

AN FOCAL

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Tuesday

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FREE

UL announce strategic alliance with NUIG

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh - Editor

ON FEBRUARY 18, University of Limerick (UL) and the National University of Ireland Galway, and (NUIG) announced a Strategic Alliance which will see increased collaboration between the two Universities which will hopefully boost enterprise and foreign direct investment in the western region.

The alliance will cover all aspects of teaching and learning in UL and NUIG while also strengthening research and industry partnerships to further a shared commitment to academic excellence.

The move will also allow for student exchange programmes between the two campuses and the joint development of PhD programmes. The details of the alliance were announced at a ceremony in Dublin involving An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Coughlan and the Minister for Education and Science, Batt O'Keeffe. Mr Cowen welcomed the announcement stating: "NUI Galway and the University of

Limerick are demonstrating how working together means working smarter. This alliance is an exciting new departure for two very progressive Universities.

It represents a key building block for our Smart Economy project. And it promises to make a major contribution to economic and social development in this country, at both regional and national levels.

The Government strongly supports increased collaboration between higher education institutions and between these institutions and industry. Our universities have a critical role to play as a dynamo energising our Smart Economy with new ideas and creativity.

Increased collaboration among our universities - joining forces - greatly helps us to up our game in the intense ongoing global competition to come up with new ideas, new products and new services.

The Government is very happy to see that Ireland's universities are coming up to the mark, moving from competition at home to collaboration in competing on

the world stage". UL President, Professor Don Barry, said: "UL and NUI Galway are hubs of educational excellence and research activity.

By coming together with a shared vision for the future we will optimise our delivery of world-class research, innovative teaching and service to the community, while being responsive to the needs of our industry partners and to the social, cultural and economic needs of Ireland...

This Alliance will make a real difference - a difference to our students, to our faculty and staff, to our researchers, to our industrial and business partners, and a difference to the Shannon Region and the West of Ireland."

The Students' Union has also come out in support of the alliance, with ULSU President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, saying: "It is great to see these two institutions working closer together to an all round better future for students, faculty and the country.

This is a positive move for students and will give much more variety and scope to their education."



Sabbatical Elections to take place in Week 7

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh - Editor

THE annual Students' Union Sabbatical Elections will take place on Thursday, March 11. Nominations for the five positions will open on Monday, March 1 (Week 6), and close on Friday, March 5.

Students' Union President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, encouraged all students to investigate running for a position as it is "a great opportunity for students to get

directly involved with changing the face of the Union. Students can bring in new ideas and new thinking to the organisation".

Mr Dillon McLoughlin also stated that "the job is a fun and vibrant one which requires continual dedication and enthusiasm while working long and stressful days".

Students are can contest five positions; President, Deputy President/Welfare Officer, Vice

President/Education Officer, Vice President/Campaigns and Services Officer and Vice President/Communications Officer.

There are no special requirements or experience needed to run for a position, apart from being a registered UL student, and the election is open to everyone. A description of each job will be included in the nomination packs, which can be collected

from Students' Union Reception from 9am on Monday of Week 7, but in the mean time interested students can visit www.ulsu.ie for information on each officer's job or take a look at our Sabbatical Officer feature on page 12.

Alternatively, students are welcome, and encouraged, to approach the current officers with any questions. All registered full-time students can put themselves

forward for election once they are proposed by 20 students and seconded by 40.

They are also required to have a campaign manager and must pay a €40 deposit which will be returned at close of nominations. The location and opening times of the polling booths, and the terms of the election, will be decided by the Electoral and Referenda Board at the end of this week.

An Focal Digest

In Brief

Charity Week Pulse

The deadline for submission of articles for the Charity Week issue of Pulse has been set as 5pm on Wednesday, March 3 (Week 6). Submissions can be sent to sucommunications@ul.ie. Students are also welcome to email the Communications Officer requesting that articles be assigned to them.

Staff Unions to take industrial action

Staff unions across the country have been discussing taking industrial action in relation to budget cuts. Although the staff union in UL has communicated that they want minimal disruption to students, as the situation escalates, disruption to students is likely.

Check back to www.ulsu.ie in coming weeks for more information.

Table Quiz in aid of ISPCC

A Table Quiz in aid of the ISPCC will be held in The Stables on Monday, March 1 (Week 6) at 7pm. Tickets are €5 and proceeds will go the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The Table Quiz will have a TV theme so start studying your TV Guide!

Writers' Meeting

A Writers' Meeting for An Focal & Pulse will take place on Wednesday, February 24 (Week 5) in the SU Common Room. All students are welcome to attend this meeting.

Student Media Award Submissions

The deadline for submission of entries to the Student Media Awards is Wednesday, March 10 (Week 7). Students must have preregistered by February 19 and anyone who has not done this will not be able to enter the awards.

It's that time of the year again

THE cogs of the rumour mill are working overtime now that the dates of the Sabbatical Elections have been decided. There is less than a month to go before we find out for certain who will be gunning for the Sabbatical seats, and if the rumours are anything to go by, we could be looking at one of the biggest elections in SU history.

Every student is entitled to run for any position they wish, but one piece of advice I would definitely give is for those students who are considering running to actually talk

to the current Officer. For those who are in two minds, it may be the thing that helps you decide whether to run or not. For those of you who are dead set on running and have your campaign sorted, it may be the thing that makes you realise that none of your manifesto is feasible. There is nothing worse than making promises to students that you can't deliver on. It always looks very bad to run for a position if you've never even said two words to the person currently doing the job.

Whatever you do, put yourself out there and

enjoy the week. It'll be a whirlwind of sweets, speeches and no sleep but you won't regret it for a second, no matter what happens. This time last year I was still in two minds about whether I should run or not but I haven't regretted the decision to run for one second. As the cliché goes, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

One thing I am looking forward to is being completely impartial, so don't be offended if I don't take your leaflet or don't stop to talk; I'm not allowed!

Writer's Meeting
Wednesday
Week 5 (Feb. 24)
6pm
SU Common
Room
All Welcome!

And thanks to...

News Editor – Jason Kennedy

Features Editor – Finn McDuffie

Arts Editor – Darragh Roche

Sports Editor – Tomás McCarthy

Design & Print – Impression

Senior Designer – Cassandra Fanara

www.impressionprint.ie

Contributors	Owen Hickie
Aisling Hussey	Michael Curtin
Sean Keane	Mike Considine
Shane O'Callaghan	Liam Togher
Sharon Whelton	Conor McGrath
Nicole Ní Ríordáin	Tommy Crean
Brian Finnerty	Daniel Bridge
Diarmuid Lucey	Alan Keane
Paula Jane Murphy	Enda Dowling
Denise Rocks	Mark Connolly
Amy Murphy	Fiona Reidy
Chloe Slattery	Cian Gallagher
Eoghan O'Sullivan	David Kelly
Emma Neilan	Martin Hayes
Mark O'Donovan	Stephen Kelly
Marine Plagne	
Liam Twohig	...and anyone else
Helena Murphy	I've forgotten

Next An Focal deadline is Friday, February 26 for Opinion/Features/Columns/Arts/C&S and Sport. News deadline is Monday, March 1.

Email submissions to
sucommunications@ul.ie

Quotes of the Fortnight

"If testosterone was a renewable source of energy you could power a whole city."

Deirdre Carey in relation to Eoghan O'Brien

"Get off my tits."

Strangely, this was said by News Editor, Jason Kennedy.

"Uh oh, 2 can Barry's had more than 2 cans." Know your limits kids.

"I heard one guy bought loads of sweets and gave them all away."

You can tell Brian Stewart hasn't been around for the Sabbat Elections before.

"All I'm saying is you're not as much craic when you're sober."

Overheard in the SU Courtyard.

We didn't stick around to hear the response.

"Seriously lads, where are his pants?"

Welfare Officer, Derek Daly, gets cranky on Class Reps Training.

To Brand or Not to Brand: that is the question?

By Paul Lee – C&S Development Officer

ORIGINALLY the idea for Clubs & Societies to have a common brand was discussed as far back as 1999. An idea of the UL Vikings was generated by the Clubs & Societies Council back then and followed up by the Clubs & Societies Executive of the day.

A local artist was requested to develop the theme and sketches were provided but that is really about as far as the idea went on a collective level. However an enterprising member of the Executive who was also a member of the newly founded American Football club adopted the idea later on for the American Football now known as the UL Vikings. Fast forward 10 years later and the idea was still bubbling away in various Clubs & Society Executives and individual members of the clubs and societies. In the intervening years the idea of the UL Ravens was touted to the Arena Board of Directors, we have had the UL Lions in Basketball and most recently we have again in Basketball, the UL Eagles.

It was thought that Clubs & Societies have matured a lot in their organisation over the last 10 years with many dabbling in clothing and their own specific brands and logos and that perhaps the time was right to explore once more. At an Association of Students' Unions Administrators (ASUA) in Maynooth last July,

that Secretary General, Tomás Costello, and I attended, we took part in a video conference with the University of Lowell Massachusetts as one of the conference's topics. This University created a "Riverhawk" brand for their University

Southern Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut, and the University of Connecticut and it really did offer fresh ideas and impetus on not least branding. Branding of course is huge in the US and they are very much culturally

it took probably the best part of 10 years to be embedded with UCC from its humble origins as a GAA logo.

In light of all the aforementioned history past and present a competition was organised last term by the Clubs & Societies Executive, championed by Keith O'Neill in particular, and our own marketing student, Mairtin Lally. The competition date was extended into this term from November as a result of public requests and the top eight images were put to Clubs & Societies Council and the three winners voted upon were the Bucks, Wolves and the Wolfhound. Copyright is part of the terms and conditions of the competition and the Clubs & Societies Executive, in association with the Students' Union, will now explore the three winning entrants with a professional designer to see if this might be the start of a slow process to create a communal brand.

Congrats to our winners:

1st Prize €300 – UL Bucks - Stephen Lowney
2nd Prize €150 – UL Wolves – David Hartery
3rd Prize € 50 – UL Wolfhounds - Meghan Halton

We would appreciate any further feedback or comment, good or bad (we don't mind!), via An Focal on this concept or via email to Paul. lee@ul.ie



through a series of engagements with their students and anecdotally proclaimed that it had a very positive effect on the community and their attendances at hockey matches etc.

In November we both attended the Association for College Unions International (ACUI) in New England USA for the first time. We visited Boston University, Curry College,

disposed to the idea but it ranged from the very basic, hoodies, t-shirts to the very elaborate in terms of merchandise and branding via the UConn Coop Store which was massive. Ironically too at a silent-auction at the ACUI the UCC "skull and cross" bones jersey was very highly subscribed to. We in ULSU have constantly pointed to the UCC brand and how

UGM fails to make quorum

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh – Editor

THE Students' Union General Meeting (UGM) failed to make quorum for the second time this academic year. The Annual General Meeting, which was held last semester, also failed to reach the required amount of students. For any motion to be passed, 200 students must be in attendance for the meeting.

136 students attended the meeting, which took place on Wednesday of Week 3 in the Jean Monnet lecture theatre. A number of motions were brought to the UGM by the Students' Union including motions to change the date of Sabbatical elections, incorporate the role of the Community Relations Officer into that of the Campaigns and Services Officer and create a Non-Sabbatical position of Fundraising Officer, amongst other motions.

As the meeting did not reach quorum, none of the motions on the agenda could be voted on. As a result

the Sabbatical Elections will now take place in Week 7, where it had been hoped they would take place in Week 10. This also means that it will be impossible to implement e-voting for the elections as the time frame for installation is too small.

Every registered UL student was invited to attend and vote on the UGM, as well as to bring motions and items for the discussion to the table. In advance of the UGM, only one motion had been submitted by students. This motion called on the Union to support the Fairtrade Initiative and will now be brought before Class Reps Council in the form of a policy. ULSU President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin said it was "disappointing for the Students' Union to not receive quorum as it is a great means of getting feedback from students". He also said that "students aren't using the forum provided to air their views and question the running of the Students' Union".

Seachtain na Gaeilge comes to UL

By Jason Kennedy – News Editor

THE annual fortnight to promote the Irish language will be celebrated in UL this year, with a number of events to get students back to speaking a bit of Irish.

Seachtain na Gaeilge will be held from the March 2 to March 17 and is organised by Conradh na Gaeilge. For the festival, events and activities are held all across the country to promote the use of Irish by people of all ages, whether those people are fluent or not.

A spokesperson for Seachtain na Gaeilge claimed that the event was very popular last year and that they hope it will only grow in size this year. "Thousands of people got involved in Seachtain na Gaeilge 2009 and we are hoping you will celebrate again in 2010. It is through your participation that the festival

is so successful and thoroughly enjoyable for all to experience. We look forward to working with you all again in 2010."



Communications Officer in the Students' Union, Aoife Ní Raghallaigh, a graduate of Irish and New Media, explained that she is organising a special project for Seachtain na Gaeilge in UL. "I'm organising a special, one-off pullout, in An Focal which will

be completely in Irish, called The Word. As with An Focal all students are welcome to write for this and the deadline is Friday, February 26. They can write on any subject they like, once it's in Irish and I will be checking spelling and grammar so they don't need to worry about that!"

There are also a number of events being held in Limerick city for Seachtain na Gaeilge, such as table quizzes, talkathons in Irish, fun runs, poetry readings and an Irish night in Trinity Rooms.

For more information on Seachtain na Gaeilge, and all the events, you can visit their website at www.snag.ie, or visit them on Facebook, Twitter or Myspace. Students wishing to submit articles to The Word should email articles to sucommunications@ul.ie by 5pm on Friday, February 26.

Students' Union begins lecturer evaluations

By Aoife Ni Raghallaigh – Editor

STUDENTS' Union Education Officer, Aoife Finnerty, recently launched a module and lecturer evaluation survey which will be available to students. The surveys, which were launched in Week 4, will be complied using Survey Monkey.

The evaluations will be complied online and lecturers or modules will be added to the survey at the request of students. Once the request is submitted the lecturer will be added to a drop down menu at the beginning of the survey. Students can then

select the lecturer or module they wish to evaluate before participating in the survey. Requests to have a lecturer added to the list can be down through the Class Rep but requests from other students will also be considered.

Ms Finnerty explained that she developed the survey so that students would have a voice, and a say in, in how modules are organised and taught as currently, lecturers can "choose to ignore or not partake in the evaluations run by the Centre of Teaching

and Learning (CTL)". She also stated that the survey aims to focus on all lecturers and modules, including "the very worst, the very best and the ones in the middle". Ms Finnerty will contact a lecturer with the results on the evaluation once they have been appraised by the students.

The Head of Department will be also be informed that a lecturer or lecturers in the department have been evaluated. Ms Finnerty also plans to forward a copy of the general results to Vice President Academic

and Registrar, Paul McCutcheon. Ms Finnerty will be the only person with access to the full results.

Speaking regarding the development of the survey, Ms Finnerty also stated that she approached various staff, members of various University committees and the staff unions to make them aware of the evaluation system before it launched.

Students wishing to include a lecturer or module on the system should contact their Class Rep or email sueducation@ul.ie

Students recreate siege

By Aisling Hussey

UL CIVIL engineers successfully re-enacted the 13th century siege of St. John's castle, despite the efforts of local school children.

On the February 12, 2nd year students constructed two siege platforms as part of their Problem Based Learning Steel and Timber module. They then transported the machinery to the castle for the "battle", where they had to assemble the platforms. They then faced 5th and 6th class students from St Munchin's Girls National School, who valiantly defended the battlements with wet sponges. The pupils were joined by Mog Ruith, who recalled the turbulent history of the castle for the children. The unfortunate students were eventually defeated by the children, and were humiliated in the stocks. The project was featured on RTÉ Six One news and News2day.

The event was led by the School of Engineering in UL, along with the Department of History in UL, Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, Shannon Heritage, Northside Heritage and Engineers Ireland. Chair of Civil Engineering at UL and organiser of the event, Professor Tom Cosgrave, believes that the project was a

worthwhile experience for the students. "This challenge is an innovative way for our students to gain real, hands-on experience and encourages innovative and critical thinking. The students must work collaboratively and creatively to build their medieval siege platforms to budget and on time while in hostile territory." Jennifer Moroney Ward, Manager of the Northside Learning Hub said; "We encourage educators and students at all levels to learn together in new and innovative environments. By forming active learning partnerships between third level staff and students with teachers and students at primary and secondary level we have the opportunity to build really strong and vibrant communities of learning and to explore subject areas and methods of learning beyond the traditional classroom or lecture theatre. This project is a perfect example of this in action." This project was the second community based project carried out by UL engineers. In 2009, the School of Engineers organised a bridge building competition where students constructed six bridges. This involved 5th class students from Milford National School. The event was part of Engineers Week.



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Connect with other students

By Sean Keane

IN A place as big as UL, it's easy to feel lost or out of place. Everyone seems to have somewhere to be; it may seem like no one has time for you, one person's feelings don't really matter. The whole purpose of Connect is to emphasise that no one needs to be on their own! To put a positive spin on things: in a place as big as UL, someone must empathise with what you're feeling! Connect is an on-campus peer mentoring

service, providing one to one support for students. Our team consists of student volunteers, people who've had personal experience of the highs and lows of college life and can give good advice. Like Clubs and Societies, Connect has a committee of students who decide on activities and promote the service. Notice all the new posters that have appeared in the last few days? We put them up! There are now around 50 volunteers, from

a variety of backgrounds. We try to match people with similar interests, so

“Our teams consists of...people who've had personal experience of the highs and lows of college”

rest assured that you'll find some common ground with our student volunteers. Sport, music, films, fashion, video games, studying; someone in Connect is

interested! Typically, the meetings are face to face, in an informal, relaxed context

like a café. If this doesn't suit, we're willing to be flexible, so other methods of communication (like texting or online) are options.

In terms of general

meetings, we hold a Coffee Corner every two weeks. This gives students an opportunity to meet up and just chill out together. If you want to check out what Connect is like for yourself, these meetings are a valuable opportunity. The next one is being held between 1pm and 2pm on Wednesday February 24, in the Arena Sports Bar. Lately, we've quite active in promoting the service (like the aforementioned posters), so we've had lots

of new students signing up. There are still volunteers available to meet though, so no need to hesitate.

Our volunteers will always make time to help out fellow students!

So, if you're interested and would like to know more, there are several ways to do so. You can check out our website by visiting <http://www.ulconnect.ie> or to make direct contact, you can e-mail connect@ul.ie or call 086-8115829.

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UCD face Christmas exams

By Shane O'Callaghan

STUDENTS of University College Dublin have been told that they may face exams on Christmas Eve in the next academic year as issues have arisen with the time-tabling plan that had originally been set forward.

The University Undergraduate Programme Board noted at a recent meeting that the planned dates of UCD's Orientation Week clashed with the first round offers from the CAO, which are both scheduled to begin on August, 30. This clash would lead to many first year students unable to attend some or all of their introduction to UCD, due to not knowing if they had been accepted or not. It was also felt that it would place undue stress on both the incoming students, as well as the registration system, with prospective students being forced to accept places and register in a greatly shortened time frame. Serious concerns were raised that this would lead to a backlog that would make the process more difficult for all involved.

The Board was therefore forced to decide whether it was more feasible to scrap Orientation Week or the proposed schedule as a whole. As the University felt that students would not be sufficiently prepared for their entrance into college life without Orientation Week, it's was decided that an alternative academic schedule was required. The schedule was therefore provisionally

pushed back one week, with students beginning orientation on Monday, August 6. With the semester containing 12 weeks of tuition, and a week of revision, this will lead to the exams being due to take place between December 13 and 24.

In order to avoid this occurring, a number of ideas have been suggested. Included in these is the idea of trying to shorten the exam period into 10 days, and to finish on the 23rd instead.

However, this requires a plan being formed on exactly how to condense 11 days worth of exams into 10. The feasibility of such an idea has yet to be determined.

If such a plan cannot be followed, there has also been a proposal to move the exams a day forward. As the exams cannot take place on a Sunday due to University rules, this would lead to the exam period commencing on Saturday, December 11 instead.

This is believed to be the most likely course of action, although some are unhappy that the week of revision usually set aside for students will be cut short by two days.

Students in UCD have raised concern at the possibility of sitting examinations on Christmas Eve, with one student commenting "if this happens, it will make it very difficult to get home for Christmas. Hopefully something can be done to resolve it."

SU election fever hits Ireland

By Shane O'Callaghan

STUDENTS' Unions across Ireland are gearing up for days of frenzied campaigning and sweet dispensing, as elections take place to decide each Union's Sabbatical Officers for 2010/2011.

For the first time in six years, a sabbatical officer in Trinity has decided to run for their current position once more. Current Welfare Officer, Cormac Cashman, is competing with fourth year student, Steph Fleming, in what is considered the closest of the races. The elections took place over three days on campus, with the polls open on February 16, 17 and 18.

According to one Trinity student, "campaigning across campus has been much less bitter and intense than in previous years", with a greater emphasis on positivity.

H i g h l i g h t s including a seven foot mascot roaming around campus supporting one of the education candidates.

DCU have yet to set the date for their elections to take place. An announcement is expected soon however, as according to their constitution, they must take place between week 6 and 9.

Already, there has been rumblings of people actively involved in the SU that are considering running, but no candidates has been confirmed at the time of going to print.

NUIG have announced that their elections will take place on the March 4. With no major speculation about candidates for the roles, it's clear that if anyone is intending on running, that they are indeed keeping their cards close to their chest. In UCC, sabbatical elections will take place on the March 2 and 3. Anyone hoping to run for any of the 4 positions of President, Vice

President, Education or Welfare, must first obtain 500 nominations from students, as opposed to only 60 in UL.

Already, several candidates have declared for each position. The position of President is likely to be fought by five candidates, with three names in for each of the other positions. In Limerick, neither Mary I nor LIT have made any decision about the dates on which their elections shall take place. Both institutions elect two positions, a President, and a Vice-President.

UCD will also hold their elections on the March 3 and 4. Similarly to UL, they have five full-time officers; President, Welfare, Education, Entertainments, and Communications. After the close of nominations, only the positions of Education and Communications had been contested.

However, as UCD operates a "Return Other Nominee" system, those candidates

who were uncontested must still run campaigns and convince the student body of their merit. As in years gone by, joke candidates are a theme common to a lot of the elections. Whether it is for RON or for a write-in candidate, a number of people are planning to run campaigns. In Trinity, both President and Education are being targeted by candidates with policies such as "putting the Protestant back in Trinity" and "introducing more essays" for students.

Whatever the intentions or plans of each individual candidates may be, soon enough the student bodies across Ireland will have their chance to decide exactly who will be taking them forward in the year to come.

Consultation on a National Representative Body

ULSU is looking for your views on what a national representative body should do for students and students' unions.

Please take the time to respond to us at national.consult@ul.ie with your ideas and suggestions. We have identified a number of areas that we consider would benefit the internal day-to-day running of ULSU and bring gains for members.

The issues raised in the Executive's discussion of the matter are available on the Student Portal on the Students' Union panel or on www.ulsu.ie.

We appreciate this may not outwardly seem to make any difference to the everyday life of a student, but if we are to approach the students' unions of the other six universities and 14 ITs and, if you wish, other higher education institutions, we will need to have a broad view of what our students want.

You can contact your class rep, write to us or email directly. Final date for receipt of submissions is Friday of Week 8 this semester (Friday, 19 March 2010).

Deputy President, Derek Daly has taken on this project in order to ensure that all students have an opportunity to contribute. If you have any questions you can email him Derek.Daly@ul.ie or SUWelfare@ul.ie

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(24th February)**

=====

Landlord/Accommodation Issues

Minor Offences

What could stop you getting approved for a J1

Summer 2010 in
Boston, USA
J-1 Students



**On Campus Interviews
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Students frustrated by WIT dispute

By Sharon Whelton

STUDENTS from WIT vented their anger following a dispute between their lecturers and college, which resulted in staff withholding the exam results of thousands of students. A strike was held on Wednesday, February 3, with thousands of WIT students taking to the streets in a bid to receive their results, which were due to be released on the previous day.

The row between the lecturers and college authorities from Waterford IT concerns payments to be made to Institute lecturers for correcting exams at the end of each semester. WIT Students' Union President, Cathy Pembroke, said students were frustrated by the situation and did not want to be used as pawns in the stalemate situation. Speaking at the protest, Ms Pembroke vowed that "students will continue to apply all necessary pressure to ensure that they get their results." Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) members at

WIT voted in favour of industrial action over the dispute. They agreed not to turn in results and not draft or mark future exams because the college had "unilaterally slashed the exam marking rate it had customarily paid" since semesterisation was introduced five years ago. The TUI claimed that WIT had failed to follow grievance procedures, and following a ballot of Union members, over 80% voting in favour of withholding the exam results.

In response, over 3000 WIT students took to the streets to protest against the withholding on their exam results.

Following this, TUI and WIT management agreed on an interim deal which would hopefully see students in receipt of their exam results in early March. Following the agreement, Ms Pembroke said that "students should never have been affected by the internal industrial relations process between the College and its staff."



WIT students protested after their exams were withheld

Choose a Challenge Charity Week!

PLANS are well under way for Charity Week, which takes place during Week 9, March 22 – 24. The annual event aims to raise money for four pre-selected charities through gigs and sponsored events. This year's charities are Limerick Youth Service, Mid-West Simon Community, Irish Heart Foundation and Make A Wish Ireland and each day of Charity Week will be dedicated to one of the charities.

Students can also sign up for a number of Charity Week events at the Students' Union reception. These events include a Tag Rugby and 5-a-side Soccer Tournament, a 5km campus run, the Great Race, a Sleep Out and a Duck Race. Apart from the Duck Race, which

costs €3 to enter, students are required to raise a sum of money, either alone or as part of a team, to take part in some of the events.

Students wishing to take part in either the Tag Rugby or 5-a-side Soccer Tournaments gathered their teams before submitting their entry forms for last Friday. There must be seven players on the pitch at any point during a Tag Rugby match and five on the pitch during the 5-a-side Soccer. Teams are permitted to have substitute members available. The tournaments will begin soon. Students taking part in the Great Race must organise a team of four and raise €500 between the team to take part. Completed forms must be returned to SU Reception by 4pm on Friday, March 12 (Week

7). A car and digital camera are also required to take part. The Race begins on 19 March (Week 8) and students are required to race across Ireland, completing a number of tasks for points, with only €100 in their pockets. The €100 is refunded from the registration fee. The team, who complete the most tasks, which is verified by photos, will be deemed winners. Details of the tasks will be released soon.

The Sleep Out is scheduled to take place during Charity Week, although this may have to be changed for Health and Safety reasons. Participants will be spending the night in the Students' Union Courtyard with no sleep to raise money and awareness for the Mid-West

Simon Community. Again, sponsorship cards can be collected from the SU Reception and students must raise €100 to take part in the Challenge.

A 5km Run will also be taking place around campus on Thursday of Week 6 (4 March). Every student is welcome to take part in this run and sponsorship cards are available from SU Reception. Students are not required to raise a set amount to take part in the run but aim is to raise €5000 from all participants. The run will be followed by a talk from the Irish Heart Foundation in the Castletroy Park Hotel.

So now you have all the information, the only question is: What Challenge will you pick?



Union Debrief

Ruán's Rundown

Here is a copy of a summary of some of the issues which I have dealt with over the last few months which I presented at the last UGM.

- Ensuring the Smooth running of the Students' Union. - A lot of time is taken in trying to create an effective work environment for Sabbats, staff and students. A lot of this unseen work results in a much more effective Union for students.
- Student Survey – The student perspective is needed so we do what students want us to do. This year we got 1,800 responses to our student survey, the first to be carried out in four years. We hope this will be an annual survey.
- Student Playing Pitches – A final brief is near completion which will address the works needed to be carried out to address the substandard condition of playing pitches. We have ensured the provision of floodlighting in the brief as well as extensive works. We also ensured student access to new artificial playing pitches to be constructed on the north campus. The problem hasn't be resolved fully yet, but we are working hard to ensure a speedy and effective solution.
- Information Points – Display stands have been made to display An Focal. Leaflet pockets are also attached to provide other information relevant to students.
- Information Screens – A number of information screens have been activated around the camps to advertise Union and C&S activities. It is hoped they will provide more information about Union activities.
- Entertainment – We have been working hard to provide the best Ents line-up for you this semester. We have a greatline-up so far, check out www.ulsu.ie
- Charity Week – We have looked at trying to increase the amount of money raised from our RAG week. By re-branding the week we hope to raise more money and make the week a viable event.
- Website – The website is now being updated daily to provide up-to-date information to students. Facebook is also being used extensively.
- Union promotion – We are trying to maximising the promotion of Union activities. We admit this is a big downfall and is still in need of major attention.
- Christmas tree – To lift the spirits around the campus we put up Christmas decorations around the SU building and the courtyard.
- Exploring long term developments – We need to keep a keen key on the long term projects the Union will be involved with and exploring any potential projects.
- Benchmarking trips – We undertook trips to Leeds and Sheffield Universities to benchmark current practices in the UK. A report was drawn up on our findings and is available on request.
- E- Voting – We have explored and looking at rolling out E-voting for all elections and referendums. We hope this will allow more students access to campaign information and easier access to voting.
- Long term Planning – This is another area that is in need of much more attention. We are working at a more long term planning strategy for the Union.
- Student Service Charge – We have been looking for clarification on the spending of the Student Service Charge to ensure it is spent just on student services and not on core functions of the University.

Postgrad News

IT'S here... this Friday, February 26, the PSA in Association with Ulster Bank present the PSA Annual Charity Ball 2010 in aid of the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland in Limericks Strand Hotel.

For those of you lucky enough to have tickets a number of people will be meeting at the riverside bar from 7pm as we wait for a dinner call at 7.30pm. Dinner will start as close to 7.30pm as possible so please be punctual as we cannot delay the evening waiting on stragglers.

Dinner will be followed by a performance by Nugget and Postgrad DJ, and the man behind the Treehouse, David Morrissey who will keep the party going well into Saturday morning.

Nugget have played for us before, at the Movember Madness Bash last semester, where they quite simply blew us away so we asked them back. Hotpress have labelled them "Boostsy Collins Aficionados" and if you want to check them out before the Ball go to www.myspace.com/nuggetfunk.

We are hosting this evening in conjunction with our very kind sponsors Ulster Bank, without whom the night could not be half as successful, so thank you to all at Ulster Bank for all their support so far.

Their support will help us to raise as much as possible for our chosen charity; the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland. We aim to raise as much as possible in our bid to support the Alzheimer's Society as we support their bid to build the first respite centre in Ireland outside of Dublin. Waterman's Lodge will serve dementia

patients and their carers from throughout the entire mid-west. All proceeds from the Ball and any raffles on the night will go directly to helping this worthy cause from our local community.

Why Alzheimer's?

There are currently over 44,000 people living in Ireland with dementia, they and their families need support and the Society works in the heart of local communities to try to provide support, maximise quality of life and to build awareness and understanding about dementia.

The Society provides the following support services around Ireland:

- The Alzheimer National Helpline
- Day Care Centres
- Home Care Programmes
- Carer Support Groups
- Overnight Respite Centre
- Weekly Social Clubs
- The Dementia Rights Advocacy Service

The Society also publishes and distributes resources such as their Information Pack for which they rely solely on your generosity to produce.

Tickets cost just €35 per ticket and there may be a limited amount remaining so contact the PSA President if you are still looking for a ticket. Also there may be a limited number of 'afters' tickets available – go to www.postgrads.ie for more details.

See you Friday in the Strand!

Michael

Council Corner

Clubs and Socs Council

The second Clubs and Societies Council of this semester took place in Week 3. Representatives at this meeting discussed a number of issues pertaining to the running of Clubs and Societies.

Entries to the C&S Branding competition were presented to Council. Representatives were then asked to vote on their preferred brand with Stephen Lowney, and his UL Bucks concept, emerging

victorious. David Hartery came second and Meghan Halton came third. Council also approved the beginning of a 15 Week Trial for the Development Society, Tennis Club and Finance & Investment Society. The societies and clubs will now have 15 weeks to obtain members before an evaluation which will determine if the clubs and societies will qualify for a budget in the next academic year. An update was given on the pitches and Council

also discussed ideas for a long term capital plan for C&S. Issues were also raised around the Sub Aqua Club being asked to pay €8000 to heat the diving pit when they had never been required to pay this before. The next meeting of Clubs and Socs Council will take place in Week 5.

Class Reps Council

The second Class Reps Council of this semester took place in Week 4.

The meeting narrowly made quorum and, as such, reps have been asked to ensure that they attend each fortnight. A number of policies were amended by the Council including the Class Reps Policy which was amended to correct spelling and grammar.

A new policy, the Raising and Giving Policy, was also passed. This puts in writing the procedures which must be taken in choosing the four charities which will benefit from the

money raised in Charity Week. The date of Sabbatical Elections was also set by Council.

They have decided that nominations will open and close in Week 6 with the election taking place in Week 7. A new Deputy Chair and Chair of Council were also elected at the meeting.

Congratulations to the new Chair, Triona O'Sullivan, and Deputy Chair, Barry Kennedy.

RAG Charity

Raising and Giving Charity: Make-A-Wish Ireland

Make-A-Wish in Ireland aims to grant the wishes of children aged between 3 and 18 years living with a life-threatening illness. Since the charity was set up in Ireland in 1992, it has granted over 1000 wishes for brave children. Worldwide, the organisation grants a wish for a terminally ill child every 30 minutes and nearly 250,000 wishes have been granted since the charity began in 1980.

Granting a wish for an ill child allows them to experience hope, strength and joy, and offers them a break from their normal routine of hospitals. In all possible cases Make-A-Wish grants the child's first wish once all immediate family members are happy to participate. In doing so they provide long-lasting and happy memories for those relatives, as well as the child, whatever the future may hold. Wishes are limited only by the child's imagination.

When the Make-A-Wish foundation visits a child they simply ask "If you had one wish, what would it be?"

The response usually falls into one of four categories with the child either wishing to be something for a day, go somewhere, have something or meet someone. Once the charity has discovered what the special wish is, they go about making it become reality so they child can have a break from hospitals and doctors.

Children hoping to have a

wish granted can be referred by themselves, their parents or legal guardians, a doctor or nurse, or a friend or relative.

Children between 3 and 18 years of age are eligible to have a wish granted but the treating consultant must confirm that the child is medically suitable and able to take part in the wish. Once this has been confirmed a volunteer wish team is assigned to the child to coordinate



the wish granting process. Wishes granted in Ireland include that of Aaron who met his idol, Liverpool footballer, Fernando Torres, and Cody, who travelled all the way from Minnesota to meet music legends, Metallica.

Other wishes granted include Samuel's wish to become a fireman, Brian's who wanted a yellow Power Ranger Suit, Christian who

wished to ride a rollercoaster in DisneyWorld Florida and Michael who wanted to be a fashion designer for a day. More information on all the wishes granted in Ireland can be found on www.makeawish.ie

Make-A-Wish Ireland is fully committed to providing the maximum level of care and enjoyment for the children and their families. They achieve this through a combination of professionalism, attention to detail and sensitivity; nothing is too much trouble for they children as they are, after all, the only reason the charity exists. To continue with their work and to succeed in their aims, they rely overwhelmingly on the kindness of people like you. With your generosity they can make a real difference to a child's life. A small donation of 20c per student during Charity Week could raise €2,400 which will go towards granting the wish of a terminally ill child in Ireland.

This Charity Week, be more, donate more, and make a real difference in the lives of the people around you. Register to take part in one of the Charity Week Challenges, throw your change in a collection box during the week or just leave a donation when you pick up condoms from the SU Reception. Every little helps but we need everyone to get out and donate if we want to make a real difference this Charity Week.

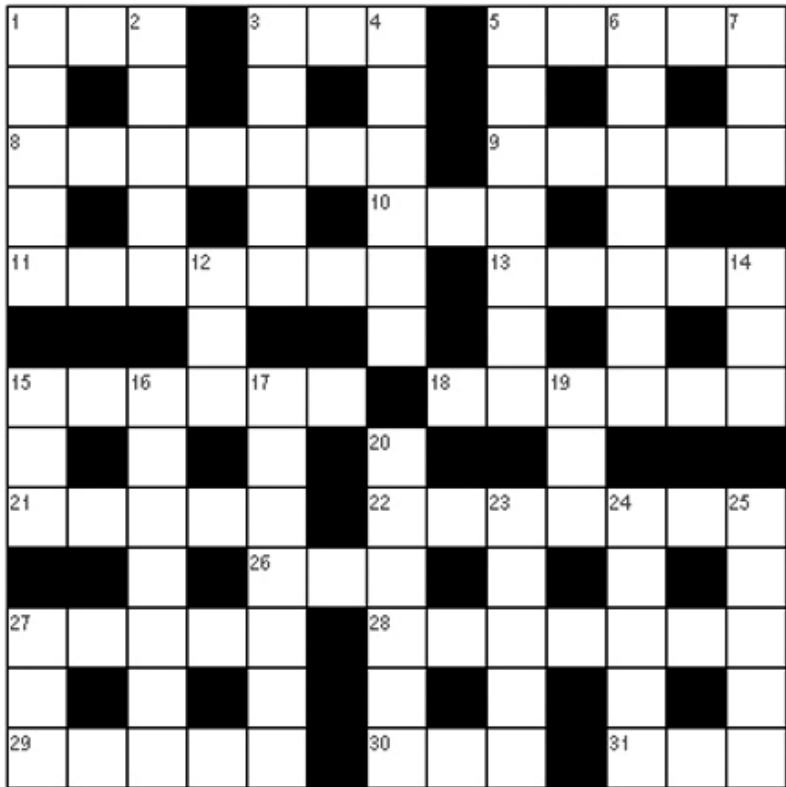


MAKE · A · WISH®

Ireland

Fun Page!

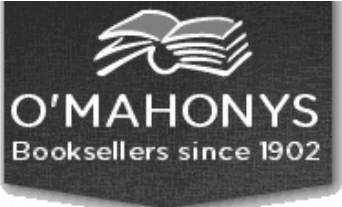
Crossword



Across

1. Which came first? The chicken or...
3. Muscle spasm
5. Frown or glare
8. Pungent gas compounded of nitrogen and hydrogen
9. Mammal with webbed and clawed feet
10. Liquid used for writing
11. False or defamatory
13. Inactive or sluggish by nature
15. Crushed or ground with teeth
18. A type of hat
21. More infrequent
22. Complying with rules
26. Fresh or unused
27. Slang for alcohol
28. The erotic quality of something
29. Select by vote
30. Cunning or wily
31. Belonging to him

Sponsored by:



Down

1. Another word for tests
2. Third letter of Greek alphabet
3. Adjusted to correct pitch (musical instrument)
4. Musical _____, party game
5. Hazier
6. Ground or rolled oats
7. Children of _____, Irish story
12. Present, current moment
14. For children to play with
15. Motor vehicle
16. External part of ear
17. The Importance of Being _____
19. A climbing vine
20. Intestines
23. A deep black
24. Born in Ireland
25. Amusement or pastime
27. Small flying insect that stings

The lucky winner will receive a €20 voucher to spend in
O'Mahony's Booksellers
or online at
www.omahonys.ie
For all your college needs

Submit entires with name & ID number to the entry box in SU reception

In Numbers

- 4
Weeks until Charity Week!
- 37
Days until Easter. How is Lent going?
- 1800+
The amount on fans on the ULSU Facebook. We're nearly at 2000!
- 200
Amount of students needed for a quorate UGM. Who know that would have been so hard?

Word of the Issue

"loquacious"

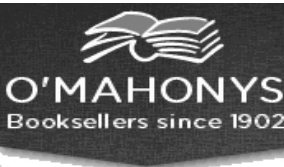
Full of excessive talk
This word debuted in 1663 and was soon snapped up by poets because of it's lyrical sound who stretched its meaning to their poetic needs. The word is Latin in origin, coming from "loqui", a verb meaning "to speak".

Sudoku

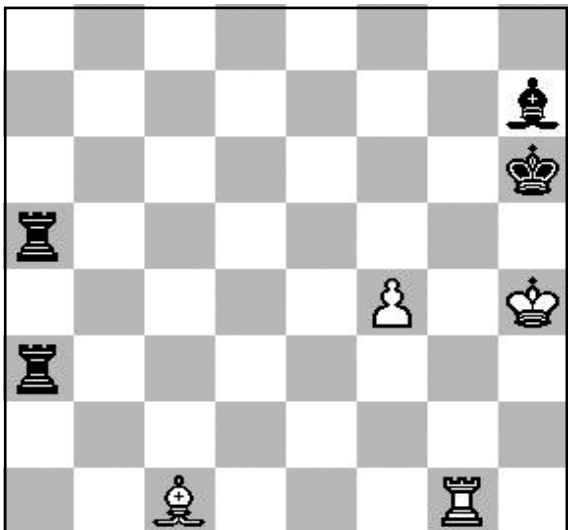
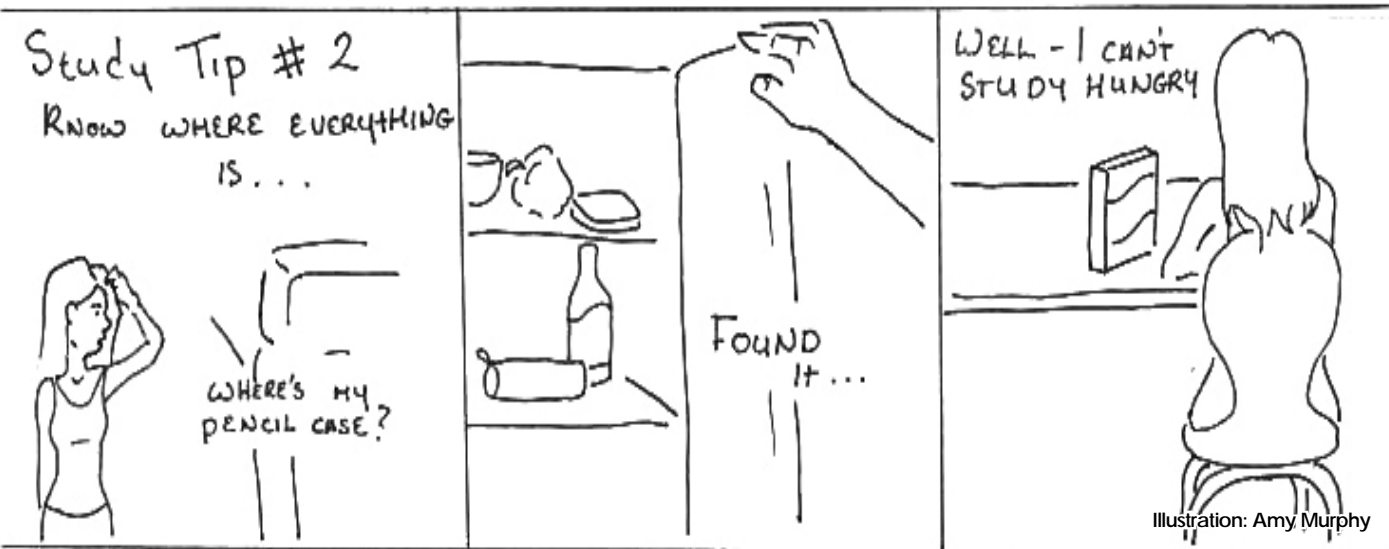
	1		9	6				3
						9		2
9			2	3			6	
	5			9		6	4	
	2	6		4			1	
	9			2	4			6
7		8						
2				5	9		3	

The winner will receive a €20 voucher to spend in
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Sponsored by:



Instructions:
The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow in a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:
* Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
* Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
* Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.



Diary of a Co-Op Student

By Nicole Ni Riordáin

HAS it really been two weeks since I wrote the last diary? Time flies! I can't believe I've been in Lithuania a month already.

One of the biggest events for me in the last fortnight is a house move. I had to choose between a horrible place in the city centre and a much nicer place in the suburbs near work. So I chose the latter. It makes a big difference in the morning to be able to walk 10 minutes to work instead of having to commute for 50. Better still; the city is pretty close for visiting in my spare time. The main disadvantage of living so close to work is that most of the students I teach live in the same area and I can't leave my house without bumping into one of them.

Work itself is going well. I'm able to navigate the school much more quickly now and I'm slowly learning the names of the students (and teachers!). It's still strange to be a teacher- I never thought I'd see the day that I'd be hanging out in the staff room and chiding the kids for running in the corridors. The responsibility has been piling up the last few weeks, but the work isn't difficult and I never imagined that teaching would be so satisfying. It's amazing to see the pupils master something I've taught them from scratch. Another recent major event was that I had my first visitors! My mom and her friend arranged a long weekend here and we spent

four days exploring the city and surrounding areas. We went on a day trip to Trakai, about 40 minutes from Vilnius, which was amazing. At the end of the town there's a medieval castle on an island in the middle of a lake, which you can reach by bridge. It was beautiful and we had the place almost to ourselves as it's off-season at the moment. The water is completely frozen over too, (since I've been here the warmest temperature has been -4) so we were able to walk back to the town on the surface of the lake instead of using the bridge. I've also been quite busy getting used to clubbing in Lithuania. The first night I went out I couldn't believe how late they stayed open, (4am, or sometimes 6 apparently!) how cheap the drinks were and the fact that the cloakroom is free (FREE!). But after a couple more evenings, I've become accustomed to it and I'm dreading returning to the expensive Irish clubs. Everything here, except clothes, is a fraction of what it would cost in Ireland. Dinner in a nice restaurant, with dessert and two rounds of drinks normally comes to about €9 or less.

One thing I am looking forward to about returning home is catching up with my friends. Everyone on my course is on Co-Op at the moment and I can't wait to meet up in UL to swap tales of our adventures!

Recipe of the Fortnight Chicken Fajitas

By Brian Finnerty

Ingredients:

- Chicken breasts
Onions
Peppers
Jar of Salsa
Wraps
Grated Cheese
Oil, Spices - Salt, Pepper & a little Chili Powder
3. When the pan is sizzling, add the chicken.
4. Cook until slightly brown.
5. Add onions and peppers and fry until cooked.
6. Add salsa to pan.
7. Simmer until hot and fill wraps.
8. Add the grated cheese.
9. Place the wrap under grill to melt the cheese and make crispy (optional).

Ni Hao from Beijing!

By Diarmuid Lucey

CHINESE greetings to all at UL! Whilst you guys have been strategically altering your time tables to avoid 9am tutorials, I've travelled 8,302Kms, temporarily lost 8 hours of my life, had a poultry pancake and celebrated the New Year for a second time.

Three days ago, I was forced to break up with my long term partner, Ryanair. I'm delighted I did as the 10 hour flight journey to Beijing would have surely induced an acute case of deep vein thrombosis. On the plane I met seven other students on the Chinese Research Internship. An hour prior to landing at Beijing International airport, a nervous silence fell over our group. The thought of finding a taxi from the airport to the college dawned on us. We frantically practiced our pronunciation and eventually elected one unfortunate guy to do the mutterings. As we flagged the taxi, our hearts were in our mouths. Would we be understood or worse, would we end up in Mongolia? Our spokesman strained under the stress and simply said the name of the college we were to go to. The taxi driver stared at us, uttered something Chinese and drove on. I wanted him to stop as I had a bad feeling. As we sat silently cramped in the back of the taxi, gazing about in awe we wondered if we would ever stop. With the grace of God, about five minutes later we stopped. The fare was about €1.

At the airport, a bit taken aback by the whole array of calligraphy surrounding us, we decided to immerse ourselves in the Chinese cuisine. We visited a "restaurant" where I was distracted by the warmth of an oven and its contents which looked like chicken. Feeling brave (or perhaps stupid) I indicated that I would like this "chicken". Moments later, I was presented with a pancake with the chicken wrapped inside it. It transpired that the "restaurant" was actually a delicatessen and the "chicken" was actually duck. We didn't like the duck and sought refuge in McDonalds with a Big Mac.

The following day, I encountered a case of déjà vu, Chinese style. The Chinese celebrated their New Year on February 14. Apparently, the new calendar in China is dependent on the first full moon in the year. It is the year of the Lion, and better again, the Mecca Lion, which is to bring good luck and wealth to China. Sadly not to Ireland though!

Tomorrow, is the start of the new College term in China and it will be the day we will rightly know why we have travelled 8,302kms to Beijing. In the meantime, we're playing it safe and stocking up on McDonalds and Costa coffee!

I'll leave you with a useful phrase: ni huì shuō yīngwén ma? = Can you speak English?

First Year Diary

By Amy Murphy

I HAVE yet to achieve a golden week. And the task isn't about to get any easier with clubs' and societies' AGMs and EGMs getting underway before a new semester full of meetings and activities.

When does the study get done? Who knows? But somehow, it gets done. Maybe it's the hour I have off between classes or that I read one page of a journal article every TV ad break. Either way, I find being smart with my time leaves more time for being busy. It's the one thing everyone notices about me. But the thing is I'm happy!

Getting involved in the community has always been my number one priority. Not that it doesn't have its downsides. I was bag-packing in Dunnes on Wednesday and while it was great craic, it left me unable to climb the stairs of the Main

Building Thursday morning. No morning coffee for me then. I might actually have to start sleeping.

But to return to my original point, I managed to avoid a module completely, up until today. It's the one module I hate.

That one module. We all have one that, if we just gave it a chance, would be interesting and engaging. But it's just comforting to have a module against which we can pitch all our college-life frustrations. It's therapeutic. I don't have much to complain about. In fact, the only problem with being so busy, is that time is flying by and I'm already worried about the fact that "the best years of my life" amount to eight semesters; the second of which is about to disappear. But didn't I promise not to worry about time anymore?

Why be a Sabbatical Officer?

IN THESE times of Economic downturn with employment prospects beyond competitive in the rare circumstance that they exist, you owe it to yourself to distinguish your CV from the thousands of others that join the treadmill every year.

The Students' Union will shortly have vacancies for five Sabbatical Officers. At the end of a year as a Sabbatical Officer you will gather some critical skills which will only serve to broaden and expand upon the academic learning already garnered during your time in the University Of Limerick.

As well as helping your fellow students you will also have made yourself a more marketable prospect to future employers or even developed your Business Acumen to enable you branch out on your own.

The Students' Union may be seen by a majority of Students as a clique for the political activists and the hacks, or of no relevance to their present and definitely none to their futures.

Take a moment to reconsider these perceptions and look at what a Sabbatical Officer can gain from their year serving the students of UL. In addition to the primary Student Representative role Sabbatical Officers will have, after their year, been exposed to some key "on the job" experiences which will serve them well throughout the rest of their lives. These experiences include the following, in no particular order:

Governorship - The President and Deputy President of the Students' Union, along with the President of the Postgraduate Students' Association sit on Governing Authority for the University. This is the final forum where all matters relating to the operation of the University are discussed and decided upon.

People Management - to put it into a "job" analogy Sabbatical Officers are effectively the Board of Directors of Students' Union Inc. Their decisions impact on the Student Body and the University but also on the 90 or so people who are employed by the Students' Union.

Project Management - whether it is a campaign or a new service, an Ents gig or some other initiative, there are narrow timelines which will need to be adhered to in order to deliver the message, initiative or service in a timely manner. Due to the nature of the academic year there isn't any slippage room so demonstrated delivery of projects on time would be invaluable to your future as well as those you serve in the present.

Procurement - getting the right products or services for the best price, at the right time.

Advocacy - As a Sabbatical Officer you represent all students and will represent the cohort, or an individual, in many varied situations which can range from University Discipline to Community Forums or Landlord Disputes.

Fiscal Acumen - All Sabbatical Officers will have Budgetary Control over their remit and as a collective will have accountability to the Members for the Financial Stability of the Union.

Marketing - For the Students' Union to be effective it must get its message out there.

Directorships - Every Sabbatical Officer will have at least one Directorship of a Registered Company; some may have 3-4 directorships with all the responsibilities contained therein.

Counsellor - Primarily the Welfare Officer



and the Education Officer, but all Sabbatical Officers, will at some stage have to advise a distressed Student. While not actually a counselling role, it is first aid for distressed students who may need to see someone from Counselling

Decision Making - You won't be able to please all the people all the time so you will learn to rationalise and prioritise to deliver the best result for the Students' Union

Negotiation - Sometimes involving high stakes.

Commercial / Retail Management - through close involvement in the operation of the Students' Union Shops and Services

This listing is not exhaustive as there are many other key learnings available. There are not that many other jobs that will get you this range of experience in the first year while still having the benefit of a paid student existence.

Sabbatical Officer Positions

President - The most visible Sabbatical Officer. They represent UL students in many forums internally, locally and nationally. The President is the Chair of Exec and as such is responsible for getting and maintaining collective responsibility to deliver the Union's objectives.

Welfare Officer - The Sabbatical Officer who is most focused on ensuring that students' physical, mental and sexual health are catered for in the best possible way. The Welfare Officer is the Students' Union contact for landlord issues. The Welfare Officer also administers the Financial Aid Fund for Undergraduates in association with the Chaplain. It is important to remember that this officer is here to offer advice, and not to "do" on behalf of a student. Welfare Officer is also the Deputy President and all that that entails.

Education Officer - Represents the students'

interests within the University on all issues regarding the academic part of your time in UL. The Education Officer also manages the Class Rep process, which is where each student's voice can be heard through their Class Rep at fortnightly council.

Campaigns and Services Officer - This office is responsible for all services offered by the Students' Union from the Pool Room through to Ents and many others in between. They are also responsible for the logistics of all Students' Union Campaigns

Communications Officer - This position has responsibility for all Students' Union publicity. This includes editorial responsibility for all SU publications, and liaison for all external businesses who wish to hawk their wares to you as students. All prospective Officers must have altruistic intentions; these roles are not for selfish purposes. The primary role is representation of the interests of all students as well as taking up the cudgels for the disenfranchised few.

Yes, you do get some personal benefit from exposure to the position, but anybody going for the position purely for the personal benefit will ultimately be unsuccessful in their tenure and probably not enjoy what is a most rewarding and satisfactory year. You will also gain a great appreciation for what working in the real world is, if you can handle the hours of a Sabbatical Officer, you have the makings of a very employable graduate. Hours can range anywhere up to 70 or 80 hours per week at peak times. This is not a year living the life of a student.

The Small Print

If the life of a Sabbat is so wonderful why is every student not running? Well, fundamentally there are some downsides. In order to get these positions you must subject yourself to

the Annual Popularity Contest, namely the Students' Union Elections. For some this may be no problem but, for the shy amongst you, that could be an insurmountable obstacle but a vibrant Campaign Manager may help with that. Also, there is the politics and perceived power struggles between the different offices but this is no different to the majority of workplaces that you may end up in after college.

Your own personal beliefs may need to be put aside on occasion and you must deal on behalf of the student body as a whole. You may have personal issues with those you will end up working with. You will have to leave these issues outside the door, and if you can't then you should consider whether you can really serve students to the best of your ability.

Most of the work will be committee based and will involve a lot of reading and other research. Resolution is generally by consensus and you need to be able to accept that change will not be immediate and work to bring others along with you.

Most important to be aware of, you will be wearing the office for the year. When interacting with a general student outside of your circle of friends you are still the SU Officer 24/7 and what you say or do will be taken as the SU position. Also you are never really off duty. You may get queries and complaints at any time. If this has pricked your interest in any position go speak to the current Officer and they will answer any questions that you may have. Nominations open on March 1, 2010 and close on March 5.

Elections will take place on Thursday, March 11 2010 The Postgraduate Students' Association will also be holding an election for a President. The PSA President combines the roles of President, Welfare Officer and Education Officer for Postgraduate Students. This Election is held later in the semester.

Food for thought Facebook's revised privacy policy

By Finn McDuffie – Features Editor

There's no such thing as a free lunch.

AS IDIOMS go, it's a bit dull and clichéd. But consider it a little further and before you know it, it begins to apply itself to your daily activities and halts very annoyingly in your mind's caution zone.

Why? Well, probably because that's what it's supposed to do. But also perhaps, because you just remembered that embarrassing, drunken night you had lately. And all the photos. And the fact that Facebook incorporated now owns them, ad nauseam.

I say incorporated for two reasons. Firstly, it sounds sinister. Secondly, to highlight the reality that Facebook is an international business that is focused on profits as much as it is our loyalty. The fact that Facebook's new Terms of Service and recently updated Privacy Policy caused so much hysteria should be enough to have your alarm bells ringing.

Facebook's "free" service is funded primarily on the basis of advertising revenue, which seems fair enough. Facebook provides the service; consumers eye-up the ads.

This is how it has been and it has made everybody very happy. So much so, that the global Facebook community is now 350 million users strong. But, what else are we giving Facebook? We're certainly addicted (some say "locked-in") to our new online routine, so we're providing plenty of time to Facebook's advertising partners.

In fact, last December, 112 million individuals in the USA gave Facebook an average of 246.9 minutes of their time. But what about privacy? This is the big question, especially in light of Facebook's latest reorganisation of its key legal documents.

Its revised privacy procedures are so contentious, that Canada's privacy watchdog launched an investigation into the alterations. This happened in December 2009. So the new policy is current. Further, it applies internationally. So it's local. It's also very likely, irreversible.

So what are the changes? To answer this will require a little less scare mongering and some legalese.

As it stands, Facebook Inc. can use anything you upload, in any way it deems fit to promote itself, forever, even if you delete your

user profile. This is subject to some conditions I will explain later. By being a member of Facebook, you grant that company not ownership, but an absolute right to "(a) use, copy, publish, stream, store, retain [and so it goes one] any user content [that you post or another user posts about you] and (b) use you name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial or advertising [...] in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof."

I hope I haven't lost you, because the above should be very surprising. Firstly, Facebook also has the right to sublicense.

That means any third party can obtain your user content from Facebook, probably in return for money. This could include employment agencies. Secondly, the definition of what constitutes "the promotion" of the Facebook Service could entail anything. Arguably, "promotion" could be construed as any act that enables Facebook to make profits. Therefore, any activity that makes Facebook money could be deemed appropriate under this catch-all clause. The clause represents a massive grey area. And privacy rights shouldn't be grey.

Thirdly, your user content, privacy practices and proprietary rights and more, will "survive" in the event that you terminate your Facebook

profile, as laid out in the Termination Section of the new Terms of Service. As a result, Facebook has been dubbed "The Information Black hole" by consumer advocacy blog, The Consumerist.

However, all of this is subject to the individual user's privacy settings. Facebook respects the member's chosen privacy settings. So, if you upload several photos making them solely accessible to your friends, then Facebook claims it will not show those photos to anybody outside your friends list.

But things are grey and Facebook admittedly "still [has] work to do to communicate more clearly about these issues."

An interesting aspect in all of this has been highlighted by Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg. He has outlined the unique nature of these issues of ownership and rights clearance when dealing with content in social networks. Simply put, individuals want absolute control of the information on their page. However, that information includes posts from others. So what happens when others delete their profile? Should their choice to pull out of Facebook limit other users' enjoyment of the site?

While this may be a cloud of dust in the faces of privacy advocates, it does provide food for thought.

Why do we idolise people and what's the point anyway?

By Chloe Slattery

DOES everyone have a hero? I do! Perhaps it's our duty to find or create one. When we go through a rough time or a period of disappointment, it's natural to wish there was a superhuman character to rescue or inspire us.

The great Jonathan Swift once said "who'er excels in what we prize appears a hero in our eyes". Heroes are those rarities who are admired for what they've achieved. In our modern, consumer-driven society, it is not uncommon to hear "Victoria Beckham is my hero". And who am I to judge?

Perhaps she is a hero. Anybody can be a hero.

Maybe you are someone's. But don't be discouraged at the prospect of having to admire a celebrity! Parents, siblings, friends

and neighbours can fulfil the role too. We can try to emulate our mothers' and mirror our fathers' achievements because it is not wrong for them to be our selfless saviours.

People are not born heroes, we create them. We all appreciate different qualities, therefore we create different heroes. Just like the world of fiction, the sporting world has heroes such as Pele and the fashion culture has heroines like Coco Chanel. A novel without a hero doesn't have a happy ending so should this encourage us to source a hero, to find somebody who can truly "save" us?

We cannot deny the modern day heroes such as Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama who have earned their title without vanity and ego by instilling hope in all of us. Such people embody the characteristics admired by us all; nobility, loyalty, honesty and courage. Without somebody to admire, without someone to aspire to be like, are we condemned to struggle alone without the possibility of success and without that coveted hope? It is part of our make-up to believe in the greatness of others?

Kiss once sang "a world without heroes is a world without sun, nothing to look up to". At times

of struggle, in a world full of cruelties, casualties and cattiness, we need support and encouragement. Some heroes have stood the

test of time. Fionn MacCumhaill and George Washington are still idolised today.

There is a misconception that heroes are only found on battlefields. Heroes imbue us with a sense of purpose to live a worthy life in a direction of our choice. They have proved dreams to be reality while being mere mortals like ourselves.

To be a hero you must be afraid to run away and find strength, to persevere and endure hardships. To end on another quote, former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli put it, "nurture your mind with great thoughts; to believe in the heroic makes heroes".



Student Speak

Jason Kennedy takes to the Student Centre to ask what you would do if you only had one day left in College.

"Cartwheel around the courtyard naked."



Sean Carroll
1st year Industrial Biochemistry

"Jump into all the fountains in the one day."



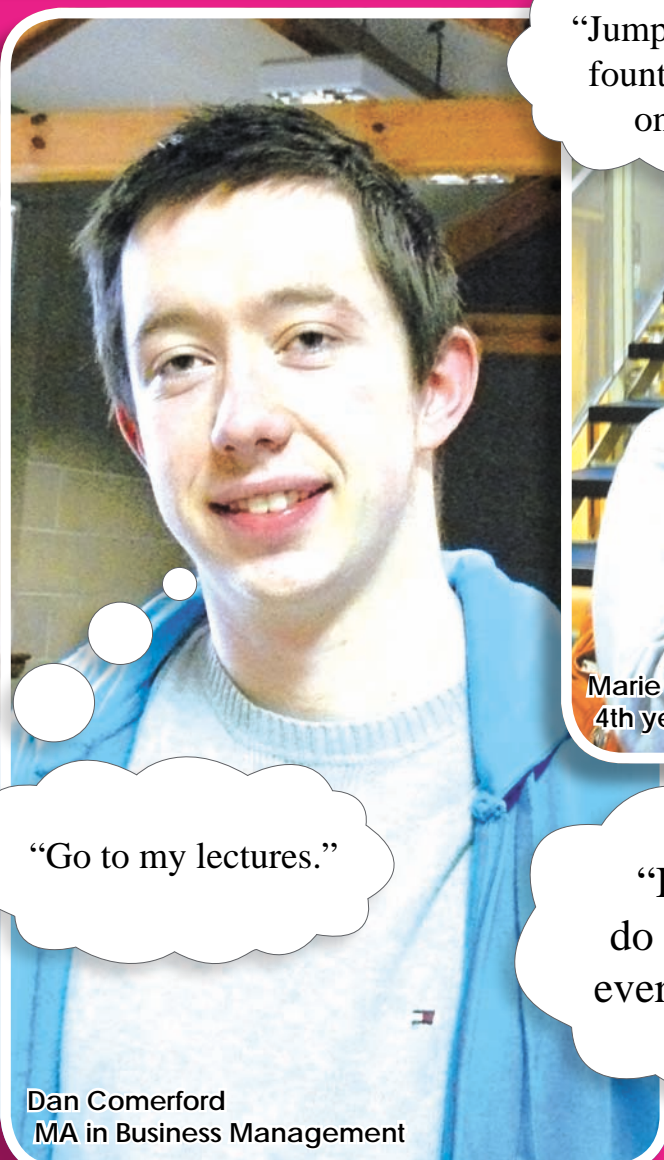
Marie Casey
4th year Computer Systems

"Go out with all my friends in Japanese"



Amy Murphy
1st year Joint Honours

"Go to my lectures."



Dan Comerford
MA in Business Management

"I would do what I do every day, because every day is awesome."



Laura Kerin
1st Year MMPT

"Get on top of the wooden guy in the Foundation Building and go flying."



Laura LaVelle
1st Year Voice and Dance

The Big Swap – Go on, go on, go on!

By Denise Rocks

IRELAND drinks about 1200 cups of tea a year per person. 1200! That's like every household in Ireland having their very own Mrs. Doyle in the kitchen! Most people are familiar with the expression “a cup of tea solves everything” but now a cup of tea can make a difference, not just to you in your kitchen, but to a producer in the developing world.

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from February 22 to March 8 and this year's theme is “The Big Swap”. Universities, schools, offices, ladies mornings and even granny gatherings will all be taking part, with the emphasis this year on swapping your regular cup of tea of coffee for one which displays the Fairtrade Mark. Fairtrade Mark Ireland, an independent non-profit organisation, awards the FAIRTRADE Mark to products which meet internationally recognised standards of Fairtrade.

So what is all the Fairtrade fuss about? Well Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices (which must never fall lower than the market price), Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives. Fairtrade standards comprise both minimum social, economic and environmental requirements, which producers must meet to be certified, plus progress requirements that encourage continuous improvement to develop farmers' organisations or the situation of estate workers.

But enough about the benefits! Comfort Kwaasibea is a cocoa farmer based in Ghana, and she says: “Fairtrade is good to the farmer and makes us happy. We would like to sell more cocoa to Fairtrade so more farmers can taste a better life. We have taken our destiny into our own hands. Through Fairtrade and Kuapa [Kuapa Kokoo Union, Cocoa Growers' Co-operative] we now have a lot of progress. We have good drinking water, toilet facilities and schools. Kuapa pay the farmers on time and there is no cheating when the cocoa is weighted. We are able to generate extra income through our soap making and palm oil making schemes that help us through the lean months. Kuapa have assisted women, they ensure that women have a voice and that we are heard. I have learnt a lot from Kuapa. I grew up in cocoa and I see many differences between Kuapa and the other buying companies”

How does the Fairtrade system work in practice? Of the money you pay for your teabags, coffee, chocolate or bananas some of it goes to cover the Fairtrade minimum price. This minimum price defines the lowest possible price that a buyer of Fairtrade products such as Cadbury's must pay the producer. The minimum

price is set based on a consultative process with Fairtrade producers and traders and guarantees that producers receive a price which covers the cost of sustainable production. When the market price is higher than the Fairtrade minimum price, the market price is payable. Money paid on top of the Fairtrade minimum price is known as the Fairtrade Premium and this money is invested in social, environmental and economic developmental projects, decided upon democratically by a committee of producers within the organisation or of workers on a plantation. Around 70% of the world's coffee farmers are small-scale growers, and they face particular disadvantages in the market

The Big Swap by swapping your regular tea, coffee, chocolate or wine for Fairtrade versions. Even better, make the switch permanently! This is now easier to do than ever since major brands such as Cadbury's Dairy Milk have converted to doing business the Fairtrade way. Many Fairtrade items can be found in our very own ULSU shop, and, as Fairtrade is not only about food, the Development Society will be hosting a Fairtrade Craft Stall in the Courtyard on campus from February 22.

Still not convinced? Introducing Irene Kijara may change your mind. Irene lives around 1,500 metres above sea level on the lower slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains near Fort Portal in



Fairtrade is a great help to farmers

place. Fairtrade's mission is to make trade work for marginalised or disadvantaged producers, and therefore there is a global agreement that the system should offer champion purchase of sustainable coffee from organisations of small coffee farmers explicitly.

Now, you may be asking yourself, where do I, a simple student, come into this system? Some Fairtrade certified producer groups are able to sell their entire production under Fairtrade terms, while others sell only a very small percentage and badly need more buyers to offer a Fairtrade deal. It is only by increasing the amount sold as Fairtrade that producer groups are able to receive a steady stream of additional income to improve their lives. Get involved in

the west of Uganda, the country's main tea growing area. Irene, age 31, has three children, Cyrus, 5, Esther, 8, and Susan, 11. She is a teacher by profession and is also a successful local businesswoman. Irene puts her business experience to good use as treasurer of the Mabale Factory Joint Body, a committee of elected farmers and factory workers plus representatives of the management. Their function is to consult with members and workers to decide which projects to fund with the Fairtrade premium, an additional sum of €0.50 a kilo paid by Fairtrade buyers that is reserved for social and community development.

Irene says of her work on the committee: ‘I enjoy serving other people and looking after the

funds. The rules are rigid and clear so no-one can deceive me - because I am a woman and I am clever!’ She is not entirely joking and develops this theme: ‘Men do not look after their farms. But mine is one of the best around and I am proud of the work I do on my farm. I am here as a representative of the women farmers who elected me. Other women have seen what I do. They are starting to look after their farms and realise they too can be strong and independent of men. Working for the committee has helped me to do this.’ Irene is enthusiastic about Fairtrade even though it represents a small percentage of total sales at the moment: ‘Fairtrade is a very good benefit to us. It has helped us by building roads, schools, leaf collection sheds, and a clinic at the factory. And field extension officers trained have helped us improve the quality of our tea.’

Irene says the Joint Body is full of ideas for future Fairtrade funded projects. It plans to complete the construction of a primary school which the government has left unfinished. It's not much more than a shell - no floors, doors or windows. The children sit on the dirt floor where they are prone to contracting jiggers, a tropical flea that burrows into the skin of its host. Repairing pot-holed or washed away roads and building new roads are ongoing priorities. They not only make it easier for farmers to transport their tea to collection sheds or get their other crops to market, but also help everyone in the community get on with their day-to-day activities. Villagers rely on community wells for their water. They can become contaminated by dead rats or other animals falling into them so protecting them with concrete covers is high on the list. These projects will make a real difference to the Mabale tea growing community. ‘Thank you for your support,’ says Irene. ‘We hope we will sell more tea to fund these projects. We have the best teas!’ Not bad for a simple cuppa!

Article based on information from Fairtrade Mark Ireland www.fairtrade.ie

The Development Society will be running and attending a number of events for Fairtrade Fortnight:

- Fairtrade Craft Stall in the Courtyard on various days in Week 5
- Fairtrade Thinktank with MIC and LIT students, Wed 24th Feb, Week 5
- Free Fairtrade Tea and Coffee in the courtyard in Week 6
- A talk by the Head of the Fairtrade Mark Ireland and a producer representative from Nicaragua 6.30pm on Mon 1st Mar, Week 6
- Fairtrade PubQuiz, Clohesy's Bar, Wed 3rd Mar Week 6

Look out for members around campus or email: uldevsoc@gmail.com, check out Facebook University of Limerick DevSoc for further details. Meetings Mondays 6pm, Student's Union.

Ents

By Mick Flannery

Week 5

February 25 – 8pm

Jean Monnet – €10/€12

Mick Flannery was raised on a farm in Blarney, County Cork. He sometimes begrudgingly practised his piano as a kid, while trying to play his mother's guitar on the sly and not get into trouble. He worked as a stonemason for a bit because his father wouldn't let him get the job he wanted in the local pub.

Tickets for Mick Flannery and Band are available from the Students' Union Reception.

Week 6

The Oscars Ball

March 3 – 11pm

Trinity Rooms – €5

Get swept away in the Oscars Magic by attending the Oscars Ball in Trinity Rooms. Dress up as your favourite Oscar winner and you could win a prize for best lookalike couple or best costume.

Who will dress up as?

Crying Gwyneth Paltrow?

Bjork in a swan dress?



PROMOTIONS & MEDIA

Neosupervital

March 4 – 8pm

Scholars – €5

Neosupervital makes Neosuperpop for dancing and other related activities. Neosupervital is one-man electro-pop music machine, Tim O'Donovan, and is set to release his new album, Battery Power, in the coming months. In the mean time, Neosupervital is bringing his tour to UL for one night only. Get your dancing shoes on and come along to the Scholars on Thursday of Week 6.

Neil Delamere

March 5 – 8pm

UCH – €25

Best known as the star of RTE's The Panel and BBC's The Blame Game, Irish comedian Neil debuts his new show, "Bookmarks", at the University Concert Hall on Friday of Week 6.

Tickets are on sale now from www.uch.ie or from the UCH Box Office in the Foundation Building.

Are you going to the gym?



Treadmills can be intimidating if you don't know what you're doing

By Paula Jane Murphy

THESE days it's a pretty standard question. This University has an excellent gym and a rather infectious get fit atmosphere so exercise should not be a problem. But how many with a paid, annual gym membership have gone, at the very least, weekly?

There are those who religiously attend the gym (the fit ones who jog past you with ease) and those who intend to religiously attend (that's you and me left behind on the stairs). From September to December, I began every week with a packed gear bag and I ended every week with the same untouched gear bag. Whether I was going out, had an assignment or simply wasn't finished until 6 in the evening, I made an excuse. Why could I not spare an hour for exercise? I came back this semester with that annual New Year, new beginning mantra. Like people the world over, I made a self improvement resolution and then hiked to the arena. Shockingly, I found it full of fit people. A friend and I walked into the changing room and being amateurs took fifteen minutes to grasp how to operate the lockers. A professional had to step in.

The next hurdle was the fact that gym gear does not generally have pockets. You need pockets. I had to hold my student card while I tried to stay on the treadmill. While I just about managed it, my friend, in the course of a graceful jog, parted company with her i-pod.

Retrieving it from the floor on the other side of the room was the gym version of the walk of shame. Treadmill abandoned I attempted to use an exercise bike. I pressed the quick-start button several times but nothing happened.. I sat there thinking I had broken it and was about to flee the scene when someone informed me that you have to pedal to start the contraption. Insert 'duh' here. Like the new kid in school who sits on the chair that everyone else knows is unstable, I missed every trick. We left the gym red-faced due to one-part exercise and three parts embarrassment. The only positive to take from this experience is that I will not make all those mistakes again. I did, somehow, feel accomplished having finally done some exercise and I have discovered it is a great way to let off steam after being cooped up in lectures all day.

After going once I no longer feel the need to procrastinate. The unknown turns out to be not so bad. The reason the people in the gym are intimidating is because they are fit and the reason they are fit is because they are in the gym. If you're lacking motivation, sceptical or as I was, scared of showing yourself up, hesitate no longer! The motivation is that exercise makes you feel better and if you are just sceptical of the gym go for a walk instead! Embrace the gym and make use of your membership! It's not so scary after all.



Mick Flannery

UL is nothing without your support



By Amy Murphy

STUDENT outcry has often been considered laughable, irresponsible and unreasonable by those who feel the working world is the “real world” and students have no real troubles.

But, as George Bernard Shaw once put it, “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.” In UL it seems progress is doomed and stagnation inevitable. On Febuary 10, the SU General Meeting was held between 2 and 3pm. Of the 12,421 students registered. for the spring term, 200 were needed to make quorum. Of the 12,421 students just over 125 showed. Of the 12,421 students a mere 2,435 were scheduled for lectures or tutorials on that hour. So on February 10, over 9,900 students turned their back on our SU. Were you one of them?

Looking at the Sheffield and Warwick SUs (considered some of the best), it makes my heart sick; their websites are always teeming with activity and the range of services they offer is awe inspiring. This isn't the work of any one group of sabbatical officers. A single year term makes that impossible. Instead, it must be the product of ongoing, consistent student support and interest in an SU.

You may think there is no need for the SU; that all your needs have been met. You may be satisfied with the fact that there are four walls, chairs and a lecturer. But when the world tells you that these are the best years of your life, full of opportunity, do you really want to miss out? In both the Academic Ranking of World Universities and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (the two most prominent world university rankings), UL ranks joint-sixth out of Ireland's seven universities.

If you truly care about your studies and the time you will spend as a student, you should realise that you have the power to change this and a duty to yourself to do that.

UL is your space; your University. Some may try to dismiss students and their concerns. They may tell us that we do not deserve their help; that we do not need it. But the truth is the Universities need us more than anything else. Without us, the University does not exist and furthermore, a University can only ever be as good as its students.

This puts UL in an unfortunate position because it's the people who care the least who are in power. You and me!.Had the Union's General Meeting met quorum, it would have been, potentially, the most influential meeting held this year in UL. Anything bothering students could have been brought before the student body and because enough of us would be present, an immediate course of action could have been decided. No matter what your concerns are (be it facilities, funding for students, our relationship with the wider Limerick community), nothing is beyond our reach when we use our voice. Conversely, everything is impossible when we don't.

If you're convinced there are enough students to allow you to be lackadaisical, clearly it is now time you stood in for those that continue to hide behind excuses. Maybe someday, when ULSU is considered one of the best SUs and when UL climbs the world University rankings, you can smile and say to yourself, I did that! For those of you who take issue with how the SU is run, you can't expect change without your input. Most importantly the next time you accuse the Students' Union of being inadequate, be it true or not, ask yourself what you've done to change it!

ULSU Nitelink

Timetable for Academic Year 2009/10

Route A 19:00, 20:30, 22:00

Stop 1: Dromroe Village
Stop 2: Thomand Village
Stop 3: Cappavilla Village
Stop 4: Plassey Village
Stop 5: College Court
Stop 6: Groody Student Village
Stop 7: Courtyard Student Village
Stop 8: Brookfield Hall
Stop 9: Parkview Hall
Stop 10: Park Mews (Clancy's)

Returns to UL via Flag Pole Entrance

Route B 19:45, 21:15, 22:45

Stop 1: Kilmurry Village
Stop 2: Elm Park
Stop 3: Oaklawns
Stop 4: Kilmurry Lodge
Stop 5: Brierfield (Back of the Estate)
Stop 6: Woodhaven
Stop 7: Annacotty (Synotts)
Stop 8: Spar (at University Court)
Stop 9: Courtyard/Brookfield Roundabout

Returns to UL via East Gate entrance

Route C 23.30 Only

Route A+B Stops on Request
Drop off only

The Lovely Bones:

haunting and poignant but not to everyone's taste

By Emma Neilan

THE Lovely Bones was a novel written by the acclaimed American author Alice Sebold in 2002. It received largely positive reviews celebrating Sebold for her unique imagination and lustrous plot, and as a result became an instant bestseller with over a million copies sold.

The film rights were purchased by Peter Jackson, the renowned director of The Lord of the Rings franchise whose fascination with fantasy and spaces laced with mythical tendencies designated him as the most eligible and qualified candidate to bring Sebold's vision of heaven or the "in-between" to the big screen. The film stars emerging Irish starlet, Saoirse Ronan, in the lead role as 14 year old Susie Salmon. Susie is a stereotypical teenage girl entering the years of adolescence where her sense of rebellion against authority in this case her parents, Jack Salmon (Mark Wahlberg) and Abigail Salmon (Rachel Weisz) and her emerging sexuality, signal her imminent transformation from young girl to young woman. However, Susie's young life is cut short when she is murdered by a family neighbour George Harvey (Stanley Tucci) who is frighteningly disturbing in his depiction of

how this man lusts for and lures the innocent into his hands for purely evil motives without a single feeling of sympathy or regret for his victims and their families.

The main plot of the story then takes over, which illustrates Susie's desperate attempts to quash her desire for vengeance against Harvey and seek an alternative method to instigate healing for her family, who are emotionally and mentally devastated by her death. What is unique about this story is that Susie's personal struggle to come to terms with her murder is viewed from her perspective as she is trapped in the "in-between", watching over her devastated family in the mould of a guardian angel unable to move onto heaven until she makes things right again.

At the heart of this story is human emotion and the overwhelming feelings of protectiveness and responsibility which we feel for those who we love. Peter Jackson poignantly portrays this in his heart-rending illustration of Jack Salmon's mental struggle to come to terms with his daughter's murder. Mark Wahlberg is mesmerizing in his portrayal of Jack and his inability to let go of the anger and hatred which has consumed all of his mental

faculties. His inability to cope in daily life or move past his issues destroys his relationship with his wife (Rachel Weisz).

Asurprising factor in this film was the distinctly poor and shortened character development of Weisz's character Abigail. She has very little screen time and her character imparts no impending sense of presence or development to the plotline which was drastically altered to Alice Sebold's original story in the novel. This can only be deemed as a waste of the Oscar winner's talents and potential to add to the power of the film. She seems mainly to have been hired to add a renowned and award winning name to the glossy movie posters and perhaps her role was demoted due to time constraints with character development. In short, Peter Jackson had too much to do and his struggle with this characters importance to the plot is one of the flaws which diminishes from the films overall impact.

The film excels in its deliverance of mesmerizing scenes and insight into a fantasy world, which of course is down to Peter Jackson doing what he does best. His surge in popularity was heavily influenced by cinema audience's enthrallment with

computer generated effects which have now become a trademark of Jackson's. Overall, The Lovely Bones is a masterpiece in terms of its beautiful and often dazzling imagery and it doesn't disappoint visually. However, it comes in for criticism for its plot and dialogue. The contrast between the sometimes extremely graphically violent and disturbing scenes and the often cringe worthy or overly cheesy dialogue of Susie's character leave the question of whether a horror film or a fairy story has just been viewed. Saoirse Ronan is a very talented young actress, as we know from her Oscar nominated performance in Atonement, but she is simply very constricted in this film due to the over-sentimentalised dialogue which she must deliver. Stanley Tucci shines in his performance of the leering George Harvey which will literally have you on the edge of your seat. This film is a must see for its uniqueness in plot and imagery but I would predict that many will be disappointed with the overall impression which they are left with. Worth parting with your money for a one time watch but don't expect to be blown away.

The Lovely Bones in cinemas February 19

Hot Chip is back

and ready for world domination

By Eoghan O'Sullivan

AH HOT Chip, how we love thee. Yes, the nerdiest band in the world is back and staring down the barrel of worldwide domination.

They almost had it in their grasp when they released The Warning in 2006, an album that just lost out on the Mercury Music Prize to the first Arctic Monkeys' album. Over and Over became the song of the year after dominating airwaves during the summer. The five piece then recorded Made in the Dark and again had the world within their grasp, but didn't quite get it.

Despite one of the video's of the year in the form of Ready for the Floor, the album was seen by some (the bloody NME) as a failure, though Pitchfork made it one of their ten albums of the year. Sometimes those Americans get some things right that everyone else fails to see.

And so, here we are, hoping against hope that Hot Chip achieves genuine headliner status and mainstream success. Also, it would be brilliant to see Alexis Taylor, with oversized glasses that would put Denis Taylor to shame, become a sex symbol, or something to that effect. If you are unfamiliar

with Hot Chip, then shame on you. They make electronic songs on their laptops in their bedrooms then, meet and come up with songs that are astounding in their emotional output. They could reduce you to tears if you were not already raving like someone who had just visited a headshop and then gone to Glastonbury!

The self-titled first single from the album, has all the trademarks of a classic Hot Chip song. Mildly dangerous opening beats, tales of not losing "my baby", before a chorus that Rihanna or Kylie Minogue (yes, Hot Chip were asked to write a song for her), would die for.

Opening track, Thieves in the Night, at six minutes long, could have been off-putting for some. But could well be one of the most perfect songs to open an album that you hear all year. The emotional punch of this album cannot be understated.

Alexis really sounds like he knows love inside out, and that he knows that "Happiness is what we all want".

Brothers, meanwhile, is a tale of, ahem, brotherly love, and literally giving your life for your friends. It is hard to imagine many



bands being able to pull off such a potentially lame song. But Hot Chip do it in such a way that one imagines that at a gig, this could turn into an "Oasis moment", with arms wrapped around the shoulders of a stranger, shouting the song back at the band, with tears in your eyes!

Slush has vocal backing throughout of "Hamana Hamana Hamana Hamana Hamana", which does sound like Speedy Gonzales singing a love song. Obviously this shows the ingenuity of Joe Goddard and the rest of the band. Nothing is too far from experimenting with for Hot Chip.

Take It In, the closing track, is a Jekyll-and-Hyde track with vocals and music doing battle to get the listener's attention. Another shimmering chorus of love follows, "Please take my heart and keep it close to you/ Take It In" before the album fades to what should surely be swooning from anyone who listens. Hot Chip is a band to fall in love with, who can soundtrack all the moments of your own love life, or lack thereof, and enhance every second.

They deserve every plaudit that is sure to follow the release of One Life Stand 9/10

Advice Bureau

Welfare Corner

HEY everyone, it's been a busy busy two weeks since I last wrote. We had the UGM which was unfortunately inquorate.

The main issue which concerned me was that people seemed bothered enough on Facebook to tell us that an increase of €4 in the price of an ID card is bad, but didn't come to the meeting to back this up for us in a minuted meeting which I could act upon. This weakens my position when I bring the issue to the table with the Director of Student Affairs.

I haven't had a single email on the issue either. Maybe I'll just have to stick around for another year for a quorate UGM.

On the plus side, I got through my officer report in less than a minute and it is on the Student Portal to be viewed in the Students' Union box. If you have any questions you can email me.

There's also a brief article, more an announcement, on page 6 of An Focal this week regarding a consultation we are engaging in with you, the student, on a national representative body.

The items discussed by the Executive are also on the Student Portal which might give you an idea of what you would like to add. In terms of meetings, I've had loads. Under-Represented Students and Facilities

and Services discussed Student Hardship at length last Monday. We are proposing to the University to get a significant increase given the part-time job market and increase in student service charge meaning students are in a far worse financial situation in some cases.

The Alcohol Working Group, chaired by the Director of Student Affairs, met again and I proposed a set guideline for students on Discipline which was sent to the Vice-President Academic and Registrar. This group is also looking at running some events such as acoustic gigs and quizzes in the main canteen during Week 7.

The Equality and Diversity Committee was happy to hear about Jason's plans for Equality Week in Week 11. There is a Diversity Calendar at Students' Union Reception for anyone who wants to check out what's on.

Bagpacking in Weeks 2 and 3 raised over €1,300 for the Raising and Giving Charities. Get in and collect your entry forms for Tag, 5-A-Side, Sleepout and €5k 5km run.

Apart from that I spent a number of days in Week 3 interviewing candidates for Clubs and Societies Liaison Officer with Paul Lee (Clubs and Societies Development Officer) and Tomás Costello (Secretary General).

Ed's Education



So far this semester I've looked at ways that you can improve your academic performance. We've looked at organising your week and setting aside specific study time (Week 1) and in Week 3, we examined a healthy diet as a means of increasing energy.

This week I'm going to focus on something else that could be seriously affecting your ability to perform well in college: sleep. The amount of sleep you have (or don't have) affects virtually everything you do and consequently, it will have a big effect on your ability to learn and function well in college!

While you snooze, your brain increases its ability to perform well at problem-based tasks. Not getting enough sleep can slow your response times and make it tough to focus on things. If you think about it, your response times and your ability to solve problems are both key components in learning, particularly at university level.

Not only that, but poor sleep can affect your concentration. If you're not concentrating, then what hope have you got in classes that you already find tough and challenging? So what can you do if you think lack of sleep may

be affecting you? Well here are a few tips that might help you:

1. Avoid caffeine and nicotine (particularly before bed) as they are stimulants – caffeine can be a tricky one to avoid because it may be found in places that you don't expect including coffee, cola, Red Bull, tea (even herbal ones) and chocolate.
2. Be aware of the time that you are exercising – exercising can be a great way to make sure you get a good night's sleep. However, exercising too close to bed time can have the opposite effect and make you too alert to sleep.
3. Keep your room dark – this may seem fairly obvious but even light from a CD player, television, laptop, streetlight, etc. can confuse your body into thinking that it's daytime and consequently wake-up time. You'll find it much easier to sleep if you black out any light, even if you have to put an eye-mask on.

So give it a try, get some more sleep and see if you find college work any easier!

Sex Stories

By Kanielle Dantie

EARLIER today I was sitting around a table in The Scholars amongst some friends. Our usual analysis of the previous night on the razz brought up the topic of unusual sexual experiences.

Some strange looks were thrown at us when the phrase "...he swallowed a genital wart instead of a Starburst!!" was uttered. We have all heard stories which have made for riveting coffee conversations. To avoid embarrassment, I have thrown together a few general tips of what not to do or say in the sack.

What not to do

- If you bring a horny, dirty, and excessively drunk girl home, would you go in for the kill, or would you take a more adventurous approach at pleasing her? A friend of a friend took the latter approach by using a coke bottle to penetrate her. Not only did this prove ineffective, she had to be carted off to Limerick General... Don't do it people!!

- Speaking of hospital visits, did you know that if you sneeze during sex it is possible

to get stuck together? It's a medical fact. So if you are feeling the wrath of spring and hay fever, you might want to invest in some form of anti-histamine to avoid unnecessary complications.

- Don't look for the ride if you're on the rag. End of story.

- Don't leave shit stains on the bed sheets or you may always be referred to as "The Shit Monster" around UL...

- Don't leave any form of remuneration on the bedside locker. Take your loose change, your spunk filled condoms and any other junk with you.

This is just a taste of the mishaps in the bedroom that came up in our conversation; the others were a tad unsuitable for publication. I'm sure everyone has heard that one story that makes your toes curl.

So if you feel you can add to this, feel free to email me your story and it can be shared and enjoyed by all. Send an email to kanielledantie@hotmail.co.uk

Campaigns and Services Officer

WELL, how are ye all getting on now? This semester is flying by! Week 5 now? That's nuts! So there's a couple of things coming up that everyone should hear about.

The annual O'Brien's Memorial Match, which is a Colours match between UL and LIT, is happening in Thomond Park on Wednesday 24 February. This is gonna be a serious night lads and lasses.

Not alone is it a chance to see the future O'Connells and O'Gara's play but it's also a great way to see the hallowed ground of Thomond Park. There is great rivalry in this game between the two colleges. Hopefully we'll get a good crowd out to it!

The Paddy's Day Hair Dye Event is gonna be taking place in the Stables. This is starting to look like a great day out. Green hair dye, green pints, ceilí dancing! It's more Irish than you can shake a length of wavin' at! Call into the office to collect a sponsorship card. We really want to make this a big day; it'd be great if we could get a couple of more people to sign up to raise money for Special Olympics.

We would love to break a World Record. Lad's there's no excuse! Girls are gonna fancy ya more because you've done such a noble deed for charity!

Don't forget to sign up for some Challenges in the run up to Charity Week. We have TAG tournaments and five-a-side soccer leagues all starting up. A great night out will be the sponsored sleep out! It should be good craic in the Courtyard! We'll make sure everyone is safe and sound and that no one's hitting the hay either!! It's something we've never done before so it'll be an experience for all involved!

Just in the run up to Charity Week, I would ask for a bit of respect and that for the neighbours and residents of Castletroy. We need to be good to them for them to be good to us! Local Residents do not mind house parties as long as there's not hundreds of people at them and the music iss not blaring until 3am! Some respect and decorum will go along way to people enjoying themselves more in Charity Week!

Don't forget to look after one another as well. If anyone is stressed out or that you can call into the Union and we're always here to have a chat with ye. There are some great support service in UL so make sure and use them while you're here.

Slán lads,

Fergal

MusicSoc

By Owen Hickie

This college year has become the year of Music Soc: last semester our society went through a major overhaul, with regular events, new gear and bringing the focus back on the music and just havin' the craic!

Speaking of havin' the craic, there's plenty of that to be had in Glasgow. Music Society brought 20 lads out there in January and somehow managed to bring all 20 back, although there was a wheelie bin outside one club whose life was irrevocably changed thanks to one member's over exuberance...Glasgow's got plenty going for it; cheap food and drink, good music stores and great pubs and clubs.

A few of the guys played in an open mic night and we even got to see OK Go, the band best known for their music video for "Here It Goes Again", featuring the group performing a deadly dance routine on treadmills. Great gig, great band, Music Soc knows good music when we hear it...There'll be another trip later on in the year, our Trips Officer is looking at "Brussels or Belgium" for the next one (we'll buy our Trips Officer an atlas and explain the basic concepts of geography to him at some stage...) and we're hoping to bring an even bigger crowd out with us this time, see if Europe can handle some UL Music Society mentalness!

Congratulations to Roulette, who won our Battle of the Bands in The Stables last Thursday...a smashing night was had by all thanks to all the bands who competed. Thanks also to Ladydoll and Hot Electric who provided entertainment

afterwards. The Stables was wedged for the night; have we found an alternative to the traditional Thursday night wander down to The Lodge? Hoping to run another Thursday night event some time later in the semester: an Air Band Night is looking like a good option, so tune up your air guitars and watch this space for more info! The Stables is also the venue for our Open Mic nights every Monday which are open to everyone to play. So if you have one or two tunes that you want to belt out...or even just want to play something cheesy so that hot bird at the bar comes over to you for a chat, we want to hear it!

If you know Music Soc, you'll know Bakers and don't worry; we'll be hitting that spot a few times this semester! So far just a gig during Charity Week in March and a Metallica Night in April are pencilled in, but we'll be bringing in some quality unsigned bands and running more theme nights over the coming months – we'll let you know when we know! As always, there's a fully kitted out music room at our disposal for you to practice by yourself or with your band, and don't forget we also have a few virtuosos offering lessons if you want to learn to play an instrument. We're hoping to expand our ever-growing society, so if you wanna join up at anytime, you can. Want more information about everything Music Soc, just email ulmusicsoc@gmail.com or you can also follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/ulmusicsoc>

Hope to see you guys this semester!



Bulls on Parade at the Battle of the Bands

Hope for Haiti



By Helena Murphy

THE Development Society recently hosted a seminar entitled "Haiti: Why So Poor?" in which Haiti's history and future prospects were discussed.

The three speakers were Dr. Lucian Ashworth, head of UL's Politics department, Andrew Coleman of Christian Aid and Fionagh Nally of Concern Worldwide. The devastation of January's earthquake, described by the UN as the worst they have ever confronted, has only added to Haiti's woes that includes a long history of poverty and natural disasters. The quake was followed by a response from the Irish public which has been "outstanding", according to Ms Nally, and it has also led many to ask why the Caribbean nation has been so unfortunate. Wednesday's guest speakers looked beyond the newspaper headlines and answered this question by examining Haiti's structural problems.

Dr. Ashworth took an historical approach and cited factors such as Haiti's origin as a slave colony, its crippling debts (it took Haiti over a hundred years to repay France), US intervention, and a long line of despotic rulers including the brutal dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier. Unwise economic policies, such as the over-reliance on cash crops, were often pursued by Haitian governments and the IMF's role in

this regard was also criticised. The other two speakers represented NGOs present in Haiti and they provided valuable insights into the situation on the ground. It's clear that the relief effort has proved difficult and water supplies and removal of corpses remain problematic. Yet Ms Nally is confident that lessons have been learnt from the chaos of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami relief effort and that there is more coordination in Haiti.

Both Ms Nally and Mr Coleman stressed that their agencies strive to assist the most vulnerable. Where possible this is done in a manner which promotes long term recovery such as providing employment and the means to purchase local goods rather than allowing communities to become dependent on food hand-outs. Haiti's recovery may take five to ten years and the international community's role will be important in this regard; cancellation of the country's debt is advocated by Christian Aid amongst others. Mr Coleman praised the "spirit of endurance" of the Haitian people and that this factor will be integral to the country's recovery.

€300 was raised during this event which was donated to the Gena Heraty Appeal Fund for Haiti. For information on upcoming Development Society events or workshops please email uldevsoc@gmail.com.

An Outstanding Weekend

By Michael Curtin

THE weekend before the Spring Semester started UL Archery hit the road again, this time with Galway as the destination. With an Intervarsity on Saturday and the National Barebow Championships on Sunday the team had a busy weekend of shooting.

The team did remarkably well, and returned to Limerick weighed down with medals, bringing home 16 medals in total after a fantastic two days of shooting. As well as their medals one member, Craig Tyner, also brought home the impressive title of National Barebow Male Champion. On Saturday the team finished second overall, a result not seen by the club since 2006. Craig Tyner finished first in the Advanced Barebow category, while one of our newer members, Fergus Conway, brought home the gold in the Beginner Barebow category. Fergus also set a new personal best on the

day with a fantastic score of 447 out of a possible 600. Rory Thornburgh came second in the Advanced Male Recurve category, and Tom Sheppard finished in third place in the same category.

Sunday brought with it another day of great archery with The National Barebow Championships. Craig Tyner again won his category, beating off some stiff competition in the knockout stages, earning himself the title of National Barebow Male Champion. Fergus Conway also did amazingly well, knocking out the reigning champion before he was knocked out in the next round, a huge achievement for someone who took up archery last October. In the Recurve section of the competition the club didn't fail to impress and our coach, Emmanuel O'Dea, took first place in Advanced Recurve with Rory Thornburgh coming in third in the same category. Margaret Carey

won silver in the Female Recurve category. With some impressive shooting from our Junior Male Recurve competitors, we brought home all 3 medals in this category, with Steffan Ashe in first, Phil Ryan in second and Michael Curtin in third place. As well as remarkable team scores, personal bests were also being broken all day, with Rory Thornburgh setting a new high of 524 out of 600. Michael Curtin also set a new personal best of 461. Steffan Ashe achieved a feat not accomplished by many by scoring 504, a new Personal Best, after shooting for only 3 months.

Beginner courses will be running from February 3 until Week 6. Everyone is welcome to join, just come along to training. With three more Intervarsities to go before the end of the semester, and a number of National shoots, it's certain to be a busy semester for the club.



ULKC Victory at the Varsities

ULKC travelled to Galway recently to compete in the Kayaking Intervarsities hosted by NUIG. The club won second place in the kayak polo, beating off stiff competition and missing out on first place by the slightest of margins. We won first place in the freestyle event and individually the club's freestyle competitors achieved the highest possible places in the event.

Nearly everyone who travelled to Galway took part in the long distance race on Saturday morning, despite quite a few sleepy heads after Friday night's festivities, and again the club won best overall club in this event. On Saturday night we let our hair

down, dressed up as dirty pirates for the fancy dress event, and engaged in some inter college bonding.

Somewhat controversially, boys could even be found

“The icing on the cake was definitely [winning] Best Overall Club”

wearing jeggings on the night. On Sunday we dug deep and went on to win fifth position in the white water event despite an imploding spray deck situation. Despite exhausted bodies,

by Sunday night the general consensus was definitely that it was a great weekend, with plenty of memorable moments both on and off the water.

The icing on the cake was definitely the fact that we won Best Overall Club at the competition and brought the Intervarsities Cup back to UL for the first time since 2003. We won a brand new kayak for the club and brought home plenty of medals making it a very worthwhile and fun weekend.

Next year UCC will host the intersvarsities. For now the next plan on the kayaking agenda is a weekend in Sligo in March but hopefully we will travel to Cork next year and win the double.

DJ Battles rage on

By Liam Twohig

LAST semester UL DJ Society, Phono, held a DJ Battle in The Kilmurry Lodge Niteclub who gave €500 cash to the four finalists. This semester sees UL DJ Society do battle in a number of intervarsity competitions.

First off, society members will compete in “Scholar Beat”, which is a Limerick based college competition held at The Treehouse at Bentleys on O'Connell street. Here, 4 colleges, UL, Mary I, The Art College, and LIT, are competing for a residency

at The Treehouse. The competition takes place on Thursday nights in February. Phono also competed in a DJ battle in Cork. The event was organised by UCC and was held during their RAG week. UL DJ Society are also planning on heading up to Dublin to play in The Pod in an intervarsity competition organised by DIT. Phono will continue to play in the Courtyard to brighten the mood and they are also organising events with other clubs and societies for the coming semester.



Here Comes the Jumping Season!

WELL there has never been a better time to start than now with the Skydive UL. With the weather starting to get better, the days getting longer and even CHEAPER courses, you have no excuse not to join up and jump out! We have a packed semester ahead of us which include training courses, fundraisers and of course the big trip abroad in the summer.

Skydive UL has had a great start to the new year when some of the experienced members of the club were at Skydive Empuriabrava in Spain during the Christmas holidays. Skydive Empuriabrava is the biggest dropzone in Europe which offers excellent facilities and coaching. During the week in Spain members worked mostly on formation skills, forming different shapes and tricks while in freefall.

The more advanced members of the club progressed onto "freeflying" where the skydiver can move on any axis. So they can fly while in a sitting position, standing position, fly upside down and be able to transfer between each of their range of movements fluently while maintaining a consistent fall rate. This is complicated again by multiple skydivers jumping simultaneously and attempting to freefly together, weaving around and over each other

before separating from each other at the right time before deploying their parachutes so that the parachutes don't get tangled. (We tend to not want that to happen...)

Towards the end of the week, most of the members on the trip took part in a Canopy Course which was run by the Safe Flight School at Skydive Empuriabrava. The Coach for the course was Brian Vacher who is a world champion canopy pilot. During the course, the participants worked on their canopy skills which involved classroom training and also had a practical side to it with the participants completing ten "Hop & Pop" jumps from 7000ft where they had to complete some manoeuvres as outlined in the class. Overall, the course was a great success with the participants learning a lot about how to fly their canopy safely and effectively.

Plans are already underway for our main trip of the year which is our progression trip to one of the leading dropzones in Europe, Gap Tallard in the south of France. This trip is aimed at our newer members of the club where they can progress in the sport very quickly and gain their "A" licence within the two weeks. This trip has proved very successful since it started two years ago with participants progressing very fast



mainly due to the great weather.

First Jump Courses are currently been run every week so it's never too late to join the club and go skydiving. Raffle tickets are also been distributed to make the cost of your course even cheaper so get your hands on these as soon as possible.

Packing Classes will start in Week 4. Anyone who wants to become a certified skydiver must know how to pack their own parachute.

Check out our website for more details on this. It is also hope that experienced members of the club will do a training jump into Pitch 1 near

the UL Arena in the coming weeks so watch out for more information about this on our website.

For more information about the club or to sign up for a course, email info@skydiveul.org or check out our website: www.skydiveul.org

Blue Skies!!!

UL handball compete well at Intervarsities

By Mark O'Donovan

THE 40x20 Singles Intervarsities for 2010 were hosted in Kingscourt Co Cavan on January 28 - 31. Another action packed weekend was had by UL's 21 participants. This singles competitions saw colleges from all over the country competing for a chance to win the highly coveted title's which were up for grabs.

Every participant was guaranteed 3 matches over the course of the weekend, the first two of which decided what division players would compete in for the knockout rounds.

Cathal Hannon got things started in the Men's A Division with a comfortable victory over Brian Quigley of NUIG.

In the quarter final it was an all Clare clash when he encountered

Niall Malone, again of NUIG. Unfortunately after a tough encounter Cathal bowed out at this stage. In the Men's C Jamie Geraghty met his match in the round of 16 when he lost out to C. Counihan of ITT. A lot of good runs came to an end in the Men's Contender round of 16 with Fiachra Hayes, Gary Hassett and Seán Egan all losing out to superior opposition while Mark O'Donovan received a bye. Mark put in a great effort in his quarter final tie but alas it was the AIT man, Enda Fitzpatrick, who prevailed. The Men's Challenger division proved to be a much happier hunting ground for UL. Damien Healy and Eamon McNicholas advanced to the quarter finals with Colin Clarke falling at the previous hurdle. Eamon was defeated in

the next round in a close fought encounter while Damien put in a string of impressive performances to reach the Contender Final, which he won on a 21-19, 21-12 defeating N. Brady (AIT). Brendan Sheehy caught the eye in the Beginners Division putting in some great performances but his luck ran out when he came up against the eventual UCC champion Colin Keane.

The club was well represented in the Ladies grades with Deirdre Donoghue, Lisa Falvey and Karen Lawlor competing in the A and the other five ladies competing in the C grade. The Friday games brought a mixed bag of results for the ladies with victories for Joan McNulty, Therese Hearn and Karen Lawlor. On Saturday Lisa Falvey and Joan

McNulty both won their quarter finals but were beaten in the semi finals of the B by Laura Keever's (DIT) and Siobhan Tully (NUIG) respectively. Edel Finnegan, after a promising start in the early rounds, was defeated by Siobhan Tully in the B quarter finals who in turn fell to Laura Keevers in the final after a tight match. In the C competition Laura-Anne Furlong, attending her first singles intervarsity, was unlucky to crash out after her quarter final defeat to Siobhan Brennan (DCU) after a closely contested match. She was followed by fellow team mate, Mary Glennon, who was defeated by Natalie NiShim from Queens University.

Therese Hearn managed to progress to the semi final where she was beaten by the eventual winner,

Siobhan Brennan, on a score line of 21-15, 21-19. Deirdre Donoghue and Karen Lawlor in the Ladies A were a lot more successful where they contested an all UL final with Deirdre coming out as eventual winner to add yet another title to her growing list.

Karen Lawlor defeated Catriona Casey (ICAI) in the semi final after a tie breaker while Deirdre Donoghue over came Hilary Rushe (UCD) in her semi final on a score line of 21-12, 21-7. Deirdre defeated Karen 21-6, 21-10 in the final where Karen seemed tired showing that the extra tie-breaker in the semi had taken its toll on her. And finally best of luck to those travelling to compete in the WPH World Intercollegiate 4 Wall handball Championships in Arizona.

A story about ass, holes, and kitchen gloves.

The common link? Caving with ULOPC



By Marine Plagne

Wednesday night, 6pm.

I jump on to the ULSU minibus with my towel and my kitchen gloves. I don't where we're going just yet, but it doesn't matter. Ten of us are ready for a long night out and about in Co. Clare.

The weekly OPC caving trip just started! We arrive in the middle of nowhere in the Burren beside the ruin of an old church and a cemetery. After a long day in college I'm tired and just want to lie down and relax. I'm questioning why I am doing this at all but I soon realise how bright I am to have signed up for caving.

With no time to think, I got changed and grabbed some wellies, helmet, knee-pads, oversuit, belt...and my kitchen gloves! After crossing some muddy fields, loose walls and electric fences, we gather around a big stone. Rectification, it's a cliff actually! Our group leader announces that we have reached the entrance to the cave but I can't see the entrance from looking at the cliff. Our leader Cillian points to a little hole at the bottom of the cliff; there is the entrance. So basically, he wants want me to go under this huuuuge cliff, through this tiny little hole here? Yeah. That's

the point. I'm not convinced I can manage to squeeze myself through this little hole, but he leads the way and of course, I can!

On all fours, the adventure begins

After having crawled a few meters on all fours, I can stand upright again. The cave is pitch black, but with the light on my helmet I start to explore the cave. Water is running down some of the walls and cool formations are visible everywhere. The ground is sometimes rocky, sometimes muddy and sometimes completely covered with water. But that's no problem as I'm wearing my wellies. One of the guides is leading the group and gives advice on how we can maneuver our way through, under, over or along the next obstacle without hurting ourselves. I didn't know before that my body is so flexible, but it must be. (Caving is just some adventure Yoga). After every obstacle a new small world appears: sometimes a small tunnel, sometimes another bend to go around, or a huge chamber. When we arrive in one big chamber, we have a little break. It is quite exhilarating but yet exhausting to climb around the caves and even crawl through some

small tunnels seeing nothing but the ass of the person in front of you. The helmet was great and useful the 30 or so times I bumped my head on the roof. My laughter saved me from ridicule: crawling under a cliff, on stones, in the mud and water, I admit, it doesn't seem really attractive especially when you get into ridiculous positions! Definitely funny and a great way to spend a Wednesday night!

There is a lot of space in the chamber and Cillian shows us the map of the cave. Quite confusing on first sight, but after he explains where we started, which way we went and pointing out some significant points, everyone more or less can understand the map. After this short break, the journey goes on. We eventually leave the cave two hours since our adventure began.

What a contrast it is to walk around without any obstacles again. I'm just realizing what I did: I was under the cliff and rock; I was out of time and space with some friends and the friendly caring OPC team. I felt like a child, rediscovering this feeling of discovery and amazement. I was in another world where all my everyday life vanishes to leave something

terribly exciting and new. It was like being behind the scenes, looking at the earth from the inside, where no one else is looking, where my appearance doesn't matter anymore, the smartness either. It was just me, learning how to move and use all parts of my body; me, amazed by the world that lives in the dark, by the shapes, the natural beauty, the colors... and the right to look at the ass from the person in front of you for such a long time, without being slapped!

After changing my clothes and helping to pack the bus and trailer we leave the high Burren and a short stop at a chipper on the way home provides some nourishment. We all get a log book and I make my first entry in it to recollect the adventure before finally falling asleep as the bus delivers me home to UL's campus. I dream again about one of best nights of my life. For anyone hoping to explore the beauty of the Clare underground this semester send an E-mail to Caving@ulopc.com with your contact details and you too can do some adventure yoga. All levels are catered for. All other information about the Outdoor Pursuits Club is available from www.ulopc.com

UCC rise above the mediocrity

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

ON A bitterly cold February day on Pitch 1 UL were well beaten by UCC in the quarter final of the Fresher B Hurling Championship. The quality of the fare on offer did little to warm the hearts of the freezing supporters.

The home side in particular were a major disappointment. Over the course of the 60 minutes they failed to register a single score from play. In addition they shot a total of 12 wides, six in each half. UCC's shooting wasn't much better as they ended with a

tally of nine wides. A match that produces more wides than scores usually doesn't lead to much entertainment and this was certainly the case here. UCC seized the initiative early on in this encounter. They led 0-4 to 0-0 after ten minutes with two monstrous frees from Brian Coughlan and points from play courtesy of James Casey and Jamie O'Mahony. It took UL 17 minutes for their first score which was a free from centre back Nigel Foley.

The midfield pairing of Coughlan and Casey was

proving more than effective and UL should have been further behind by half time. Despite UCC's wide count of seven they led 0-6 to 0-2 at the break. UL narrowed the gap to three with a Michael Barry free early in the second half but a comeback was never on the cards. The switch of full forward Ciaran O'Mahony to centre forward proved a masterstroke from UCC's point of view. As well as rifling over two second half points he won or broke an amount of possession. The inevitable goal for UCC

arrived in the 47th minute. Rob Mullane was the scorer drilling a low shot to the bottom corner of the net. UL battled to the end with Michael Barry, goalkeeper Arron Fogarty and David Egan their best performers.

On too many occasions however, their hard work was undone by disappointing finishing in the forward division. On the UCC side man of the match Ciaran O'Mahony was ably assisted by good displays from Brian Coughlan, Jamie O'Mahony and James Casey.

UCC 1-12

UL 0-7

UL: A Fogarty, J Heary, M O'Sullivan, D Hickey, D Egan, N Foley (0-2f), K McManus, B Hogan, A Fogarty, G Grace, J O'Dwyer, B O'Donoghue, M Barry (0-5f), A Cummins, D Kilmartin.

UCC: E Ahern, C O'Brien, K Cummins, S Young, C O'Flynn, D Bagnall, C Kearney, J Casey (0-1), B Coughlan (0-4f), J O'Mahony (0-1), B Dollard (0-1), T Leahy (0-1), J O'Mahony, C O'Mahony (0-4), R Mullane (1-0).

Who Are Ya?

Compiled by Alan Keane

The Basics

Name: Lee 'Dubz' Casey
("How do you not know me like?")
Age: 18
UL Club: Athletics
County: Cork
Position: Runner
Sporting Heroes:
Asafa Powell, Alistair Cragg, Michael Essien, Robbie Fowler
Biggest sporting achievement:
Mallow 10k
Best thing about the club:
The craic and the people.
Worst thing about the club:
Having no money!

Favourites

Food: Lasagne
Drink: Bud
Song: Jason Mraz – "I'm Yours"
Movie: The Hangover
Jersey: My Chelsea one

Take Your Pick

Lodge or Trinity Rooms:
Lodge.
You'll probably see me there!
Dunphy or Giles:
Giles because he knows his stuff and was actually a good player!
Tea or coffee: Coffee
Simpsons or Family Guy:
Family Guy giggidy giggidy.

Four to Finish

Describe yourself in 3 words:
Charismatic, hungover, and cheesy!
Who will win the 2010 World Cup? Ghana
Best chat-up line you've heard:
"So you're doing equine science yeah? So you're good at riding? Wanna dance!?"
What will you be when you grow up?
An Economist... I'll save Ireland!



Lee Casey

Clarification

Two articles printed in the last issue of An Focal, printed February 9, were incorrectly credited.

The copy of "Who are Ya?" was compiled by Liam Togher, but Mr Togher was not credited for his work.

The article entitled "All Ireland success for Fresher Ladies" was incorrectly credited to Enda Dowling instead of Tommy Crean.

The Editor would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused by this and thank the writers for their hard work and dedication to the newspaper.



University of Limerick
Students Union
Aontas na Mac Léinn
Ollscoil Luimnigh

UL's Fitzgibbon campaign begins with win and rain

By Liam Togher & Enda Dowling

THE Senior Hurlers started off their Fitzgibbon cup campaign with a victory over St. Pats Dublin on Pitch 1, in conditions which were certainly not conducive to fluid hurling.

The much-maligned GAA field had been left in a state of distress following Sigerson Cup action from the previous day, so champagne hurling would have to be put on the backburner. Despite the torrential rain and ravaged pitch, the game did throw up some fantastic moments and remained competitive right up to the final whistle.

Mark Bergin fired St. Pats into the lead with two short range frees in quick succession.

UL's Andrew Quinn then pointed from a free before Ryan O'Dwyer brought matters level with a fine score, taking a knock in the process. A magnificent individual score from half forward Thomas Connors gave UL a brief

lead before JJ Farrell pointed a long range free to bring the teams level a second time. St. Pats keeper Eoin Reilly showed great agility to save Shane Dooley's close range effort, but could do nothing to stop Thomas Connors ground stroke hitting the back of the net moments later. UL then enjoyed a long period of possession but failed to register a single score, mounting five wides in 15 minutes. St. Pats punished this inaccuracy with three points from Farrell, Bergin and half forward, Paudie Keogh. The last score of the half proved to be crucial as Shane Dooley raised the green flag to end a lack lustre spell and put daylight between the sides. That turned out to be a key score as St. Pats found it difficult to rouse themselves yet again in what had hitherto been a see-saw game. Ryan O'Dwyer and Connors, probably the two standout performers on the UL team, added points to make the score 2-5 to 0-7.

Once Matthew Ruth struck a goal which was only awarded following consultation between umpire and referee, the result was beyond doubt. It took until the 50th minute for St. Pats to notch their first score after half-time but they proceeded to add two more in quick succession, suddenly forcing UL to peer nervously over their shoulders. There was to be no miraculous comeback, though, and the favourites closed out the game comfortably en route to a 3-9 to 0-10 victory. Considering how shocking the weather was both teams should be rightly proud of their performances. Frankly they deserve credit, as do the hardy souls who went along to watch the game, merely for turning up. It was a day for guts and determination and there was plenty of that from UL, for whom a place in the quarter-finals is now a racing certainty.

UL: James Dempsey, Paddy Stapleton, Conor Fogarty, Michael Verney, Kieran Joyce, John Devane, Martin Walsh, Seamus Hickey (0-1), Brian Carroll, Noel O Murchu, Ryan O'Dwyer (0-3), Thomas Connors (1-2), Shane Dooley (1-0), Andrew Quinn (0-1), Matthew Ruth (1-0).

Subs: Michael Gleeson for Dooley, Michael Heffernan for Quinn, David Burke (0-2) for Carroll, Paddy Murphy for Ruth, Kieran Fox for Walsh.

St. Pats: Eoin Reilly, Eddie Kearns, Darragh Waefer, Alan Murphy, Philip Brennan, Damien Fogarty, Shane Campion, JJ Farrell (0-2), Eoin Doyle, Alan Cowman, Mark Bergin (0-6), Paudie Keogh (0-2), Tom Breen, Ian Duggan, Canice Maher.



UL 3-9

St. Patricks College 0-10

Miserable weather can't dampen Cunningham's mood

By Liam Togher

ANY manager would walk away from a Fitzgibbon Cup victory a happy man, but UL boss Ger Cunningham was particularly complimentary of his side after the 3-9 to 0-10 over St. Pat's on a day when only true lovers of hurling would brave what resembled a monsoon.

"I'm delighted to get through this game," stated Cunningham with a great deal of satisfaction. "It was always going to be a tough match, always going to be a banana skin. Everyone was hyping us up after getting to the final last year and would have expected us to win but, in fairness to St. Pat's, they showed plenty of quality and turned it into a dogfight and showed up a couple of our weaknesses." Inevitably he factored in

the atrocious weather during his analysis. "It wasn't a great day for hurling. We like to play a quick short-passing game so we had to change our game plan. I have to take my hat off to the lads just for getting through the game. They showed great character because it wasn't pretty out there. I couldn't even write the subs' list at one point, my hand was so cold! I could only imagine what they were going through. We have to give them credit, especially playing on that pitch. I'm just happy to have got the result and to be looking forward to the next game." That, of course, is against UUJ in the second Group C game, and it's one which Cunningham approaches with plenty of optimism. "We had a good run in the league and getting to the semi-

finals of the Waterford Crystal Cup was great. We've lots of games under our belt and we need to get in a bit of training now and get a system in place." The manager had plenty of positives to take from the match while admitting there was some room for improvement. "Our backs were magnificent. We defended really well, even though we weren't under pressure for massive spells. It's very easy for defenders to switch off when the ball is up the other end of the field but we stayed focused and the lads dealt with the conditions brilliantly so I'm very happy with that. However I'd like to see better quality of ball going into our danger men. We were doing a bit too much messing around in the middle of the field with the ball. We're not going to score

from the halfway line so we need to get ball in a bit quicker the next day. We hope to keep more ball in hand rather than keep playing it on the ground, but it was a shocker of a day so I can excuse them that."

Cunningham also mentioned the new handpass rule and how rarely the referee actually blew for it. "In fairness to the ref he kept the game flowing for both teams and he took the conditions into account. We told the lads in training there has to be a visible gap between hand and ball and hopefully that was in their minds today when they were handpassing the ball but I think the ref did let a few dodgy ones go!" In truth it was nothing more than a mild annoyance from a very contented manager.

Ladies soccer continue league winning run

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

THE UL Ladies Soccer team remain unbeaten in the Premier Division after two more resounding wins in Week 2 and Week 3. On February 3 CCFE were the visitors to the Ten Acres Pitch.

UL quickly set about their task. Aoife Herbert, Karen Duggan and Julie Ann Russell all struck for first half goals. In the second half the tempo was raised again.

Richael O’Brien got the second half scoring underway as Julie Ann Russell added two more for her hat trick. Aoife Herbert then fired home a penalty and Sarah Crotty completed the 8-0 rout. This was a clinical display all

round. While the UL goalkeeper and defence were troubled little, the creative play in the middle of the park and up front was slick and left CCFE in all sorts of trouble. Sarah Considine and Kacey O’Driscoll operated in midfield to great effect playing simple passes and snuffing out any attacks. Herbert and Russell were livewires on the wings and showed off the tremendous skill and pace that they both possess. Next up was a tricky trip to Dublin to face UCD.

UL emerged 3-1 winners in November against the same opposition so a tight encounter was expected. Little fazes this

team nowadays however and a 5-1 win again emphasised their dominance in this division. They currently hold top spot ahead of nearest challengers Sligo IT.

38 goals scored in seven league games is also an intimidating statistic and again displays the talent in the squad.

The Intervarsities are approaching in March and UL have been drawn in Group A. They have been pitted against Athlone IT and Waterford IT. The competition commences on Thursday March 4. On current form UL will be full of confidence and hopeful of retaining their varsity crown.



Ladies Soccer have two more wins under their belts

Intermediate and fresher hurling success

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

THE hurling talent currently occupying the maroon and white jerseys continues to be of the highest calibre. In recent weeks UL have added Intermediate and Fresher League titles against Cork opposition.

Intermediate final UL 2-14 - UCC 1-14

On January 28 the UL intermediate hurling team matched their senior colleagues by claiming the All Ireland League title with a hard fought three point victory over UCC. The team had not been together since before Christmas, thus making this victory even more satisfying. A superb performance by Kevin Fox of Tipperary at centre back set the tone of the game.

David Lynch at midfield also contributed greatly, as well as accurate forward performances from Thomas O’Brien, Patrick Murphy and Pdraig O’Murchu. This bodes well for the start of the Intermediate Championship in the coming weeks when UL square up to NUIG. It also completes a sweep of senior league titles for the UL hurling club.

UL: Thomas Lowry (Tipperary), Stephen O’Connor (Tipperary), Anthony Moore (Laois), Shane Lawlor (Waterford), Darren O’Dwyer (Kilkenny), Kevin Fox (Tipperary), Rory Foy (Galway), David Lynch (Limerick), Eamon Dwane (Galway),

Thomas O’Brien (Limerick), Patrick Murphy (Tipperary), Cairbre O’Caireallain (Antrim), Pdraig O’Murchu (Waterford), Donagh Stack (Cork), Liam Dwane (Tipperary).

Fresher final UL 2-11 -CIT 1-6

A strong first half was the foundation for the UL Fresher Hurling team to claim the league title on February 2 at Mourneabbey. Goals from Kieran Morris and Rory Hickey gave them a 2-8 to 1-4 advantage at half time. CIT’s green flag was raised by Anthony Cronin in the sixth minute.

UL’s twin scoring threat of Tipperary man Morris (1-5) and Galway underage star Ritchie Cummins (0-4) proved more than enough to see off the CIT challenge. Best for the Rebel side were Stephen Daniels (Waterford) and John Dineen (Cork).

UL: S O’Keefe (Waterford), K Murphy (Waterford), J Prendergast (Waterford), E Mulvihill (Clare), S O’Sullivan (Cork), J Gallagher (Tipperary), P McCarthy (Kilkenny), E Murray (Tipperary), J O’Regan (Galway), G Brennan (Kilkenny), D Butler (Tipperary), C Flynn (Galway), K Morris (Tipperary), R Hickey (Kilkenny), R Cummins (Galway).

Subs: T Spain (Offaly), S Heagney (Clare), G Guilfoyle (Clare), D O’Keefe (Wexford)

Ladies Rugby dish out a DCU mauling

By Fiona Reidy

UL Ladies Rugby set themselves up nicely for a perfect finish to the CUSAI League. UL, with a game in hand, have maximised their points after receiving bonus point victories in all their games this season. The ladies are comfortably topping the Division One table after their away game to DCU on Wednesday of Week 3.

Led by Captain, Fiona Reidy, and Vice-Captain, Anna Caplice, UL were determined to start this semester as they had finished the last. UL played out of their skins for vast periods of the game and completely dominated in all areas of the pitch.

Ashling Hutchings opened the scoring within the first five minutes and, after quick hands through the backline, Caplice converted.

The scrum which had been an issue in the teams’ previous encounter on the Bowl was improved, and the UL forwards set up a perfect try for winger Eileen Shanahan after the number eight picked and went blind from a scrum on DCU’s 22 meter line, skipping a pass to oncoming winger Shanahan who finished off excellently. After lots more interchanging

play between the backs and forwards throughout the entire game the following UL players all scored the numbered amount of tries: Ailish Toner (1), Sarah Jane Cody (2), Ashling Hutchings (5), Eileen Shanahan (1), Bronagh O’Donovan (1), Anna Caplice (1). This was one of UL’s finest performances in recent years with everyone playing very well with backs and forwards combining creating havoc amongst DCU’s defence. The final score was DCU 0 UL 62.

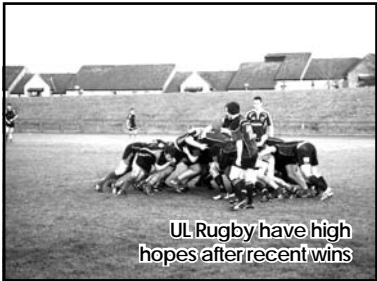
UL’s next game will be their toughest of the season against rivals UCC on the bowl on Wednesday of Week 5 at 2pm.

UL: Leah Barbour, Liz Cronin, Sarah Hogan, Clodagh Lacey , Fiona Malone, Rosie Flanagan, Michelle Claffy, Fiona Reidy, Ailish Toner, Anna Caplice, Niamh Lonergan, Claire Keohane, Sarah Jane Cody, Eileen Shanahan, Ashling Hutchings

Subs All Used: Katie Bee, Kate Friere, Sarah O Sullivan, Mary O Regan, Bronagh O’Donovan, Michelle Barry

Future looks bright for UL rugby

Fiona Reidy reports from the UL Bowl



UL Rugby have high hopes after recent wins

A DOUBLE win for the Fresher and Senior men's rugby teams against LIT gave both UL teams an ideal start to this semester. On the Bowl on Wednesday of Week 2 the Freshers game was the opener to what was a very entertaining afternoon of rugby.

The UL Freshers took on the LIT Freshers in the first round of the O'Boyle Cup. LIT looked the stronger team in the first half with their out half making excellent line breaks and creating lots of space

for his fellow backs. UL gave away some easy penalties which created LIT's first score giving the visitors a 3-0 lead. The UL pack upped their game after this and took on good go forward ball which formed an attacking platform. This pressure resulted in a penalty for UL in front of the post, which was converted by winger Sean Manion. The LIT out half was creating havoc among the UL defence, constantly breaking through the UL line and almost touching down twice but for last second tackles by UL's fullback Cormac O'Sullivan. This constant pressure on the UL defence inevitably led to a LIT try by Ian Moloney after LIT turned over a UL scrum just outside the 22. UL finally started to gel just before half time and had many phases in front of the LIT posts after a good lineout. UL's number 8 Liam Quinlan took a

pick and go from a ruck near the line and drove over to score UL's first try which Manion converted. The half time score stood at UL 10 LIT 3.

UL raised their game in the second half. UL robbed a LIT lineout and scrumhalf Barry Dwyer skillfully chipped the ball through and then kicked it on and gathered it, scoring a brilliant try under the posts. Manion again converted.

There was severe pressure on the UL line for the last ten minutes of the game with LIT's hooker putting a foot in touch before the try line denying them a consolation try. In one of the final phases of the game UL's man of the match Liam Quinlan sealed the victory for UL when he picked and drove on with the ball over the line. UL ran out 22-8 winners. In the senior game, UL started putting pressure immediately on the LIT line. UL were held up

twice in the opening minutes with their coach Mike Story commenting that: "UL definitely look the more enterprising team". UL indeed were showing some class, and through Munster Colleges winger Kyle Murphy who received a skip pass from Cillian Kennedy raced up the wing outclassing his opposite number and scored in the corner. UL continued applying pressure on LIT and were rewarded with a penalty which was converted by Kennedy. UL led 8-0 at the break.

Immediately after the break UL's centre John Scully made a great intercept breakaway and was caught by the LIT fullback just before the line. LIT started developing patterns of play and were putting severe pressure on UL. The LIT second centre cut a fantastic line and sliced through the UL defence and touched down to the right of

the posts. It was converted by LIT's out half. UL seemed to desperately defending this onslaught and LIT scored once more when their out half scored under the posts after a good break. UL trailed by six points with 15 minutes remaining. UL back row Alan Cambell then drove over the line after an excellent scrum anchored by the front row.

Immediately after the restart UL's prop Eddie Brennan gathered the ball and took it on down the left popped the ball out to Kyle Murphy who stepped two players and outpaced the LIT winger once more scoring under the posts with Kennedy converting. The home side finished strongly emerging 20-14 winners.

Both the freshers and the seniors can now be slightly confident ahead of the annual Colours Match versus LIT in Thomond Park on Wednesday February 24 at 7pm.

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UL triumph at the IUSA Sailing Western Championships

By Cian Gallagher

THE University of Limerick Sailing Club recently played host to the Irish University Sailing Association Western Championships in Kilrush, Co. Clare.

The morning dawned with fickle winds and frozen over boats but the boats were soon rigged and sailed out to the Race Area within Kilrush's unique man-made sea lake by way of a lock gate. With over 20 teams from 10 different universities and only three flights of boats, rather than the usual four, it was shaping up to be quite a task to get all the races done in time.

The light breeze delayed racing by over two hours and thus only half the expected races went ahead. These unforeseen circumstances forced the organisers to go to race win percentages to decide who made the quarter finals in the Gold and Silver fleets. Facing into the quarters both UL teams were sitting comfortably at the top of the league, with UL-1 winning two out of their three races,

and UL-2 winning four out of their five races both teams.

In a best-of-three quarter final UL-1 overcame TCD-1 in a two-nil defeat to progress to the semis against DIT-1. UL-2 had a more exciting quarter against UCC-1, winning the first race and losing the second before triumphing in the third to put them through against UCD-2 in the semis. Once again UL-1's top form showed through as they easily defeated DIT-1 in another two-nil win in the semis to allow them through to the final. UL-2 had a repeat of their quarters, ending up with a win and a loss against UCD-2 before heading into the final race of the best-of-three. With well implemented team racing techniques they defeated UCD-2 and headed into a final against their greatest rivals, UL-1.

A rather lacklustre start by UL-2 and a well timed one by UL-1 meant the latter went on to dominate and win the first race of a best-of-five final. The second race proved more exciting with UL-2 putting up a

valiant effort and causing havoc at the first, second, third, and fourth marks before ending up at the wrong end of the umpires stick which left UL-1 with another well deserved win. Up against the ropes UL-2 stood their ground and raced a much improved race in the third and claimed a win against their opposition. Still relatively against the ropes in the fourth race UL-2 gamely gave it their all but to no avail; UL-1 gave a fantastic example of their experience and team-work by manoeuvring themselves into a unorthodox late position on the line and fooled UL-2 into a losing position from the very start of the race. The event went off very well with UL-1 coming first in the Gold Fleet with UL-2 second and UCD-2 third in the same fleet. UCD-3 overcame the other seven teams to win the Silver Fleet and TCD-3 followed suit in the Bronze. ULSC would like to thank everyone who helped out and gave us their support, especially ULSC member Cian Gallagher, who pulled an absolute



blinder in organising the event and pulled more weight than anyone else which was widely appreciated by everyone involved. Hopefully all will wish them the very best of luck at the Intervarsity Championships in Fenit, Kerry where they will hopefully rank high enough, if not win, and qualify for the second year running for the Student Yachting World Cup

in France that they competed in at the end of October 2009.

Teams: UL-1: Darragh O'Connor, Katie Tingle, Kevin Stallard, Rachel O'Brien, Patrick Hegarty, Peadar O'Sullivan

UL-2: Billy Clarke, Rachel Cronin, Conor Martin, Lucy Fitzgerald, Shane Newman, Conor Coleman

Fresher 1 hurlers advance to semis

By Tommy Crean

UL 2-19 NUIG 0-06

UL completely dismantled a surprisingly lacklustre NUI Galway side in near freezing conditions in the Fresher 1 hurling quarter final at Pitch One. The Galway based outfit never warmed to the game, as UL set a serious marker for the remaining colleges in the competition.

James Regan opened the scoring with a powerful strike from a good 45 metres out, while Gary Guilfoyle scored a carbon copy moments later. Ritchie Cummins pointed and Kieran Morris struck a free before full forward Rory Hickey netted the first goal of the game.

Even at this early stage, most observers were in unanimous agreement that there was little chance of NUIG halting the one way traffic. The Galway side finally registered their first point midway through the half, courtesy of a Niall Burke free. His team could only add two more for the remainder of the half, by Cathal Egan and Ronan Crowley respectfully. These were sandwiched between scores by UL's Morris, Regan, Guilfoyle as well as Ritchie Cummins and David Butler. The half time score left matters at: UL 1-12, NUIG 0-03. In fact the opening period was a golden one for the UL forward line; all six starters had raised at least one white flag. The second half was in no way a fresh one

for NUIG as Morris added another early point. Burke appeared to be the only player capable of producing any sort of magic as he struck another score before Morris added on two more frees. Centre forward David Butler and Guilfoyle raised two more white flags before the final nail in the coffin was hammered in. Morris sewed up his man of the match performance with a classy, powerful finish, following excellent work by his teammate Cummins, who was impressing. The sides traded several points in the remaining minutes as UL sent plenty of red faces and glowing references back up the N18. For UL, Kieran Morris was outstanding. He was one of the most accurate free takers seen on pitch one this year and will hopefully be a real gem for the college in the years to come. The whole forward line worked excellently as a unit and deserve the highest praise for their delightful accuracy when shooting. Full back Pdraig Heffernan stood out as a real rock in defence, while his fellow defenders coped well with rare NUIG ventures.

UL: S. O'Keefe, K. Murphy, P. Heffernan, T. Spain, S. O'Sullivan, J. Gallacer, P. McCarthy, E. Murray, J. Regan, G. Brennan, D. Butler, G. Gilfoyle, K. Morris, R. Hickey, R. Cummins.

Subs: P.Stritch, E.Mulvihill, E.Fitzpatrick, P.O. Connor, R.Ryan, D.Leahy, S. Heagney, D.O'Keefe.

UL experience Harding Cup final blues

By Mark Connolly

THERE was disappointment for UL soccer at this year's Harding Cup as they lost out 3-0 to UCD in the final of the competition.

While the club will take heart from the footballer's consistency and fine performances to reach the final for the second year in succession, disappointment was surely the dominant emotion on the team bus journey home from Terryland Park in Galway as the cup yet again eluded them at the final hurdle.

A 2-0 quarter final victory was achieved against Mary I on day one of the tournament with goals courtesy of Daniel Clinton and Simon Malone.

After hopes were raised again with a convincing 4-2 victory against University of Ulster, Coleraine in the semi-final in which Daniel Clinton starred with a hat-trick, UL were emphatically dispatched by

a clinical UCD in a one-sided final. Tyrone McNelis opened the scoring for the Dubs on the half hour which was followed quickly by a Danny Fallon strike which left the Shannonsiders with a serious second half mountain to climb. It could have been worse as UL goalkeeper Alan Coleman saved a first half penalty.

The 2-0 interval advantage proved to be a gap they were unable to surmount as Samir Behout completed a miserable day for UL soccer four minutes from time for a deserved UCD triumph.

Last year UUJ denied UL in the final but many of that team went on to represent the senior side this year.

Players like Alan Quill and David McGrath have starred in the senior ranks this term. The soccer club will be hoping that many of this squad can make the same transition and put this disappointment behind them.

Camogie

Ashbourne disappointment for UL

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

THE UL Camogie team failed in their bid to make the Ashbourne Cup weekend in Cork IT after a narrow two point quarter final defeat to UCC at the Mardyke on February 6.

In spite of the best efforts of Aine Lyng, Clodagh Glynn and Mary Ryan, UL just fell short on the day. There can be no shame in defeat though considering the talent at UCC's disposal.

Their side contained Cork's Orla Cotter and Denise Cronin, Tipperary's Jill Horan, as well as Therese Muldowney and Elaine O'Shea from Kilkenny. It was a tight game throughout with little to choose between either of the two sides. The majority of the scores came from frees. UL relied on Aine

Lyng (Waterford) for her deadly accuracy on these placed balls. Ciara Johnson (Cork) also pointed from play early on. The away side held a single point advantage at the half time interval. The second half continued to be a tense, close battle. In the end UCC emerged victors on a 0-11 to 0-9 score line. Many of the UL team felt that this was a game that slipped through their grasp.

UL also fell at the quarter final hurdle last year. This year's Ashbourne Cup took place on February 20 and 21 with WIT, UUJ, UCC and UCD battling it out for the title. UL have won the Ashbourne crown on four occasions with the last triumph in the competition in 2006 when they completed the three in a row.

“It was a tight game throughout”



UL were narrowly defeated by UCC

Brislane: 'We will bounce back'

By David Kelly

UNIVERSITY College Cork broke UL hearts with a two point victory in an explosive game at the Mardyke Sports Grounds in UCC on Saturday. It was clear from the outset that this game would go down to the wire with UCC's skill level being matched with the sheer determination of a revamped UL side.

Despite being the underdogs, UL got off to the perfect start. Two frees converted by Aine Lyng settled them into contention. Further scores came from Mary Coleman, after great work by Shauna Curran in midfield, and Mairead, before UCC could muster their first score. UCC's Orla Cotter converted three quick fire frees in succession to reduce the gap to a single point. UL's Ciara Johnson then got the score of the day from what seemed like an impossible and obscure angle.

However, consistent fouling by UL's backline saw UCC back in touch, despite playing second fiddle to UL for most of the first half. At halftime UL were still in the frame, leading 0-6 to 0-5.

From the restart it was UCC who dominated proceedings with Therese Muldowney and Niamh Goulding leading from the front. Two Aine Lyng frees kept UL in touch, before UCC made one final surge. Two points by Orla Cotter and another from midfielder Denise Cronin snatched the lead from UL's grasp. Try as they might UL just couldn't break down the stout UCC defence for a sniff at goal. UCC's Sarah Collins and Elaine O'Shea halted any progress made by UL in the latter quarter. In the end however, it was UCC who emerged victorious with two points to spare. The final score was UCC 0-11, UL 0-9. Despite being disappointed at the loss, UL camogie manager Eoin Brislane spoke about the pride and determination UL had given on and off the field. "I couldn't have asked for a better performance," he said. "You gave

it your all. We will keep plugging away and we will go out and win the Ashbourne Plate. The improvement you have made since the Waterford game has been enormous. It was like watching a whole new team play."

UL then played Tipperary Seniors in a challenge game on Wednesday last. They emerged victorious with a few points to spare. Preparations are in full swing as they take on UUJ in the Ashbourne Plate Semi-Final next weekend. Nobody can deny the impressive strides this collective group have made in the last three months. The spirit, determination and gallant effort may not have been rewarded this time round, but watch this space. UL have a great chance to gain some silverware in the Ashbourne Shield, but they won't be underestimating CIT, UUJ or NUIG. In the Ashbourne Cup it's hard to see anyone shaking off WIT. They are a force to be reckoned with, physically and technically superb. However, should they take it for granted they could get caught on the hop by UCC. Player of the match was Claire Ryan (UL). In a game that could have gone either way, UL's Claire Ryan held her own in defence. Staunch defending and tackling by the backline helped UL's cause. She is a real presence in defence and if she replicates her performance next weekend UL will have a real shout.

UCC: D. Leahy, J. Brien, S. Collins, E. O'Shea, A. McNammara, F. Carr, M. Crowley, J. Horan (0-1), D. Cronin (0-2), G. Kenneally (Cpt), O. Cotter (0-5 (3 frees, 1 `45)), T. Muldowney (0-1), N. Goulding (0-2), L. Gahan, A. McLoughney.

UL: S. Vaughan, E. Frisby, S. Larkin, A. Walsh, C. Ryan, M. Ryan, K. Duggan, C. Glynn, S. Curran, F. Rochford, M. Coleman (0-1), A. Lyng (Cpt) (0-6 (5 frees)), C. Johnston (0-1), M. Scanlon (0-1), D. Ryan. Subs used: J. Brennan, U. Quinn, F. Lafferty.

UL surrender

Premier League crown

University of Limerick - 0
University of Ulster Jordanstown - 3

By Martin Hayes

UL's reign as Colleges and Universities league champions came to an abrupt end in the quarter finals at a windy AUL complex on Wednesday of Week 1. A well organised Jordanstown outfit, containing a number of established Irish League players, were good value for their victory as a combination of poor defending and an inability to convert chances means that the UL's management team has plenty to think about with only four weeks to go before the Collingwood Championship kicks off in Derry.

It was a case of whatever could go wrong went wrong horribly on the day, and indeed before. UL had to go into the game without their Limerick FC players David McGrath, Gavin Roche and Martin Deady. Although the absence of the latter was no surprise, as Martin continues to make a comeback from a long term injury, it was a big shock for the UL management team when they were informed on the Monday evening that the other two players (UL's top scorer and highly influential central midfielder) would also not be made available for this game. To make things worse half the UL back four had to be replaced within the first 15 minutes. First Dan Goggin pulled a hamstring in the opening 5 minutes of the game. Although Dan was keen to try to play his limited mobility was a significant contributing factor to the opening goal on 12 minutes as the stricken UL defender was caught for pace by UUJ striker Stephen Doyle. The Institute marksman was first onto a ball played into the penalty area and calmly finished the ball to the net. Things went from bad to worse for UL only five minutes later when they lost skipper, and Irish Student games star, Brian Cleary, to a very nasty head injury. Cleary had to leave the field immediately as the wound required stitches and was unable to play any further part in the game. This necessitated a complete

reorganisation of the UL back four as Darren Lynch and Rob Phelan came on at right and left back respectively. Perhaps a lack of organisation is understandable in such a circumstance but UL were made to pay dearly as they conceded on the half hour thanks to an ability to deal with a regulation free kick that was swung in from the left wing. UUJ midfielder Paul Lowry was able to control the ball first time in the penalty area and finish coolly into the far corner.

Being two down at the break, and considering that they had been playing with the aid of the strong breeze, could only mean that UL's task in the second half was always likely to be too big an ask. To their credit however The Limerick lads took the game to their Northern opponents and probably should have got at least one back early in the second half. Alan Quill in particular was very unlucky when his deflected shot inside the six yard box diverted straight into the UUJ goalkeeper's arms. The game was effectively killed as a contest with 20 minutes left when UUJ broke quickly up the field. Classy UUJ defender, David Bell, played a good ball over the top and Stephen Doyle managed to get between Lynch and UL keeper, Andrew Cosgrave, to lob the ball cheekily into the back of the net for his second of the day. UL must now prepare for the championship using only friendly matches. This result shows that plenty of work needs to be done if any impression is to be made at the Collingwood in Derry next month. Of course there are a number of players who should come back into the side then. On the evidence of this game these players are badly needed.

UL (4-5-1): Cosgrave, Barrett, Goggin, Stanley, Cleary, Healy, Richardson, Daly, Clinton, Walsh, Quill.

Subs: Lynch for Goggin (10 minutes), Phelan for Cleary (17 minutes), Brennan for Clinton (60 minutes).

Togher's Top 20:

exotic team names the UL soccer club should consider

By Liam Togher

1. CSKA UL
2. UL Network Solutions
3. Red Bull UL
4. UL & Hove Albion
5. UL Kaizer Chiefs
6. Shakhtar UL
7. Deportivo UL
8. UL Barcelona
9. Lokomotiv UL
10. UL & Diamonds
11. UL Galaxy
12. Calcio UL
13. UL Saint Germain
14. Olympique UL



15. Borussia UL
16. UL Alexandra
17. Sheriff UL
18. Internacional UL
19. UL Academicals
20. UL Sporting Goujons

Keane won't earn his Spurs at Celtic

By Alan Keane

IN truth, it's not all that far between Tallaght and Glasgow. Modern transportation would get you there in two hours, give or take. However it's taken Robbie Keane the bones of 30 years to finally arrive in the city of his childhood heroes, Celtic.

It has always been his dream to play for the Hoops, and on February 1 this year he made it a reality by signing a six-month loan deal with them. If Keane was to have made the decision on his season with his head rather than his heart however, you'd have to wonder whether he would have chosen Celtic as his destination. Celtic, under Tony Mowbray, isn't exactly setting the World on fire. With the Hoops languishing 10 points adrift of Rangers at time of going to print in the SPL, Keane would almost (almost) have a better chance of winning silverware with Tottenham this season. It's not as if Celtic is even in any European competition. Indeed it's possible that Celtic could be pushed into third place in the league (an unthinkable prospect) by an in-form Hibernian. With the exception of the Old Firm derby, Keane will be hard pushed to muster any excitement when he lines out against the likes of Hamilton or Dunfermline. Is Robbie Keane really going to better himself as a player in the next 6 months? You'd find it hard to believe he will.

Spurs was a settling influence on Keane, who during his early years as a professional had more clubs than Rory McIlroy. He even had a short lived stint in Italy with Inter Milan, where he struggled to break into the first team. His flaw

has always been his finishing. This is the main reason he's dropped down the pecking order at Spurs, with Defoe far more clinical and Crouch the perfect foil for his fellow Englishman. Even in the SPL Keane has yet to set the World alight, and his finishing has been called into question once more. There's no doubt that Keane has certain subtleties that are rarely seen in the SPL and as such will make an impact in Scotland. However even though he has been given the iconic number 7 jersey, I find it hard to see him scoring much more than that number in his loan spell. Come the summer, (with Gudjohnsen and hopefully Pavlychenko departing from Spurs) expect Keane to return to North London with his tail between his legs, ready to fight for his place instead of chasing what should have stayed a dream at this stage of his career.



Thomond Park Stadium - 24th February - 7PM

UL vs LIT

O'Brien Brothers Memorial Colours Match

Admission: €5
Match / Dugout Bar / Night Club Combo: €8

Tickets available from ULSU during Week 5
info@ulrugby.com

Sports Writers Diary

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

30 January
John Terry sets the headline mill into over drive after his winner against Burnley. My favourite was “Terry puts the affair to bed”.

31 January
Nani delivers a display against Arsenal that virtually no one could believe. United fans might have to wait another 3 years for the next big performance!

1 February
The beginning of Week 2; the honeymoon period is already over for us fourth year students. Any freshers reading this don't know how lucky they are!

2 February
While playing pool in the SU “Lady in Red” by Chris De Burgh comes on over the speakers. Someone was definitely having a laugh with song choices.

3 February
The An Focal Sports Writers’ Meeting get loads of stress balls which get kicked and thrown around the place as I try and keep some order. Kids these days are easily amused!

4 February
I battle the wind and rain and cold with two umbrellas while Liam and Enda attempt to take notes of the Fitzgibbon match between UL and St Pats. It's not easy though as the paper gets wet and the pens fail to make any mark on the page. If anyone would like to donate any sort of rain gear it would be very much appreciated!

5 February
I realise again how useless Bus Eireann are especially on Fridays!

6 February
The start of a serious weekend of sporting action! Unfortunately Ireland fail to entertain in a dull opening Six Nations match. Also €70 seems a bit steep for a game against Italy.

7 February
Good starts for Dublin and Mayo in the National football league but we all know that no trophies are given out in February.

8 February
Home and Away finally gets interesting for the first time in ages. I'm not a fan though I swear!

9 February
It is absolutely freezing on Pitch One for the Fresher 2 hurling. By the end of it my hands were a red/purple colour. I attempted a text message but I couldn't even feel the buttons!

10 February
Another classic An Focal sports meeting in the SU Common Room. Plenty of controversial comments about Rob Earnshaw, Roman Pavluchenko and Scott Brown among others!

11 February
An Focal sports writer Tommy Crean requests tickets to the Champions League final. Unfortunately Champions League passes are not one of the perks of writing for this newspaper and Crean's request was politely declined!

12 February
The end of another tough week! Before I depart I must give a big shout out to Barry Larkin who I was talking to recently around The Stables. Best of luck on Co-Op Barry! Any comments can be directed to mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com

Forgotten Footballer - Tony Sylva

By Tommy Crean

FOR those having trouble remembering, Tony Sylva is a Senegalise International goalkeeper and a World Cup legend. He is fondly remembered as a member of the Senegal side that took the 2002 tournament by storm, in particular the opening shock 1-0 victory over France. They reached the quarter finals, losing out to Turkey on the golden goal rule, although I have no idea how they got that far in the first place with Sylva's dodgy goalkeeping skills.

Manchester United fans may recall Ryan Giggs' controversial goal away against Lille in the 2007 Champions League campaign. Giggs scored from a quickly taken free kick to the opponents' anger as the referee had not blown his whistle. Sylva was between the sticks for that episode.

He landed himself in hot water when he unilaterally broken his contract at Lille to move to Turkey. He was later ordered by FIFA to pay the French side €1.1m; not the most intelligent of decisions Tony. Sylva also enjoyed spells with Monaco and AC Ajaccio. Now 34 years old, he currently plies his trade with Turkish side Trabzonspor.



The Rumour Mill

By Conor McGrath

UNLIKE Ashley Cole, or even Heather Mills for that matter, a rumour without a leg to stand on will get around some other way. The Squash Society of UL has been the subject of much library entrance/stairs chatter throughout the last fortnight. The lowly club has, apparently, organised information evenings for prospective members recently as they face the annual battle for top tier status. “We think people have forgotten about the sport, so we're just trying to remind them of what Squash actually is” was the reply of the club's head hencho, Mr. Dunlop. However, sources in the PESS building go further. Match attendances have been described as “basically an old man and his paper apart from the usual lost, apologetic Erasmus students”. Current membership figures were also deemed to be as appalling as “garlic breath”. Well, it seems that Squash in UL is in danger of actually living up to its name. On the subject of jeopardy, UL students have been warned to approach Jerry Flannery with caution over the next few weeks since Ireland's defeat in Paris. Bystanders have been warned, “to leave onions and any sort of black and white striped jumpers at home or there could be another case of a mistimed kick”. Leave a bull to this grass I suppose...

Quotes of the Edition

By Liam Togher

“He's not a Cavan senior because he's not called Brady.” Dan appears to be hinting at some nepotism in the Ulster county's football panel selection.

“We're the worst team in Britain!”
Fans of Montrose, who lie bottom of the Scottish Third Division with nine points from 19 games, cheer on their team in a Scottish Cup tie against Hibs.

“I wonder why they got rid of the scoreboard.”
Tommy Crean sarcastically notices the absence of the malfunctioning electronic scoreboard which had been on Pitch 1 a week earlier.

“Be quiet! There's important news coming in from Victoria Park!”
Jeff Stelling hushes the Soccer Saturday team when he finds out about Hartlepool's late equaliser against Leeds. Ah there's nothing like impartial broadcasting!

“Quit your f*in dancing and hit the yoke!”**
An observer at the UL - Athlone IT match in the Sigerson Cup doesn't like Ray Galligan's free-taking approach. It yielded four points (he also got 1-1 from play) for the visiting forward so perhaps it has some merit.

“Let's hit the showers, people!”
Mark Connolly draws the Sports' Writers meeting to a close amid frenetic laughter from the remainder of the team.

Give It A Lash Quiz

Compiled by Mike Considine

- Which current UL student contested an All Ireland hurling final with his county in 2007?
- Name the Ryder Cup Captain for Europe.
- How many stages of the Tour De France did Mark Cavendish win last year?
- Who has the record number of Super Bowl wins?
- Name the youngest player on the Lions tour last summer?
- Who was the 1000th player to receive a GAA All Star?
- What four players scored goals for Ireland in the 2002 World Cup?
- Name Ireland's second highest ever try scorer.
- Name the last Clare Hurling captain to lift an All Ireland title.
- In 1989 what Irish player faced down the Haka at Lansdowne Road?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6. Paul Galvin | 10. Willie Anderson |
| 5. Leigh Halfpenny | 9. Ciaran O'Doherty |
| 4. Pittsburgh Steelers | 8. Denis Hickie |
| 3. Six | 7. Matt Holland |
| 2. Colin Montgomerie | 6. Damien Duff, Gary Breen, |
| 1. Seamus Hickey | 5. Robbie Keane, |

AN FOCAL SPORT

O'Neill frustrated at lack of training facilities

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

IN THE aftermath of their Sigerson Cup exit by Athlone IT a disappointed UL Gaelic Football Manager, Cian O'Neill, voiced his displeasure at the poor training facilities in the college. He singled this out as a "key contributor" to his team not preparing properly for the competition.

O'Neill describes the week of training that preceded the match. "We trained here Friday morning at half 7. It got bright about five past eight and then we had to pay €200 to go Cork to Newtownshandrum to train on Sunday night. If you're telling me that's optimum training for a Sigerson Cup team there's something wrong." O'Neill also claimed that his side have not trained properly since November. "The thing is we can't apply ourselves because we have nowhere to train. We had a disappointing

league by our standards because normally we do quiet well in the league. We got three training sessions on Maguires in the light and then it became too dark."

The option of training on the Astroturf also wasn't ideal. "The Astroturf is no good because it is a carpet, it's not synthetic grass. There's a different bounce, a different feel." The UL boss is not willing to interfere with classes by holding sessions during the day. The sense of frustration is evident because his team is not being given a chance to perform to their optimum level. Despite this O'Neill hopes other UL teams will overcome this hurdle. "I'd like to see some of our teams win despite the poor standards for field sports in UL."

On the game itself he felt that the team never really got to the pitch of the game. He also

noted that mistakes in possession were costly. "We had our fair share of possession but I think [Athlone IT's] utility of it was probably a little bit more efficient. We weren't playing well we were only a point down in the first half. Once again we started a little bit slow and they got the chase on us. We got the goal that brought us right back into it and I thought that was the moment things would change. The next gear just wasn't there."

Fatigue was also an issue according to O'Neill. Many of UL's players, like Enda Varley and Seamus O'Shea, lined out for the counties the weekend prior to the game. This meant they had to play three competitive games in a week. "Athlone came in that little bit fresher and maybe that's what stood to them in the end."

After refusing to comment on referee Mike

Meade's performance against Carlow IT O'Neill on this occasion "thought that we were harshly treated today and last week." He backed up this claim with some startling figures. "When you have a free count of 32 against and 11 for last week and 28 against and 9 for this week up until the last two minutes questions have to be asked." While Brian Tyrell won't be receiving a Christmas card from O'Neill, he does realise the difficult job officials have. "The referee has a job to do and I respect that. I'm just disappointed that's all."

Another unsatisfactory end to a Sigerson campaign for UL but there is much food for thought in O'Neill's words. For him losing a game is something he can accept but not getting a fair opportunity to prepare to win is a more serious matter.

Sigerson journey ends in disappointment

By Daniel Bridge

ATHLONE IT got the better of UL in the second round of the Sigerson Cup in Week 2. Cian O'Neill's charges put up a brave challenge to the Leinster outfit but ended up being comprehensively beaten.

Just as in the previous game against Carlow IT, it was the high amount of wides that the hosts kicked that proved costly. Along with this, their reliance on scores from frees and on Mayo man Enda Varley was a key factor in Athlone's dominance. To add to UL's difficulties, Athlone IT forwards Ray Galligan and John Reynolds were in fine form, with the Cavan man Galligan hitting 1-3 and linking up most of his team's attacks.

He became even more of an influence when UL pushed to decrease AIT's lead and he was given more room to move and cause havoc in the UL backline. Varley was the pick of UL's players, popping over five points and netting a

penalty. Despite the penalty, Varley was almost anonymous during the second half, and after an impressive first half he will be disappointed with the last thirty minutes. UL won't be going to Maynooth this year for the Sigerson Cup final, but there are positive signs which this side can build on and take the next step. Preparation is the key and although manager Cian O'Neill didn't get it this year, next season may be different.

UL: Thornton, Fitzgerald, Codd, Brady; Lonergan, O'Donnell, Rattigan, O'Shea, Moloney, Cahalane, Austin (0-1), Larkin, Varley (1-5), Niblock (0-1), O'Sullivan (0-1).

AIT: Connaghton, Higgins, Masterson, J. Reynolds, Mitchell, Considine, Smyth, Dennigan (0-1), Connors, Doherty (0-3), Egan (0-2), A. Burke, F. Burke (0-2), J. Reynolds (0-4), Galligan (1-3).

Athlone IT 1-15
UL 1-8



UL Gaelic Football in action earlier this semester