidan Lonergan spoke to UL's only Galway hurling selector

GALWAY hurling selector Louis Mulqueen is adamant that Galway must reach the All Ireland Final this year. While he freely admits that it won't be easy with the likes of Kilkenny and Cork as favourites, he places Galway as the main challengers alongside Tipperary and Waterford. 'Yes, I believe we are serious contenders. One of the main things a team needs to win an All Ireland is scoring forwards and I feel this is one of our strongest areas' he says.

Mulqueen is currently part of the Galway backroom 'Dream Team' alongside former Galway hurler Brendan Lynskey and the charismatic Ger Loughnane, who manages the side. Loughnane's arrival has sparked a huge amount of interest in the county but Mulqueen believes that they

can use the increase in support as a motivating factor. 'I wouldn't see it as adding extra pressure. In fact I would think it could act as a spur for us to try and end the current famine of 18 years'

The new Galway management were only settling in when controversy exploded onto the national scene. Following the controversial Galway County Final both Joe and Ollie Canning withdrew their services from the panel and are still unavailable. Ollie has said he has had enough and announced his retirement while Joe (18) wants to travel during the summer. However Mulqueen deals with the issue in typically calm fashion. 'No panel has been finalised for the coming year and some players will come and go. At present it remains open to all'

In recent years Galway have earned a reputation on the national scene of failing to transfer their success at underage level onto the senior

stage. The backroom team have looked at some key areas to try and counteract this. 'We are currently working on three key factors cohesion, strength and ruthlessness'. Another key factor in any successful team is the presence of leaders and Mulqueen expects Galway to have no trouble on that score. 'We picked David Collins as captain because he is a good leader and crucially has the confidence to drive on others around him. Eugene Cloonan has been made vice-captain and his wealth of experience can only add to our chances.'

For years many observers have associated Galway's problems in the championship with their absence from a provincial championship. In recent years Lenister have offered them a place in their championship but Galway have repeatedly declined. Mulqueen isn't so sure about a team from outside a province taking part and believes that it would be 'out of character' for Galway

to participate in Leinster. Instead Mulqueen feels that the League is vitally important to Galway this year. 'The national league is crucial to us this year and we are trying to use it as a means of building confidence and character in the team.'

Mulqueen has started to build up a reputation for himself in the past decade. He was in charge when St. Joseph's Doora/Barefield won the All Ireland Club Championship Final in 1999 and was a selector with Clare when they lost out to Kilkenny in the 2002 decider. His talent hasn't gone unnoticed and he will only become better under the tutelage of the indomitable Loughnane. On the matter of becoming a manager himself one day he just shrugs and says with a smile 'ah sure I'm still young and learning...from the master'.

Louis Mulqueen is a Geography Lecturer in the University of Limerick and



currently trains (and acts as a selector for) the Galway Senior Hurling team.

UL Arena Hosts Superleague Finals



BY TOMÁS MCCARTHY
SPORTS EDITOR

THE UL Arena hosted the men's and women's Superleague basketball finals on the weekend 24/25 March. On the Saturday the Nivea For Men Superleague semis took place. In the first semi-final Merry Monk from Ballina overcame Kieran Donaghy's Abrakebabra Tigers. Later in the evening DART Killester from Dublin defeated UCC Demons. Sunday saw a double-header of finals, the action beginning with the women's final between UL Aughnish and DCU Mercy. DCU were

always in control leading 37-27 at half-time. They finished off the job in the second half winning in the end 79-65. American Mary Fox won the MVP award (it stands for most valuable player in case you didn't know!). The men's final proved a much tighter affair. DART Killester started the brighter and held a 47-40 interval lead. Ballina fought back though in the second half and looked to be home and dry leading 88-81 in the final quarter. But DART made an amazing comeback in that final quarter to emerge victorious 95-90. Paddy Kelly was awarded the MVP. Overall the finals were a success with big crowds turning up on both days. There is no doubt that the UL Arena is the ideal venue for these games. There was also some further UL interest with Paul Freeman, Jillian Ahearne, Mike Dowd and Aidan Holden all representing their respective teams over the weekend.



DART Killester v Merry Monk Ballina

UL Cho's Taekwondo Successful at Galway Open!

ON Saturday the 10th of March a troop of UL Taekwondoers took to the road at the early hours to make the weigh in for the annual Galway Open Competition. There was a range of belts competing with success coming in all shapes and forms. For many new members this was their first experience at competition and despite nerves and apprehension all competitors did the Club and University proud. At the intermediate level both Darragh and Patrick did us proud bringing home third place in their respective weight divisions, this was despite differences in fighting styles between the clubs. Patrick used his speed and agility to score hits only losing out in the semi final to the eventual winner of the division. Darragh was unrelenting in his attack showing his very high level of fitness and determination, losing narrowly by only one point in a tense, tight fight. In the beginners division

Paddy used his reach and strength to out class the competiton and first place with Monty taking third in the same category. In his first competition Ed took home a third place in a category that was full of youthful determination and excitement. He showed a keen head despite coming up against more experienced competition. The UL team were narrowly beaten by a combined Galway-Cork team in a points-sparring team competition. Out of 5 fights, the UL team won 2, lost 2 with the last fight ending in a draw. In the end UL were beaten in a play off with the eventual winners of the team competition. Next on the cards for the UL club is the annual Kickathon. UL Taekwonders raise money for the UL Rape Crisis Centre and kick solidly for a full hour. Last year we managed to raise €1800 and hope to do likewise this year.

Quotes Of The Edition

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

- 'I wanted us not to get a result. I'll admit that now. This is a shambles. It has to be said , it has to be hurting the young Irish players who pull on their green shirts.'**

Eamonn Dunphy giving his brutally honest views after the Ireland v Wales match at Croke. Suffice to say he is not a fan of Stan.
- 'What a load of rubbish.'**

The 4,000 English fans who travelled to Israel vent their anger towards Steve McClaren after their 0-0 draw. They have a point you know.
- 'Are Tipperary footballers the worst footballers in Ireland?'**

Tipp FM lends its support to the county cause on their 'Extra Time' show. Talk about kicking a team when they are down.
- 'There's a fine line between loyalty and stupidity.'**

Roy Keane on Steve Staunton's team selection referring indirectly to Robbie Keane and Damien Duff.
- 'It was a strange feeling in the dressing room when we came off. We scored as many points as we could, and we won the match, but we still came off feeling that it might not be enough'.**

Denis Hickie after the Italian match. How right he was.
- 'The midfield positions were picked and nothing was really said about the roles'.**

Lee Carsley after the Wales match. It seems amazing that none f the midfield were told their jobs. Well, when you think about the manager maybe it's not so unlikely.
- 'Everyone wants a superstar and now they have one'.**

Ruby Walsh on his Gold Cup win aboard Kauto Star. He certainly made the punters happy after a tough week.
- 'There's some gutter press in Clare. There's a local rag that's complete and utter gutter journalism. Every week they're writing this horrible stuff.'**

Tony Considine lashes out at the Clare media after their victory against Waterford. But with Fitzy still sidelined expect this story to run and run and run.
- 'There's no doubt in my mind that being from Cork certainly doesn't help him'.**

Keano again disgusted by the omission of Liam Miller from the Irish squad. This time Roy you are trash talking.

Can Woods Master Augusta Again?

CONOR MCGRATH

IT is that time of the year again. Spring is in its glory and the evenings are noticeably getting longer. Usually around this time a certain sporting event called The Masters tournament takes place in Augusta National Golf Club. Apart from the British Open, this is the most famous golf championship in the world which is played on the most famous golf course in the world. Augusta National is famous for its lush fairways and beautiful presentation. The championship itself is also famous for its "back 9 syndrome". This means that players that are in contention for the title usually crumble on the final 9 holes due to the intense pressure and the difficulty of the holes themselves. The championship itself has been won by famous players such as Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo. This year's championship should be an enthralling one.

The obvious choice for the title has got to be the World No.1, Tiger Woods. Woods has won the Masters 4 times and the course is tailor

made for his 300 yard drives and his ruthless short game. Woods is also in good form as he won the WGC-CA Championship in Miami last week. Apart from Woods; there are plenty of contenders but none as serious. Phil Mickelson is a good choice. He is the reigning champion, he has won the Masters twice and his short game is exquisite. But Mickelson has a tendency to collapse in the heat of a major championship. In last year's US Open, Mickelson had a hand on the trophy but he threw it away on the final hole. Ernie Els and Retief Goosen are major champions and have been in contention many times on the final days at Augusta, but both of them never have conquered the pressures of the final holes at Augusta National. Vijay Singh is another contender. He is a past champion of the event and he has won 2 other major championships. Singh is 44 now and his form is not great this year which may dent his chances of glory. I would include other names such as Jim Furyk, Chris Di Marco and Adam Scott as possible contenders.

At this year's Masters,

there will be a strong European challenge. This is mainly due to Europe's Ryder Cup humiliation of Team USA. Out of all the Europeans, I believe that Henrik Stenson will be the strongest contender. At this moment in time he is No.1 on the Order of Merit and is the highest ranked European in the world ranking. His form is great and he was a key member of the European Ryder Cup team last September. Padraig Harrington is also in with a good chance of capturing his first major. He is the reigning Order of Merit champion and he has won in the States on plenty of occasions. Harrington was in great form at the start of the season and if he can replicate that form then he will definitely be in the reckoning on Sunday evening. Sergio Garcia has a decent chance as he hits the ball long off the tee. Garcia's putting has been abysmal over the last 2 years which may cost him dear as the greens in Augusta are notoriously hard to read. The British contingent of Paul Casey and Luke Donald has failed to deliver a major yet and I think that a top 10 finish



for either of them would be a more realistic proposition.

Come Sunday night, I believe that Tiger Woods will have wrapped up his 5th

Masters title. This is solely because of the fact that Woods is utterly brilliant and his game suits Augusta so well. Stenson will definitely be

close. Harrington could do it and if he did, then it would be a truly special day for Irish sport.

LEGENDS AND LOSERS

TOMÁS MCCARTHY

LEGENDS

Stephen Ireland

The scorer of the first soccer goal at Croke Park. What a cool finish it was too. Not bad for a Corkman Keano!

Irish Cricket Team

Hats off to the Irish cricketers for making the Super 8 against all the odds after a win over Pakistan and a draw against Zimbabwe. Still one question remains, how the hell do you play it?

Donegal Footballers

Donegal have made an impressive unbeaten start in the football league. Wins over Dublin, Cork, Tyrone and Kerry will surely boost confidence going into the summer. Brendan Devenney is in fine scoring form too.

Bernard Dunne

Dunne retained his European crown with an easy knockout win against Kazakhstan's Yersin Jailauov after just three rounds at The Point.

Eugene Cloonan

The Athenry man is in a rich vein of form in the hurling league at the moment. He scored 10 points in Galway's win over Tipperary.

UL Ladies

Congrats to both the ladies rugby and football teams for bringing back some silverware to UL.

LOSERS

Limerick Hurlers

Just what has happened to Ritchie Bennis' men? After an impressive win over Tipp in round 1 the signs were positive but after three bad defeats to Galway, Kilkenny and Dublin the Shannonsiders are in relegation trouble.

Punters

If you were one of the punters that actually made money from the Cheltenham consider yourself lucky. For most of us Cheltenham hit the bank balance very heavily. It was the best festival in 25 years according to some bookies. On the Wednesday none of the 6 favourites were placed. Thank God for Kauto Star.

Kieran Donaghy

'Star' as he is known in Kerry will be out for two months after a serious shoulder injury against Donegal. Full-backs all over the country breathe a sigh of relief.

David Connolly

Ireland's forgotten striker is banging in the goals for Roy Keane's Sunderland but still hasn't got a call from Stan. Surely Connolly deserves a second chance.

Sick Tipperary Hurlers

Several Tipp hurlers were unable to line out against Galway after a stomach bug hit the camp. Unconfirmed reports say the filthy Galway water was the problem.

John Toshack

Have you ever seen a Welsh side that was so inept as the one we saw at Croke Park. They showed no ambition playing with three centre halves and also no invention. But then again we only beat them by a single goal.

SIX NATIONS 2007 SPECIAL!



Thrills, Tries And TMOs

Tomás McCarthy reflects on the 2007 Six Nations.

WHAT a dramatic, unpredictable Six Nations campaign it was. We can truly say that rugby was the real winner. Each team will take both positives and negatives from this championship leading into the World Cup in the autumn.

France
The French were deserving champions as they were the most consistent team throughout the championship. They absolutely blew Ireland out of the water in the first 20 minutes at Croke Park displaying immense strength in the pack. The French flair is still alive and well and they can score from anywhere. Poitrenaud, Clerc and Dominici all displayed their threat with ball in hand. David Skrela was a revelation at out-half consistently kicking the goals and well able to play for territory. There is still a tendency though for the French to switch off or completely fall to pieces as they did in Twickenham. They showed remarkable strength of character however against both Ireland and the Scots to get the vital tries. Bernard Laporte's rotational policy worked well and they now have a strong squad going into the World Cup.

Ireland
This was the one that slipped away from Eddie O'Sullivan's men. This was the year for this special team to earn a Grand Slam but they choked. Worryingly Ireland showed dramatic inconsistency throughout the championship. They were unable to lift their game for the big clash against the French in Croke but were able to play some of their best rugby against the English. Ireland still rely too much on their key players. The team suffered

badly when O'Driscoll and Stringer were missing against the French and the pack struggled without O'Connell against Italy. God help us if O'Gara gets injured. What a championship he had scoring tries and kicking penalties at vital stages. A major plus is that when we didn't play up to scratch we grinded out results against Wales and Scotland. The back line confirmed their class with some mesmerising tries like O'Driscoll's against Wales or Horgan's against England or any of the tries against Italy. Hickie, D'arcy and Dempsey were my pick of the lot. Overall assessment? Good but not good enough.

England
After the Croke Park debacle English rugby looked to be on its knees but with some fine young players coming through and the win over the French Brian Ashton can be proud of his first Six Nations. The return of Jonny Wilkinson brought some excitement back in the first two games but covered over inadequacies in the back line. Ireland truly exposed their weaknesses in Croke. England were a disaster in the backs and were comprehensively out muscled in the forwards. But then came that Sunday in Twickenham. Youngsters like Flood, Rees, Geraghty and Strettle brought some much needed energy and exuberance to the team. The whole team displayed great spirit and determination to deservedly beat the French. With this talent coming through things aren't so bad in English rugby.

Italy
The Italians were the revelation of this tournament winning two games for the first time. Their

pack is a match for anyone and they have the ability to replace each one of the front row with a replacement who is just as good. Parisse was inspirational in the back row, one of the players of the tournament constantly putting Italy on the front foot and working tirelessly. Ok they were fortunate that the Scots were in very generous mood at Murrayfield but they did hang on and took their chances when they were presented. They were very impressive against Wales scoring some good tries. The Italians still aren't the most fluent in the backs but with their powerful pack and ageless captain Troncon they are still awkward opposition.

Wales
A disappointing championship from a team that are capable of so much more. They were so inept against Scotland and Italy in games they would have been expected to win. Their off the cuff high tempo style is still prevalent and highly entertaining. Flashes of this were shown against the French and the English. James Hook really starred well able to break the line and kick.

Scotland
Frank Hadden simply doesn't have the players. The first half display against Italy was suicidal rugby at its best in a performance that was error-ridden throughout. The Scots showed great spirit against the French and Ireland and never lacked for effort. Chris Patterson is a class act but other than that the Scots are limited. A poor side.

So, a most intriguing and entertaining championship. Hopefully we will get more in the autumn and a bit of luck for the Irish.



Ireland: A Lot Done, More To Do

CONOR MCGRATH

OVER the next few weeks, Eddie O'Sullivan and his coaching staff will conduct a review of Ireland's Six Nations campaign. They will see what weaknesses and strengths lay in the Irish team. Having watched all of Ireland's games over the last few weeks, I have come up with my own opinion of all the good and bad things that came out of Ireland's last five test matches.

There are many positives which can be taken from this year's Six Nations Championship. The Irish backline has now become the most dangerous international backline in Europe. Gordon D'Arcy is in scintillating form. He continues to break the game line at every opportunity. Girvan Dempsey has become much more of a threat when running with the ball rather than kicking it back. Ronan O'Gara has started to put his backs into space more instead of his usual tactical kicking game. Denis Hickie has found a new zest in his game when most people thought he was finished. O'Driscoll is not overly relied on to score important tries anymore. In my view, this all bodes well for the World Cup in the autumn. It's just a case of keeping the form going. Another positive has got to be the introduction of fringe players to the arena of test rugby. Players such as Simon Best, Mick O'Driscoll and Isaac Boss have a gotten a good taste of test rugby and have strengthened our bench enormously, especially in World Cup year. This has been a major problem for Eddie O'Sullivan in recent years. Now when push comes to shove, He can look at the replacements and know that most have valuable experience. Ireland has also shown in this year's Six Nations Championship that can win matches in different ways. Against Italy and England, Ireland showed us their ruthless side. In their final game, Ireland put eight

tries past the Italians in an attempt to win the championship itself. This was very pleasing to see. Against Wales and Scotland, Ireland were lacklustre to say the least but they still claimed the away victories. Ireland's defence also performed superbly during the championship. The team only conceded 5 tries in 5 games in comparison with France's 9 tries. All of the positives mentioned show that Ireland had a good Six Nations Championship. This was championship winning form but Vincent Clerc had other ideas.

There are a few negatives which can be taken from Ireland's Six Nations campaign. The game against France in Croke was a game which should have won. Ireland were too nervous in the opening quarter and choked in the final two minutes. This asks a lot of questions about the team's mentality when the pressure sets in. Hopefully this will not happen against France again in September. The biggest negative was the one we all feared; our

vulnerability without certain key players. During the championship, Brian O'Driscoll, Shane Horgan, Marcus Horan, Peter Stringer and Paul O'Connell missed at least one game due to injury. This had detrimental effects on the team and our chances. Against France, O'Driscoll and Stringer were hugely missed because of their vast skill levels and their big match experience. The worrying factor is that the World Cup matches are closer to each other than the Six Nations. This will give the players less time to recover from the previous match. Hopefully these negatives will be addressed by the coaching team. Ireland has a great chance of seriously contending the Rugby World Cup and it would a huge shame not to threaten New Zealand at it. It could be more than another one of those worthless Triple Crown season's...



McCarthy's Team Of The Tournament

15. Clement Poirtnaud (France)
14. David Strettle (England)
13. James Hook (Wales)
12. Gordon D'arcy (France)
11. Denis Hickie (Ireland)
10. Ronan O'Gara (Ireland)
9. Alessandro Troncon (Italy)
1. Olivier Milloud (France)
2. Raphael Ibanez (France)
3. John Hayes (Ireland)
4. Marco Bortolami (Italy)
5. Paul O'Connell (Ireland)
6. Sergio Parisse (Italy)
7. David Wallace (Ireland)
8. Sebastian Chabal (France)

McGrath's Team Of The Tournament

- 15: Clement Poirtnaud (France)
- 14: Vincent Clerc (I know!) (France)
- 13: Brian O'Driscoll (Ireland)
- 12: Gordon D'Arcy (Ireland)
- 11: Denis Hickie (Ireland)
- 10: Ronan O'Gara (Ireland)
- 9: Alessandro Troncon (Italy)
- 1: Pieter de Viellers (France)
- 2: Raphael Ibanez (France)
- 3: Santiago Dellape (Italy)
- 4: Jerome Thion (France)
- 5: Paul O'Connell (Ireland)
- 6: Serge Betsen (France)
- 7: David Wallace (Ireland)
- 8: Denis Leamy (Ireland)



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