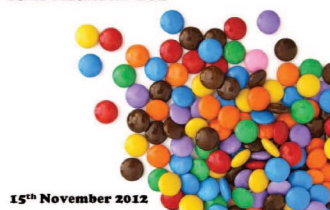
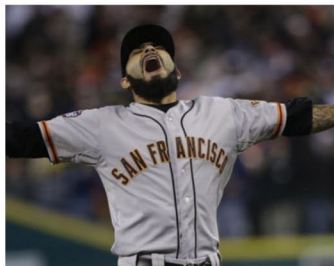


STUDENT LEVY REFERENDUM

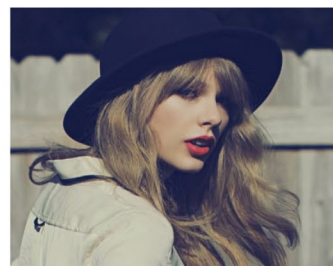


15th November 2012

Check out our Levy Referendum Spread and don't forget to vote from 7am to 8pm on Thursday, November 15th.
Pages 5, 6 & 7



Catch up on the latest Baseball news as the Giants clinch the World Series.
Page 16



Read Alex Sheehan's review of Taylor Swift's new album, *Red*.
Page 21

UL Student Levy Referendum To Be Held Thursday November 15th

Gerard Flynn
Co-Editor

There will be a referendum on Thursday November 15th, week 10, to decide whether the UL student levy should be raised from its current rate of €72 to €130.

The levy increase would last until the development is substantially complete but will be increased by a further €20 as part of an operations levy thereafter which contributes to the development and maintenance of the student centre, arena extension and the newly developed Maguire's pitches.

The levy amendment which is expected to last 20 years, would be needed in order to fund the building of a new student centre, an extension to the UL Arena and the development of Maguire's pitches.

The operations levy of €20 is to become payable in the year that work on the student centre is finally complete and will increase annually by the greater of 2% or CPI.

The original levy date was set for Thursday November 8th of week 9 but due to external technical difficulties with the online voting system, the date had to be put forward by a week.

UL President Adam Moursy stated in an e-mail sent out to students last week that "work is currently on-going to solve these issues to ensure the vote can go ahead using the online voting system" and that "regrettably, it was

not feasible to organise a paper ballot at such short notice for the date set by council."

Following this e-mail, there was also a Q&A session in the Jean Monnet Theatre last Tuesday, November 6th which gave students the opportunity to query the new development plans.

The event was attended by almost fifty UL students as well as former rugby player and current arena board member, Keith Wood. Director of Buildings and Estates Robert Reidy and Director of Sports Dave Mahedy were also in attendance. All three guests spoke at the event and were eager to allay any fears that the student population would have in relation to a student levy increase.

The new student centre development would contain a large scale student entertainment/gig venue with bar, C&S rooms and offices, students' union offices (including a new radio broadcast station), a cinema, games room as well as shops and other retail outlets.

The Arena extension would consist of a new 25 metre pool with diving and sub aqua facilities as well as a climbing wall hall, squad rooms, sauna and steam rooms and weight training and exercise gyms.

The upgrading of Maguire's pitches would deal mainly with the fields' surface which suffers every year from harsh weather and is practically unplayable during the winter months. There would also be the addition



A spec of the extension to the UL Arena, just one of the three potential developments on campus should Thursday's Referendum be passed.

of floodlights and high spec fully drained sand carpet based grass pitches.

Work on all three developments would be expected to be completed by December 2015.

Voting begins at 7am on Thursday

November 15th and ends at 8pm that night. All votes can be cast electronically via the ULSU website.

For more information on the developments you can download a pdf of the projects from the ULSU website: <http://www.ulsu.ie/about/>

studentcentreplans or from www.anfocal.ie, which covered this story in issue one of this semester.

Additional information can also be found on <http://ulsureferendum.com/> and <http://www.ulreferenduminfo.com>

Fears Rise Amid Kemmy Business School Students

Enda Costello

It is understood that the University hierarchy is considering reducing points across a number of courses including the KBS to boost numbers and as a result revenue. With the Government Budget impending and due on the 5th of December, it is believed universities and colleges can expect further cuts. To counteract this, it is understood that many colleges in Ireland are increasingly looking to form relationships with other colleges across the world to advertise

its courses to students beyond the EU who bring in badly needed revenue.

However this strategy alone will fall short of the immediate shortfall and is likely to be unable to balance off the deficit in the medium term either. This means that Universities and colleges across the country are being left with difficult choices. But is swelling the numbers by reducing the entry requirements the correct one?

The Kemmy Business School has built a reputation for knowledgeable, enthusiastic and employable students. That could be put in jeopardy if

the points required for entry to the KBS are reduced. The standard of a business degree in UL will not have the same weight for employers and it potentially means that the quantity of UL students filling Co-op, internships and placements and ultimately being employed by top quality employers could be replaced by UCD and other college students instead.

This year the principal course in the KBS, Business Studies dropped by 15 points to 375, if this was to be repeated for 2013 Leaving Certificate students, the quality of the degree could be

reduced. The reputation of the UL and the KBS is a huge factor for any employer (and for students picking their choice of college) and can have an impact for future, past and present students.

The KBS has continued to make strides in education excellence and producing students ready to make an impact on the commercial world, one would have to assume that it would be the desire of the University, the KBS and the student body this would continue by reinforcing the KBS as the best business school in the country,

and as a result the most sought after by Leaving Certificate students who would be willing to work that extra bit harder to accomplish the points necessary to enter such a prestigious and respected third level institute.

The numbers could increase without damaging the reputation of the degrees currently enjoyed by KBS students, if it continued to pursue the objective of making Business in UL the place to be.

Less Than 4% Of Students Have Received Grant From SUSI

Lorna Bogue
Co-Editor

The Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) office, which is run by the City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC) released the figures of the amount of grants paid out and waiting to be paid out on the 26th of October. According to SUSI figures out of 45,650 students in receipt of a grant from SUSI, only 1,683 have received their first payment resulting in total of 3.68%. A representative from the Department of Education press office gave An Focal the statement as to the delay in the payment of Grants, 'generally people don't have the right information in' before reiterating that SUSI is acting independently of the department of education.

Minister for Education Ruari Quinn could not be reached directly by An Focal, however on the 6th of November, Mr. Quinn answered questions in the Dáil from deputies Pat Deering, Stephen Donnelly, Arthur Spring and Michael Lowry on the issue. The reasons for the delays in payment of grants given by Quinn was due to "the volume of applications received, staffing resources, whether or not completed application forms have been received and how quickly complete further requested documentation is returned." SUSI has not only delayed the payment of grants but it has also delayed notifying students as to whether they have been accepted, resulting in students being unable to get a student loan or to register fully for university in some cases.

The effects of the delay in the payment of grants have been noted by Welfare Officer Cathal Ronan. The currently limited resources of the welfare office are under strain because of increased demand due to the SUSI delays. According to Mr. Ronan more people are looking into hardship loans and other means of financial aid in order to pay for the cost of living. "Unfortunately with so many people waiting on the grants, different situations per person and the fact I am working off a limited fund it is quite difficult to support each student that comes into me. I really hope something is done soon about this as it is having a massive effect on students who are trying to get through college."

For Students who are having financial difficulties the Welfare Officer can deal with enquiries into financial support. In terms of what the SU is doing to alleviate the harms of the SUSI delays, SU President Adam Moursy has stated, "The issue has been raised recently in the Dáil and if it persists, we will be discussing it with local TDs. In the meantime, we'll be asking the University and the Fees Office to be as flexible as possible given the financial pressure that a lot of students are under and given that exams are only a number of weeks away."

With regards to dealing with the delays caused by SUSI, Minister Quinn had this to say in the Dáil, "Staffing levels in SUSI have been substantially increased in recent weeks, with an additional 20 staff members processing the



Minister Quinn facing public disapproval over grant fees at a 2007 students' fees protest outside the Dáil.

documentation received from students and extra staff have also been assigned to SUSI head office to work on continually improving the processes and speeding up processing times." The SUSI website has also made a commitment to having 35,000 applications processed by December. Minister Quinn also stated on the RTÉ 1 Radio show 'Morning Ireland' with regard to CDVEC "they are not

as satisfactory as we would like, we are talking to them (The CDVEC) to see how it can be improved. There have been improvements already in relation to getting extra resources to process them; they are now processing 800 applications a day." Jacinta Stewart, CEO of the CDVEC, will be appearing before the Oireachtas education committee this week and will be answering

queries from senators and Dáil representatives as the Chief Executive responsible for the delays. In stark contrast to the 21st of June 2012 when Ms Stewart received the Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence award from An Taoiseach Enda Kenny on behalf of SUSI for, "innovation and best practice in public service administration and service delivery."

Credits

Interim Co-Editors – Gerard Flynn & Lorna Bogue

News Editor – Fintan Walsh
Life & Style Editor – Emily Maree
Sports Editor – Robert McNamara
Arts & Ents Editor – Kelly O'Brien
Travel Editor – Amy Grimes
Interviews Editor – Aubrey O'Connell
Cartoonist – Patrick Furnell

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Visit www.anfocal.ie to view An Focal online.

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

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

E: gerard.flynn@ul.ie / lorna.bogue@ul.ie to contact the Editor.

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2FM DJ Will Leahy Gives Talk to UL Students

Fintan Walsh
News Editor

Radio Presenter, Will Leahy paid a visit to UL last week to discuss his career and the happenings within RTÉ.

In front of a semi-packed room of ULFM presenters and producers, the 2fm presenter began his lengthy speech with how he began as a radio presenter, mentioning that from the age of nine, the Limerick-raised man "always wanted to be a radio DJ".

The 41-year-old, who works as a full-time solicitor, revealed at the start of the event that his "family was into law". However, he said that ever since the age of nine, he thought of a 2fm presenter post being "like the sexiest job ever".

Leahy and his friends, while he was in boarding school, decided to set up a pirate radio station, of which there were plenty around the country at the time. He left school in 1989, but could not get a job in any local radio station.

Though Leahy admitted that he never did any course to do with media, he firmly said that "volunteering" was the way to go about moving up the scale in radio and in the media.

His first major opportunity with

local radio was in Galway, where he dropped a demo tape into a local station.

"I was pretending to be a DJ from home but then I got a phone call from them...and I got into that station in Galway," he said.

After years of working in a Limerick pub, as well as working in the radio station in Galway, the 2fm presenter received a phone call from a staff member of 98fm in Dublin offering him a job.

He told the ULFM presenters, "The presenter I am today came from that radio station [98fm]." There, Leahy told his audience, was where he learnt that he could not play whatever music he wanted; commercial stations were heavily dabbed in market research when it came to what songs the audience wanted and what topics the listeners wanted to hear.

At the time, Leahy was "filling-in for the fill-in guy", which was around the same time TV3's Martin King was the second-in-command and was in charge of all the station's music.

The More Music Drive presenter got into 2fm when he was asked to fill-in for a presenter who was on maternity leave for 12 weeks and was given a permanent slot when the 12

weeks came to an end. Around this time, his 98fm counterparts were highly disapproving and had huge reservations about his decision to move, he told the University students.

"2fm is owned by RTÉ, which involves a lot of public service stuff that I don't agree with," he said.

"I wish we could go out and grab the audience and be more competitive but we don't have the marketing," Leahy admitted, as he repeatedly threw into his speech that RTÉ had "nothing" and "zero" to spend on their presenters.

Though the Limerick DJ is disappointed with RTÉ's budget, he said that he is "incredibly lucky to work [in RTÉ]" because of the freedom each presenter is given.

The ULFM guest referred to radio "as a science" and that there are "very few people as anal" as him when it comes to research, rates and audience feedback.

He works from the Cornmarket Square studios in Limerick City, which is also the home to RTÉ Lyric FM. He praised the efficiency of the new Limerick studios, saying "RTÉ Lyric FM has one of the best studios in RTÉ because it so modern."

Leahy also shared with the students how he was able to get high-scale

interviews with celebrities, such as Jay-Z and Jimmy Carr. He created a fake competition on his show, entitled "the best voice in Ireland", where he supposedly asked the Irish public who had the best voice. Whatever celebrity or television figure he wanted, he told them that they were voted as the best voice of Ireland. "They were then delighted to do an interview with us."

"I don't listen to most of Irish radio – a lot of it is the same," he said, criticising the "sameness" of current Irish radio, with Spin South-West serving as a major exemplar of his criticism. He said the radio station, which is based in Limerick, does not serve the radio needs of all age groups and that all of the shows seem to be talk shows.

"You would probably make more money working in McDonalds than in Spin. Although, you only work three hours [in Spin], so you could work at both."

With just an hour before his show on his 4.30pm show on 2fm, Leahy gave some eager ULFM presenters advice.

"The key to the job is confidence – to not be nervous when talking in front of people. By doing that more and more, nothing ever fazed me about that red light."

Chief Justice Given UL DebU Auditor's Medal

Sean Duggan

Mrs. Justice Susan Denham of the Irish Supreme Court was welcomed to the University on Thursday night by the University of Limerick Debating Union to accept the UL Debating Union Auditor's Medal. The Auditor's Medal, which bestows Honorary Lifetime Membership of the Union, is awarded annually to individuals that have made significant contributions to the world of discourse and debate. Previous recipients include late former Taoiseach Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald who was presented with the Medal in 2011.

Mrs. Justice Denham became a High Court judge in 1991 and was quickly appointed to the Supreme Court in 1992, making her the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court and the longest serving member of the judiciary. Since then, she has been heavily involved in reforming the legal system both in Ireland and across Europe, including working on proposals for the establishment for a Judicial Council and a Court of Civil Appeals.

Following her introduction and presentation of the Medal by Debating Union Auditor Michelle Coyle, Judge Denham spoke of the history and significance of the University of Limerick, as well as how the political and social aspects of Irish life have



Chief Justice Susan Denham being presented with her UL DebU Auditor's medal by society Auditor, Michelle Coyle.

changed since her time in University in the '60s.

The event was well attended by both

members of the Debating Union as well as students and faculty from many disciplines as they enjoyed a rare

and valuable opportunity to meet and talk with the longest-serving member of the judiciary, who was more than

happy to talk with students about her work and experiences in University.



15th NOVEMBER 2012

Here's how:

✓ Log on to <https://vote.ulsu.ie/>

✓ Polling will take place on any computer from **7am to 8pm**

on the **15th November 2012**

The Question:

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Ambitious Multi Million Euro Projects Planned For UL Student Referendum

Paul Lee
C&S Development Officer

There is a plan to put a referendum the way of the UL student body later this semester to discuss the possibility of a three site project development across the University Campus. There is no doubting that this is a highly ambitious undertaking which has many obstacles to be overcome and certainly is not a fait-a-complis but it's certainly not just a pipe dream, the vision is much more advanced than that.

During the summer the Students Union delegation have been engaged with the University Director of Finance, Mr. John Field, Director of Buildings & Estates and Mr. Robert Reidy about bringing these highly ambitious projects to life. Prior to the summer as well members of Clubs & Societies met with the Director of Sport, Mr. David Mahedy about the possibility and implications for the Arena Extension.

The projects in question are:

1. An extension to the University Arena.
2. The Development of the training fields known as "Maguire's".
3. A New Student Centre.

The extension to University Arena has been a subject of discussion at the Arena Board of Directors for a number of years, dating back to 2007. The plans have been available since 2010. Our Outdoor Pursuits and Sub Aqua Club are the immediate and long term champions for a new and permanent Climbing Wall, and a Diving "pit" with the depth required for a high standard

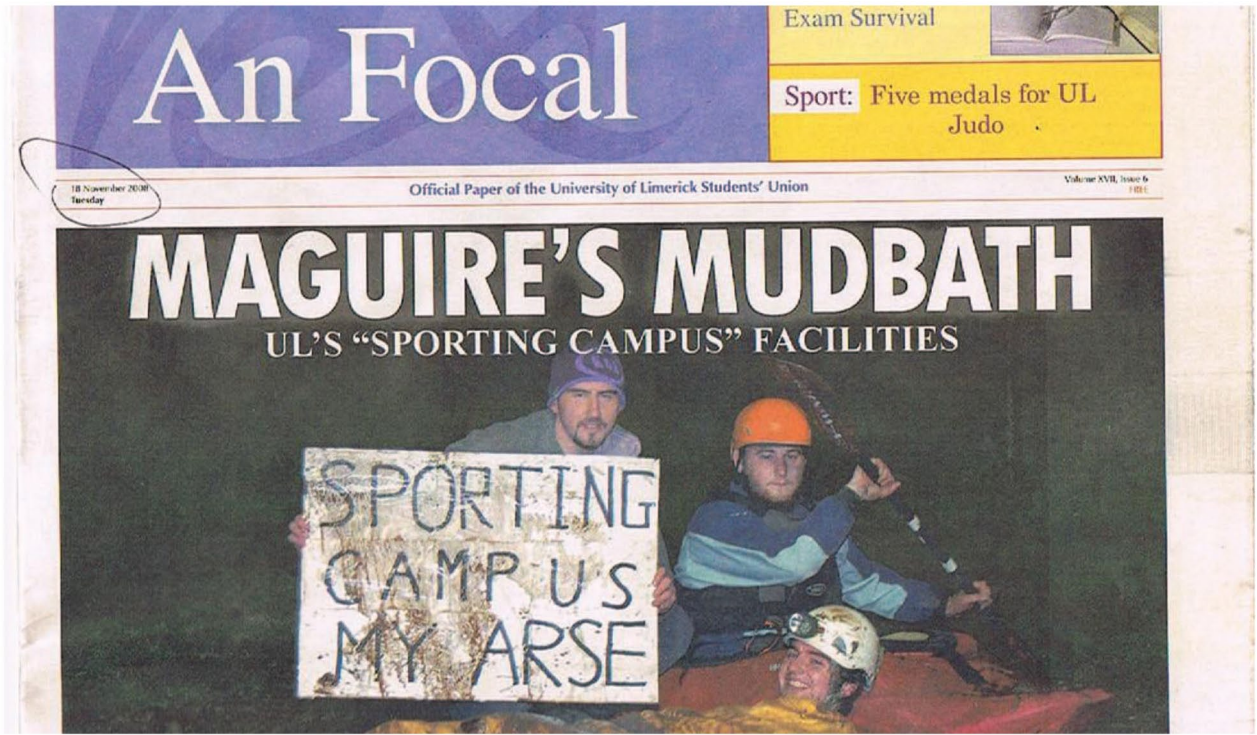
of buoyancy training. Others that we would expect to benefit from a potential extension would be Trampoline & Gymnastics, Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Krav Maga, Parkour; Dance Club not withstanding many are already housed in the current Sports Halls.

The next project is that of the upgrading of the Maguire's Training pitches, an issue that's been around for quite some time (See Picture). Maguire's was always deemed by the students sports clubs as sub-standard and suffered very quickly from inclement weather. The surface can also not take the volume of training which was compressed into the area where a very outdated set of floodlights were arranged in a very narrow strip of land. There was and still is the old "astro" pitch but many felt that an artificial surface could not entirely substitute the need to train on grass.

The upgrading of the pitches affects the Men's and Ladies Rugby Club, the GAA, Camogie, Ladies and Men's Gaelic Football, Softball, Ultimate Frisbee and the ladies and men's discipline within the UL Soccer club as well.

The possibility of a new student centre first appeared in a real sense under the guidance of ULSU President Ruan Dillon McLoughlin and his sabbatical team.

Since then the Students Union has grown and it's Clubs & Societies too and we are struggling for space within the existing footprint. The meeting rooms are too small for the demand placed upon them from Class Representatives and Clubs & Societies. I now occupy a former Clubs & Societies meeting room,



since we hired Liz Gabbett in 2010 to work with me and she in turn inherited my old office. Clubs & Societies Meeting Room 3 has been retro-fitted with storage space for societies; the dark room and photographic society room are at capacity. Many of the offices for the Students Union staff are poorly located down a dark corridor at the back of the building removed from the people they are purporting to represent.

The other new big ticket item would be an opportunity which we don't have in the current building to host entertainments like gigs, head-line acts, disco's to audiences of hundreds of people, possible student drama performances and the like which

would be immensely important for the future financial viability of the Students Union. It would benefit a whole host of societies.

This is a huge opportunity and it will require a fully engaged student body, from Class Representatives to Clubs & Societies to the Students Union AGM for all students of the University. This has been done before and the latest of these developments was the University of Limerick Boathouse completed in 2007 at a cost of €5.1M for the benefit of the Kayak, Rowing, Sub Aqua and Mountain Bike Clubs. There were significant lessons learned from that project which would have to be brought to bear on any and all of the projects

outlined not to mention the very thorny subject of an increase on the current levy to cover the costs associated.

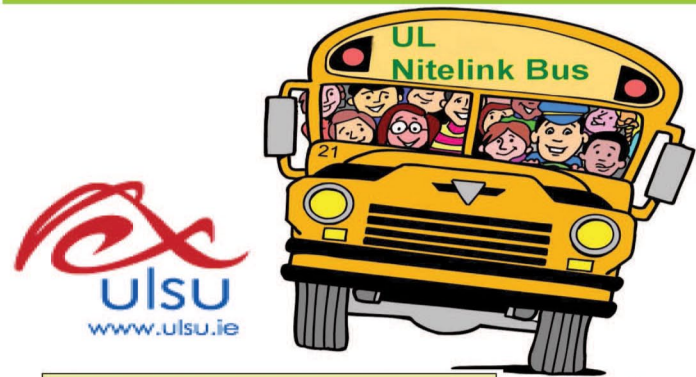
Students have contributed in the past to all the facilities we now take for granted. The Arena had a €4.5M student contribution, the current Student Centre a €3.5M student contribution and the UL Boathouse had €4.3M student contribution.

As the Greek Proverb which fittingly appeared in a UL Presidents Volunteer Award application this year succinctly put it:

"A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit"

Let the debate begin.

Student Nitelink Bus



●	Cappavilla Village	19.00	20.00	21.00	22.00	23.00
↓	Thomond Village	19.05	20.05	21.05	22.05	23.05
↓	Dromroe Village	19.10	20.10	21.10	22.10	23.10
↓	Stables Arch	19.15	20.15	21.15	22.15	23.15
↓	Kilmurry Lodge	19.25	20.25	21.25	22.25	23.25
↓	Brookfield / Groody	19.30	20.30	21.30	22.30	23.30
↓	City Centre –Arthurs Quay	19.40	20.40	21.40	22.40	23.40

Introducing a new hourly bus service for students going from UL's north campus and Students centre to the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Groody, Brookfield and Limerick City Centre 7pm to 11pm [EX-Cappavilla] every Mon, Tue, Wed and Thurs nights (Semester weeks).



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ULSU President's Column

Adam Moursy

Welcome to Week 10 everyone! First off, let me apologise for the postponement of the Student Levy Referendum. There was a major issue with the verification process that students must go through to be able to vote. Thus, in order to preserve the integrity of the vote, the Students' Union Executive had no option but to delay the vote by a week. Rest assured, the problem has now been fixed and we are in full testing mode to ensure there are no other issues in the run up to Thursday.

This week could potentially become one of the most important weeks in the Students' Union's history. The referendum on Thursday will play an important role in the road map for the future of the Union. While I am part of the Yes campaign and have worked heavily towards getting it passed, I recognise the role I play as President for all Students and as such, if students reject this referendum then we must accept that it is the will of the people. Regardless of whether you are in favour or against this project, it is vital that you vote. We would rather have a big turn out and everyone votes no, than to have a situation where everybody who votes, votes yes but we fail to reach quorum.

Recently, we held the ULSU 40th anniversary in the Radisson and it was incredible to see the role that the Students' Union and the Students played in the early years when UL was called the NIHE. Dr. Ed Walsh, Founding President of the University, recognised the fact that had it not been for the early student activists then Limerick would not have



received its status as an institution which could confer its own degrees and that it would've fallen under the NUI banner.

This leads me back to the referendum. At the 40th, the previous levy referendums were discussed and were it not for the students of bygone eras considering the future development of the Students' Union and the facilities available to future

students then we would not have an Arena, a Students' Centre or a Boathouse. This levy presents an opportunity to make an investment for the future, in the same way the students of the past invested in our future. Thus, it falls on the students of today to consider the needs of future students and potentially, their brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

On an unrelated note, the Union is aware of the on-going situation with regards to the delay in grant payments. This is an annual problem; however, the extent to which it is affecting students this year seems to be bigger in comparison to previous years. We will be speaking with the University and the fees office to ensure that they are not putting unnecessary stress on students who

are waiting on grant payments or grant confirmations, especially in the run up to exams. To anyone who is struggling, especially financially, there are supports available from the Students' Union, so please do not struggle in confidence. The Welfare Officer is there for these very reasons.

What If The Referendum Passes? What Happens Next?

Phillip Mudge
ULSU General Manager

If students vote "Yes" this week to approve the extension to the student levy everybody wants to know what will happen next. C&S Development Officer Paul Lee and I met with Robert Reidy, Director of Building and Estates last Thursday and here is the current best prediction of timelines related to the three projects in question.

Memorandum of Understanding is Agreed and Signed Off by February 2012:

This is the legal agreement between all the stakeholders, including students that copper fastens all the commitments that have been made about how the projects will be built and how the three facilities will be used. Capital levy is then paid from September 2013.

Maguire's Pitches:

Tender for the project is advertised, agreed and contractors are appointed by March 2013. The current pitches will be taken out of commission at the end of the current season. Alternative interim training facilities will be provided if possible, or funded to facilitate the equivalent of current usage. The work is then completed

by the end of Summer 2013. Pitches are then left to grow until Summer 2014. The pitches will be available for ULSU sports clubs use in September 2014.

UL Arena Extension:

Tender for construction work is advertised, agreed and contractors are appointed in Spring 2013. Construction work commences summer 2013. There will be minimal disruption to current usage. The timetabling agreement for ULSU clubs and societies usage is agreed for the 1st term 2014. The project will then be completed and ready to use by December 2014.

Student Centre:

On-going research into specific project features including site visits starts immediately. Tender advertised, agreed and a design team consortium is appointed by April 2013. A consultation and planning phase commences in summer 2013. Building work then commences in the Spring/Summer 2014 with all the building completed December 2015.

All Projects Completed

Once the projects are completed an operational levy is then payable from September 2015.



ULSU General Manager Philip Mudge.

An Focal

Gerard Flynn

Don't worry; this editorial won't be as rousing as the last by any means. I've gotten over my "are you not entertained?" phase at this point so you can allay your fears. I suppose this editorial is just a quick note about what's going on in the SU with regards to An Focal for the next few issues.

Firstly, I just want to say that Journalism Masters student, James Bradshaw will be joining the editorial team in the next few weeks and will begin work on issue 6 as a co-editor along with Lorna and myself. In the past we've been criticised for not giving intimate details on what's happening with An Focal and this accusation can even be thrown at the SU as a whole on some occasions. With James' appointment on the editorial team, we feel that it's a case of many hands making light work instead of too many cooks

spoil the broth. If anything, this will allow us to cover more on campus events and get a bit more news into the paper, something that we've been struggling with for quite some time now. I'd like to think that this issue is a step in the right direction with regards to this but as with anything, it can always be better.

Once again, I'll plug the fact that we're still looking for contributors as well as a Comment and Arts & Ents editor. Our former-Comment editor, Colm Fitzgerald stepped down after issue 3 and ever since we've been looking for someone to take over his post. There's also a similar situation with our Arts & Ents editorial position. Kelly O'Brien filled this position for this issue and I really think that you can see the difference with that section in this issue compared to the last, both in terms of quality and quantity. It shows the importance of consistency and organisation in a paper and many

of the best sections of the paper are managed by organised, punctual and diligent sub-editors.

So that's pretty much it, if you have any interest in being our comment or arts & ents editor or if you want to contribute, as always, the addresses you need are at the bottom of this editorial. For any issues you want to talk about referring to the paper, the Communications Office in the SU is always open.

To submit articles send them to lorna.bogue@ul.ie or gerard.flynn@ul.ie or create an account on www.anfocal.ie to submit an article online.

Lorna Bogue

It may seem as though apathy is a huge problem in Ireland. Given that only 32% of the electorate bothered to vote in a referendum concerning the future of children in this country. Whether you were pro or against the referendum,

the worrying part about it wasn't wasn't the result but rather the lack of interest in expressing a view in the running of the country.

Of course the result itself of 42% against the referendum is also a worrying sign for the yes campaign, which was basically every party in government. Perhaps the ubiquitous yes campaign was a factor in inspiring voter apathy. Any voter with the intention of voting yes could have been lulled into a false sense of security by the lack of a coherent no campaign. However, while the no campaign may have been incoherent and sensationalist, it also did manage to mobilise its voters. By doing nothing and not expressing a view, voters who would have voted yes could have lost by default.

This week on campus there are two issues that require the student voice. Firstly there is the SUSI issue, in which students are still not receiving their grants from the centralised grant awarding body.

This delay in grants is something that is adversely affecting students and is something that needs to be actively fought.

The second issue that requires the student body to put across their view is the referendum on the new student centre. An Focal has tried to present as much information as possible to help students to come to their own conclusions. What's important is to reach quorum in order to make a legitimate decision.

The last week has been really encouraging in terms of student engagement with An Focal. Ger and I were delighted with the number of people who came in to the office to either contribute to the paper, tell us how to improve or simply to have a chat. We want more people to have an input into how the paper is being run and what is appearing in your paper.

The Referendum Debate:

VOTE NO 

VOTE YES 

Rob McNamara

I'm writing this as a student who has no axe to grind with the Students' Union. I am writing from the point of view of what I think the University needs. I am giving my opinion based on the information that is available to me and I have no knowledge of the inner workings or politics of the SU.

I don't believe any of the amenities that are being proposed are essential to improving the main objective of the University – to prepare people for the work place.

UL's student body need to decide what they want the campus to be – a glorified leisure complex or a centre for academia.

The campus is one of the best in Ireland but it's far from perfect. I hear a lot from the SU about the "student experience", which is fine, but study facilities on campus are way below par.

The Glucksman library needs to be extended and there needs to be more study space. Come exam time in December and May it is almost impossible to find somewhere to work in the library, unless you arrive on campus at 8.30am. There is no other quiet environment on campus in which to get your work done.

There are desks with broken ethernet cables, it can be impossible to find books at times, when you do they are usually old editions and wireless internet access around the college is hit and miss at best.

Many departments don't have adequate facilities because they don't have the budgets to provide them. Why not put the money from an increased student levy towards improving class facilities and the learning experience?

So, to the proposals of the referendum.

To my mind, some of them don't make any sense. The cinema for example - there is already a cinema 10 minutes away from campus and two others in the city. The entertainment venue with a bar - there are already four bars on campus.

The shops and other retail outlets being proposed are just bizarre. The last I heard the SU had to shut stores down as they were operating at a loss.

The college certainly doesn't need anymore "chill out space", although asking the perennially chilled to move their conversations away from the library about how 'wrecked' they were last night might be a good idea.

The new sports facilities sound great but again, surely this money would be put to better use for academic purposes when UL is already widely recognised as 'Ireland's Sporting Campus'.

If the SU want to improve the "student experience" then put the money towards getting rid of the three-hour labs , improving class scheduling and increasing tutorial time –while making sure students have the opportunity to maximize their potential in the right environment.

Please do not be seduced by nicely designed plans being displayed around campus. All of it sounds great but there are far more pressing concerns that need to be addressed. I have not seen any information about how money from increasing the student charge could be alternatively spent, no 'Vote No' campaign. That is wrong.

There are a lot of questions to be answered and until they are answered adequately, I will be voting no.

Damien Bolger

Vice President of the Postgraduate Students' Union

The upcoming referendum proposes the development of a new Student Centre, along with an overhaul of the University Arena and Maguires Pitches facilities. This presents us with an opportunity to leave a giant footprint on this University.

By voting yes, we can improve the college experience for ourselves, our younger brothers and sisters and even for our children. Students are being asked to agree to extend the existing student levy, for the next twenty years, from the current charge of €72 euro to €130 euro until the student centre opens, when an additional operations charge will come into effect thereafter of €20. This cost however is far outweighed by what the proposed plans aim to achieve in terms of the value of the students contribution. The value of infrastructural investment, matched by a real focus on the students experience at the University of Limerick becomes paramount and this we believe makes the yes vote all the more important.

- We want sports fields which are usable throughout the year!

A yes to this referendum makes that happen. Work on the Maguires Pitches can be undertaken straight away with a yes vote. This gives us access to many more high quality surfaces for field sports.

- We want world class facilities to train in and utilise!

A yes vote allows for the Arena to be extended. This means increasing the size and scope of facilities.

- We want to build a new dynamic centre which will form the heart of the student experience.

A yes vote means that the student centre will be built in a more visible location at the heart of the university. This student centre will occupy the CSIS building, putting much of the student union's work under one roof, along with a modern student hub. This will cater for students' needs; it could house computer labs, breakout rooms, a multi-function venue, shops, and bars.

The important thing is that a yes vote is the foundation of student-led, student-centred project! UL is known for its energy and vitality. In voting yes, you can make the campus' sports and social scenes more vibrant than ever. In voting yes, you can have a say in the direction this university takes in interacting and engaging with its students and fundamentally, in voting yes you will increase and enhance the student experience for any and every student that wishes to avail of it!

Dear Angie...

Dear Angie,

Me and my friend have been best buds for the last few years (we met in college) but I feel as if we're drifting apart lately. It's as if we just don't get along as well as we used to anymore. There was a time when we'd do anything for each other. We supported each other through thick and thin, both financially and emotionally. Now it just doesn't seem to be working. In fact sometimes I think they belittle me behind my back. Every time I broach the topic they just shrug it off and say that we'll deal with it some other time but when is that time? Should I confront them on this? Does this spell the end for our friendship? I don't know where else to turn, because normally they solve all my problems.

Lonely, Plassey

Dear Lonely,

First of all, I would like to examine the last sentence in your letter; it was most interesting to me. It seems like there were problems in your relationship before this whole divide started. You seemed to be very, some might say overly, reliant on your friend. It's all well and good to be able to depend on your friend but it isn't good to lose your independence. Either for you or your friend. It's not good for you because you crumble at the times when they are not around and it isn't good for them

because it can be tiring having you depend on them all the time. So if you are having a conversation with them that may be an issue to address. I think you should have this conversation by the way. It can only lead to a constructive outcome. Burying things and not talking about issues that you have will only lead to further strife. If they seem unwilling to talk then that is more of a reason to talk it out with them. Sometimes you have to be strong in your convictions. It is up to you to get them to talk. I find the best way to get people to talk is to arrange a meeting in a neutral environment, a coffee shop, a small central European country. The options are limitless. You should then look at your friendship and decide if it is something that you want to keep. Don't be too perturbed by this process, all good friendships don't just happen, they take work to maintain. A good friendship has its ups and downs but at the end of the day more ups than downs. Which brings me neatly on to the subject of your assertion that your friend is belittling you behind your back. If you think that they are then you should definitely confront them about it. There is nothing worse than a friend who makes you look bad in order to make themselves appear better in the eyes of others. I have a friend who does this all the time. Even worse than that he has the nerve to do it right in front



of me. It really annoys me because I am damaged by what he says about me to his little friends in parliament. He makes me out to be this big monster who he has to stand up against to get a good deal for his buddies. That's not true at all! To my face he is contrite and we have always, I thought, gotten on very well together. We have polite meetings which are constructive and helpful. But then I pick up the paper and he is talking to his other friends about how he has triumphed

over me. A plucky bulldog that has slaughtered the big bad eagle. It is a complete mischaracterisation of what our relationship is. So yes, we had to have a chat about our friendship. I pointed out to him very recently the benefits of continuing our friendship. It's a very big world out there and it's important to have friends in high places. Which I, of course, am. I happen to think that my opinion is better than his on things like fiscal policy. Why look at his puny post imperial country

in comparison to mine. He still seems to think that he is owner of the world, the way that he struts around the place. But I am getting off track, enough about Cameron and let's focus on you. My advice is to have that conversation, weigh up the pros and cons and most importantly value yourself the way that you feel you should be valued. If you don't do that then no one else will. Grosses bitten, Angie X.

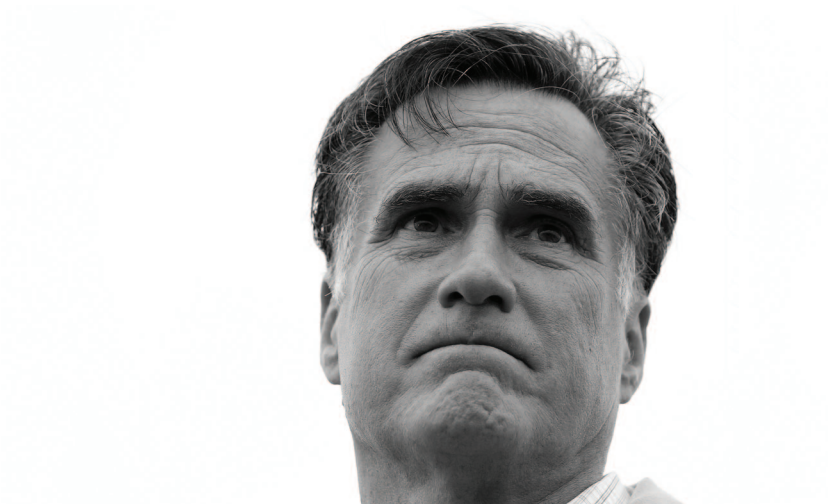
Where Did All The Conservatives Go?

The Elephant's View by Michael Shea

"America will fall without a shot being fired. It will fall from within." – Nikita Khrushchev Well, that's it. Game over. The tipping point has been reached; big government is here to stay in the United States. I had planned to write this article from my post-apocalypse survival compound in Utah, but the EPA shut it down as it didn't have enough solar panels. According to the popular media, Republicans need to "re-think" their core values; that they need to "reach out" to minorities and particularly Latinos. Simply put, Republicans need to act more like Democrats; embrace abortion, progressive taxation and illegal immigrant amnesty. This, of course, is balderdash. What really happened on November 6th was a combination of two things; the gloves didn't come off Romney's hands and the Republican Party was betrayed by its own base. However, before I begin to dissect the campaign, it should be noted the Democrats did not receive a "mandate" to continue forward. Though President Obama won clearly in the Electoral College, voter turnout was much less than 2008, so much so that the President actually received less votes in 2012 than Senator McCain did in

2008. The President didn't receive a glorious endorsement by the people; at best he was told to "proceed with caution" as evident by the growth in the Republican majority in the House of Representatives. Back to the Presidential election; as the cliché goes, "nice guys always finish last." Governor Romney and his campaign made a tactical decision not to go negative. Sure, we heard about the President's record as President, but nothing prior to 2009 when he was inaugurated. We heard nothing about his voting record, or his suspect dealings with Tony Rezko (convicted of fraud and bribery) from whom then Senator Obama purchased his home in Chicago \$300,000 below market value. We heard nothing about his relation to ACORN, now defunct, amid allegation of corruption and fraudulent voter registration. By contrast, the President's campaign set about painting Romney as a "vulture" capitalist and tax fraud. They accused him of everything from tax evasion up to and including manslaughter. When Obama spokes woman Stephanie Cutter accused Governor Romney of being a "felon", the Romney campaign responded with an underwhelming statement saying the remark was "beneath the Presidency" and "absurd". It didn't end with ads. The President's re-election campaign was ruthless in

painting Romney and his supporters as rich, white misogynists and the Romney campaign just took it. Not once did they point out that the issue at hand wasn't the legal availability of contraception but whether or not the government should fund it. Outlawing abortion was not a campaign issue, but forcing religious employers (such as hospitals and schools) to cover abortions and contraceptive pills in their employee health insurance plans as per Obamacare was. Notwithstanding what Democrats say, if Governor Romney became President, you could still get contraceptive pills and have an abortion. You would just have to pay for it yourself. These points were never pointed out audibly by the Romney campaign. They assumed that either it wasn't an issue or people wouldn't believe President Obama's negative ads. Evidently they were wrong on both counts. People took Governor Romney's silence on these issues as an admission. Hindsight is always 20/20, but the lesson to be learned for future Republican campaigns is not to be afraid to get dirty. For all the talk about the President's campaign acting in desperation (Big Bird, binders and so on) and the need for Romney to "rise above the fray", it's a Presidential campaign, not a beauty pageant and regardless of what people say, negativity works especially when you don't fight



your opponents negativity (if you plan to run for Sabbatical Officer, take note). The difference between the President and Governor Romney in the popular vote was around 2 million votes. Where can Republicans find these votes? We can start by looking at our own base; 3 million Republicans sat at home and did not vote. A further 1 million votes went to Gary Johnson. The 3 million that sat at home are coming out the word work now. What are they saying? They didn't feel that Mitt Romney was all that different from the President. You see, because the Republican Party didn't "stay true to its Conservative values" and pick Rick Santorum or Ron Paul as the nominee, they made a protest or "stuck to their values". This is the grown up equivalent to a toddler going up to

his room and sucking his thumb instead of watching a movie with the family because his choice was voted down. The Romney campaign assumed, as did everyone else, that every Republican alive would cut off any number of his/her limbs to vote for Romney and get President Obama out. But this was not the case. There is an alarming portion of the party that think that "reaching across the aisle" means surrender. How these people think government works is the subject of great mystery. These are dark times for Republicans. Not only do Americans seem perfectly content to emulate the European welfare state, the party itself is divided and on the verge of fragmenting.

FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, UL Students' Union, Castletroy, Limerick. T: 0872701500 E: gerard.flynn@ul.ie W: www.anfocal.ie
An Focal endeavours to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible. All parties have the right of reply to letters printed herein.

Why UL Clubs & Societies
Need The Referendum To Pass



A mock-up of one aspect of the potential UL Arena extension.

Dear Editor,

The University of Limerick is often regarded as Ireland's sporting campus and that may well be the case but it is due to the hard work of the University's Clubs and Societies that this accolade can be attributed to the University. However, the facilities that these Clubs and Societies have to work with are entirely inadequate and could well prove detrimental to the growth of the University's Clubs and Societies. This referendum gives the Students of this University a chance to vote on what they believe they deserve for their Union and their Clubs and Societies.

If you take a look at Maguire's Field where most of our Field Teams try to train and play, the facilities available are entirely inadequate

and the lack of drainage makes the pitches unplayable for much of the year. Part of the Referendum, if passed, means that this field will be renovated and a top class drainage system installed giving the University playing fields that the students can be proud of. Maguire's field is large enough to hold two full sized GAA fields and could be used for any number of sports. Hurling, Football, Soccer, Handball, American Football, Mens Rugby, Ladies Rugby, Ultimate Frisbee and Archery all stand to benefit from this renovation. The developments will take approximately one full year, in which alternative areas to train and play will be found for those affected by the development.

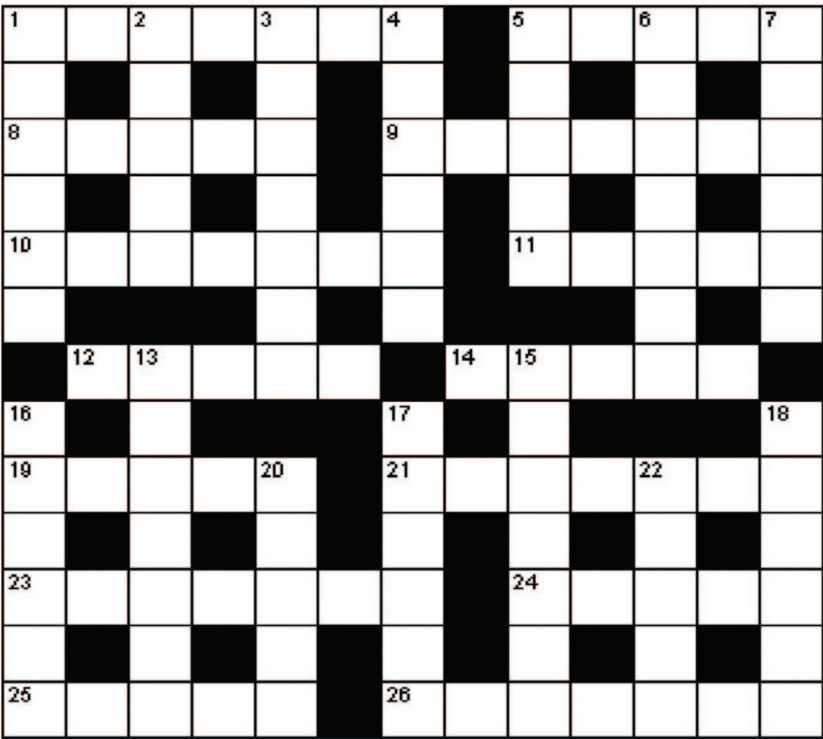
A second clause in the referendum goes towards building an extension of the Arena Sports Complex. This

will give many clubs a permanent home and a place they can continue to grow. For example, plans show the building of a Climbing Wall which will provide the Outdoor Pursuits Club with a permanent home. They also propose to build a diving pool where clubs such as the Sub-Aqua club can train their members. A multi-purpose hall will also be created which will have floors suitable for Martial Arts. Extra weights rooms to compensate for the overcrowding of other gym space will also be created.

That's why I feel that a Yes vote on Thursday's referendum is the only way to go.

Yours sincerely,

Kennedy O'Brien



CLUES

Across

- 1. On the way (2,5)
- 5. Sound (5)
- 8. Dog-like mammal (5)
- 9. Free from blame (7)
- 10. Entrap (7)
- 11. Music speed (5)
- 12. Compare (5)
- 14. Book of maps (5)
- 19. General kind of something (5)
- 21. Unaffected (7)
- 23. Pasta strips (7)
- 24. Impromptu (2,3)
- 25. Part of a church (5)
- 26. Defraud (7)

Down

- 1. Reverberated (6)
- 2. Rolls of film (5)
- 3. Oblivious (7)
- 4. Jubilant (6)
- 5. Valuable item (5)
- 6. Quandary (7)
- 7. Nocturnal wildcat (6)
- 13. Type of rock (7)
- 15. Percussion instrument (7)
- 16. Schedule (6)
- 17. Visitors (6)
- 18. Comestible (6)
- 20. Figure out (5)
- 22. Legally acceptable (5)

ISSUE #5 SOLUTIONS

M	E	A	S	U	R	E		A	W	A	R	E
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Fat Girls Have Feelings Too

Emma Norris

I know that sizeism is a thing because I tried on a gorgeous dress in New Look a couple of weeks ago in a UK size 14. It was a bit tight around the arms and didn't quite sit right on my basoomas. Was it available in a size 16? Of course not. For catwalk models, 12 is considered "plus size" but 14 is the UK national average. (I would say that Irish girls are about the same.) If I'm a size 16 but reasonably healthy, why can't I dress in the same clothes that my size 14 contemporaries dress in?

If I was very sensitive, I might think that New Look are trying to shame me into being skinnier. But I don't feel 'Fat Guilt' anymore and I move on with my life and I avoid generic clothing shops like Missy and Plush not only because the biggest size they stock is a 12 but because they're of a terrible quality.

If you feel like treating yourself and engaging in some retail therapy, you'll probably hit River Island and Topshop. They're just the right amount of pricey to make you feel like a big spender without extending your overdraft too much.

The fact that we live in a money obsessed culture aside, if you're a size 16 or larger, your trip to Topshop is probably a futile one. I like Topshop and I've long since accepted that they don't make clothes for me. They make shoes and bags and cute accessories for me but it's unlikely I'll fit into one of their delicate and overpriced blouses.

If your size is affecting your mobility or your health, maybe you should think about changing your lifestyle.



If you're happy with your size and you're a fan of wearing nice clothes but you can't find a trendy shop to suit your needs, don't feel 'Fat Guilt'. That's a recipe for low self-esteem and you shouldn't give designers like Karl Lagerfeld the satisfaction.

The plus size thing is still a bit of a taboo and many designers simply refuse to embrace it. However,

there were rumours circulating in September that curvy songstress Adele was to hook up with Burberry in an effort to create their first plus size range. Adele would be a brand ambassador and while her influence on the designs, if she had any at all, might be slight, it's still a step in the right direction for designers.

Sassy Tim Gunn of Project Runway

has always been an advocate for plus size clothing and has expressed his (and our) frustration over the lack of plus size representation in the fashion industry: "Have you seen most of the plus-size sections out there? It's horrifying," he told Marie Claire magazine last March. "Whoever's designing for plus-size doesn't get it. The entire garment needs to be

reconceived. You can't just take a size 8 and make it larger."

The fashion expert is so fed up, he's considering starting his own line of clothing. I don't know about you but I would wear his clothes out of sheer principle. He gets it.

How Much Is Too Much?

Barbara Ross

For the past couple of years the buzzword on the health scene has been obesity but has the over use of this word lost its real meaning?

Obesity is the medical term used to describe the state of being overweight to the point where it is harmful to your health. An obese adult is three times more likely to develop diabetes, compared to a person at a healthy weight. The statistics are even worse for children and teenagers.

Obesity is the most common nutritional disorder in the world and between 1990 and 2000; the number of obese people aged 16 - 24 has more than tripled. The World Health Organisation defines obesity as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more. A person's BMI is calculated based on their weight and height.

A person with a BMI under 25 is considered normal and the risk of developing conditions such as diabetes is at a minimum. A BMI of 25 - 30 is considered overweight and the risk to health is increased. No hospital service in the country is currently able to deal with people who are morbidly obese, as the bed cannot withstand the pressure. A hospital bed can take a weight of 170 kilos (26 and a half stone).

There are many factors that contribute obesity such as an imbalance between energy intake

(food) and energy output (activity). There are also environmental factors including marketing, advertising, increasing portion sizes, accessibility and availability of foods and facilities and increased car use among other factors.

There is no shortcut to getting healthy and no amazing programme. Your body is a temple and you have to treat it as such. By simply eating healthily and doing a bit of exercise you may be saving your life. Being overweight is bad for every aspect of life, health, and physical, emotional and social. That's right, even social. No one wants to go dance the night away with someone who is out of breath at the end of the first song.

While obesity is of course a cause for concern, being BMI obsessed can be dangerous too. A BMI does not take into account muscle tone and as we all know muscle weighs heavier than fat tissue. At a time when size zero is considered the ultimate goal a healthy BMI can be hard to maintain. Being underweight is just as destructive to your health as being overweight.

The BMI scale is a guideline: not a bible. If you are not within the healthy numbers on the scale but you feel good and more importantly, if your health is not at risk, then throw the scale out the window.



The Eccentric Genius Of Karl Lagerfeld

Barbara Ross

Karl Lagerfeld is one of the biggest designers of our time and maybe the most eccentric man on the planet.

He was born in Hamburg on 10 September 1933 but he is known to insist that no one knows his real birth date. He has collaborated on a variety of fashion and art related projects, most notably as head designer and creative director for the fashion house Chanel. He also has his own label, fashion house.

In 1955, he was awarded an apprentice position at Pierre Balmain after winning second place, behind Yves Saint-Laurent, in a competition for a coat sponsored by the International Wool Secretariat. In 1958 he moved to Jean Patou where he designed two haute couture collections a year for five years. After launching himself as a freelance designer, he set up a small shop in Paris.

Lagerfeld began to freelance for French fashion house Chloé in 1964, at first designing a few pieces a season but he soon designed the entire collection. In 1972, he began to collaborate with Fendi, designing furs, clothing and accessories.

His career has been marred with controversy giving him quite an infamous reputation. In 1993, he caused US Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour to walk out of his Milan Fashion Week runway show when he employed strippers and adult film star Moana Pozzi to model his black-and-white collection for

Fendi.

He was also the target of a pieing by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in 2001 at a fashion premiere at Lincoln Center in New York City in protest of his use of fur within his collections. In 2004, he designed some outfits for Madonna, for her Re-Invention tour and recently designed outfits for Kylie Minogue's Showgirl tour.

Lagerfeld in 2009 joined critics of supermodel Heidi Klum saying that he didn't know Klum as she is "more bling bling and glamorous than current fashion". He also created an international uproar on 9 February 2012, when he called the singer Adele "a little too fat". Adele hit back by saying she is like the majority of women and she is very proud of that fact.

This comment may be surprising when you know that Lagerfeld lost over six and a half stone in 2001, his explanation was "...I suddenly wanted to dress differently, to wear clothes designed by Hedi Slimane but these fashions, modelled by very, very slim boys..."

Lagerfeld later caused controversy on 31 July 2012 when he criticized Pippa Middleton for her looks. Lagerfeld was praising Kate, Duchess of Cambridge for her 'romantic beauty' before adding "I don't like the sister's face. She should only show her back". It is behaviour like this that keeps him at the cutting edge of the fashion industry.



The Stella Phenomenon

Emma Norris

The 'Stella' story can't be told without first mentioning *Humans of New York*, 'the photographic census of NYC. One street portrait at a time'. The website started by New Yorker Brandon in 2010 and was originally intended as an exhaustive catalogue of the city's inhabitants but took on a different vibe when Brandon began collecting quotes and stories from the people whose portrait he captured. One of these New Yorkers was NYU student Stella who recognised Brandon from his HONY project and was eager to take a picture of him in action. Brandon then took Stella's photo and heard her story.

Stella's story, and her passion, is her sizeism project and blog, The Body Love Blog, which she began earlier this year as a way to express her views on size acceptance. Eighteen year old Stella was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome some years ago and struggled with managing her weight as a result.

She discovered the online movement of size acceptance and wanted to be a part of it. Daringly, she posted a picture of herself in her underwear on her blog along with a message to all the people who had ever bullied her. The photo gained a huge response,

especially after Brandon posted it on the Humans of New York Facebook page where it received almost 700,000 likes and over 30,000 shares.

This massive exposure overwhelmed Stella at first but the positive responses outweighed the negative and she knew that she was being given an opportunity to promote body love. She claims on her blog that she did not post her revealing picture in order to become famous – rather she is "interested in helping young women realize their potential and stopping bullies from using 'concern' as a justification for torment."

She writes on her blog, "The picture of my body isn't about me. It's not FOR me. It's for you, the people who need the shared experience, the message of hope and the acceptance I have today."

She and Brandon of Humans of New York are working together to update Stella's blog and to turn it into a community in which people of all shapes, races, disabilities and abilities, genders and identities, can come together to share their stories in the same way she herself did.

Stella's blog is a treasure trove of personal stories, inspiring quotes and evidence of her being a proper badass fat chick. At eighteen she has put herself on the social media stage



– she has made herself vulnerable so that others won't be ashamed of their own bodies.

Stella's message is ultimately

realistic: not everyone who is healthy is thin and not everyone who is thin is healthy. Weight does not dictate worth.

Stella's blog can be found at thebodyloveblog.tumblr.com.

Air Brushing: The Little Photoshop Of Horrors

Dearbhaile Houston

Airbrushing has been used to alter photographs since the pre-digital camera era. Humans are a vain bunch, there is no denying that but what is troubling is the effect excessive airbrushing has on people, namely women, and their self-perception. You would be hard-pressed to find a photograph that hasn't been doctored in post-production. A bit of tweaking here and there of colour or lighting is acceptable but the altering that happens in fashion advertising is a different beast altogether.

We have all seen the Photoshop mishaps where the photographer has been over-zealous in touching up after-effects. Take pity on those poor models missing vital body-parts like elbows and ribcages. Recently, untouched pictures emerged of Victoria Secret model Doutzen Kroes for their swimsuit catalogue. Kroes, a successful runway model and best known for her ad campaigns for L'Oreal, is certainly the last person you'd think would need airbrushing but the people at Victoria's Secret were apparently able to find fault.

The slimming down of models with airbrushing is so commonplace these days that we barely notice. This is enough cause for worry until you consider the fact that many

models are also airbrushed when they are deemed to look too skinny. The general message seems to be: be skinny but not so skinny that you might remind people of the frightening effects of trying to achieve this arbitrary notion of perfection.

Natalie Portman's ad for Dior mascara was banned after a complaint from L'Oreal (a company that is certainly no stranger to retouching photographs either) to the Advertising Standards Authority. L'Oreal's argument was that the photo exaggerated the effects of the product. Cue a resounding "duh" from the rest of the world because, really, who has eyelashes of that magnitude without resorting to lash extensions and a little innocent Photoshop? And yet, it can be hard, especially when bombarded with these images in every television ad and magazine, to remember that what we are seeing is not actually real.

Airbrushed images, whether in advertising or in fashion spreads, assume that there is an ideal body that everyone should aim to achieve. Seeing it constantly messes with our idea of what people really look like. We can forget that human bodies fold in weird ways or that people have wrinkles and visible pores and scars. While companies such as Dove have tried to use 'real women' in their



advertising campaigns, it's not a trend that seems to be catching on.

It would be silly for us to expect advertisers to suddenly stop using enhanced or airbrushed images. They

are, after all, out to make money and are doing pretty well for themselves by trading on people's self-esteem issues. Perhaps it would be better than to have a critical eye when looking at

such images instead. So the next time you see a model with the skin of a newborn baby or thighs that look like they've never even heard of cellulite, best take it with a pinch of salt.

Spotting An Eating Disorder

Sophie McDermott

When people think about eating disorders, many people think of it as an 'easy way to lose weight.' We joke about it with our friends and fail to realise the seriousness of the situation of eating disorders. Anorexia, bulimia and binge eating are the main diseases commonly associated with eating disorders. The Department of Health have estimated that over 200,000 people in Ireland suffer from an eating disorder, there are 400 new diagnosed cases every year and results in 80 deaths per year.

When a person we know has an eating disorder, it can be difficult to see. People suffering from anorexia can seek advice on many controversial pro-ana and pro-mia sites on how to lose weight fast but also keep it hidden from loved ones. People suffering from eating disorders can hide their illness well and many are not diagnosed into very late on in the disease.

Anorexia is the deliberate refusal of food by an individual in a misguided quest to lose weight fast or to gain control of their life. Anorexia can often be indicated by a change in the sufferer's personality. They will become moody, withdrawn and tired. They will become obsessed by calories and exercise and cannot settle. They will wear baggy clothes to disguise weight loss. Anorexia can lead to dehydration, hair loss, loss of bone density, fainting, dizzv spells and the risk of heart failure.

Bulimia is when a person over-eats and then later expels the food from their body by vomiting after eating. Bulimia can develop after a period of anorexia and can be a lot harder to spot. The sufferer tends to be confident and self-assured on the outside but internally, they feel desperate and out of control and so, get locked in a cycle of bingeing and purging. Bulimia can lead to digestive problems, skin conditions, tension headaches and rotting teeth. The sufferer may start acting out of character by undertaking 'risky activities' such as drinking alcohol, drugs, promiscuity and self-harm.

Binge-eating disorder is when the sufferer over-compensates emotion with food but does not purge it after. This can lead to significant weight gain. They will feel ashamed to eat with other people and more often than not, eats alone. Binge eating disorders can lead to breathlessness, respiratory problems, digestive problems and poor skin conditions.

If you or someone you know is worried about eating disorders, there are many services at hand. You can visit the university counsellor who will advise how best to deal with the eating disorder. Bodywhys.ie have many counselling services nationwide to get you or a loved one the help that is needed. Eating disorders are treatable and have a high success rate but it is important that it is caught early.

Sweet Potato Wedges



Amy Grimes

What with this being An Focal's Size issue, this week's recipe is something simple, healthy and most importantly, delicious. We're always hearing about healthier alternatives for things, how you can swap this for that and it's better for you. But these sweet potato wedges are so delicious that they're not a substitution for chips, a sad and flavourless stand-in. These are a stand-alone side-dish or a comforting meal for one. They're not a replacement for chips, they're an upgrade.

The humble sweet potato is undervalued in Irish kitchens. They're better for you than starchy regular spuds for two reasons: they're higher in vitamins C and A and because they have a lower glycaemic index than regular potatoes that help you to feel fuller for longer and avoid a sugar high.

Serves 2.

1 large sweet potato
1 teaspoon sunflower or olive oil
½ teaspoon garlic powder or 2 cloves

crushed garlic
1 tablespoon dried paprika
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 180°C. Wash and peel sweet potato, dry thoroughly.

Cut into wedges and in a large bowl, toss them in the oil and mix through the seasoning, paprika and garlic so that they're evenly coated.

Spread flat on a tray and cook for 30-40 minutes or until crisp.

Fantasy Football Freefall

Carlo Sartori

I swore I was going to retire from the game at the end of last season. I had attentively picked my team every week in 2011/12, scouring the Premier League stats in order to pick up bargain buys and get one over on my mates. I finished in mid-table despite my best efforts.

Spending Saturday afternoons praying there is a last minute goal in a game like Norwich v West Brom is no way to live your life and I wanted to re-establish human relationships and take back the dignity that had been sucked out of me by fantasy football.

I succumbed after pleas from my friends, probably because they know I'll keep them off the bottom spot, and I now lay in the nether regions of all three leagues that I compete in.

I've ignored form players like Juan Mata and Demba Ba because everyone has them and therefore it doesn't give me any real advantage – so I thought. Instead I've tried to throw my opponents a few curveballs by doing silly things like picking players who are “due a goal”. Big mistake!

This year, not tinkering with my line up too much has cost me dearly. I've put my faith in Fernando Torres and



A spec of the extension to the UL Arena, just one of the three potential developments on campus should Thursday’s Referendum be passed.

Lukas Podolski time and time again, only for them to let me down. Peter Cech and Ashley Cole have been solid

point pickers as always but the likes of Joe Allen and Michael Carrick have been as mundane as they are in the

real life game. Disastrous week after disastrous week has made me question my nous for the game. Retirement may

be calling again.

League of Ireland Season Review

Andrew Cunneen

If you had followed my pre-season expectations, you probably wouldn't have been too surprised by the end results from the Airtricity League this year. Sligo are crowned champions, while Limerick will be making the step-up from the First Division. St. Patrick's will go into the FAI Cup as favourites, Drogheda United exceeded everyone else's expectations and Monaghan United went bust. It hasn't been a remarkable season in terms of European adventure but the footballing standard is growing, whether the barstooler wants to believe it or not.

For this week's column, I'm going to review the season as well as hand out my own awards to those I deem worthy. The PFAI (The Irish equivalent of the PFA) hand out awards upon year's end. Most seem to be somewhat bemused by the choices this year and despite the voting coming from the players themselves this year, I am too.

Sligo are being described as the best side the league has ever seen. Incorrect. They are indeed the best 'footballing' side the country has ever seen but the Shamrock Rovers side of last year along with the two-in-a-row Bohemians under the control of Pat Fenlon far exceeded the Bit O'Red in terms of ability. Sligo were always looking good to win this league but the key was the transition between Cook and Ian Baraclough. Although Cook layed all the foundations, credit must go to the former Scunthorpe boss as he griped the fact that not much needed to be changed. In that sense, Baraclough deserves his medal.

Limerick, despite losing every game against second-placed Waterford United, still finished four points clear of the Suirsiders. Limerick's key to



winning the second tier this year was the consistency they showed against the teams outside the top three (fifty-five points from sixty) – a trademark of manager Pat Scully.

Drogheda United were the “surprise” package for the year. Most people had the Dregs as contenders for relegation despite snatching the majority of the over-achieving Monaghan side who gained promotion under Roddy Collins. Mick Cooke played to Drogheda's strengths and this paid dividends in the end as he steered his side to a second-place finish.

The demise of Monaghan United seemed to come as a shock to most people. After just three months in the top tier, United went under and all results against them were expunged. Why was this? Monaghan's average attendance was circa the three-hundred mark – a figure, I can assure you, is glorified by the powers that be, or were. Paying a budget above the means that your gate receipts would allow was basing your entire year's budget on securing a sponsor – a sponsor that never arrived.

This season went to script as far as I'm concerned. Look out for Limerick next season – I warn you now.

Senior Player of the Year: Jason McGuinness.

Young Player of the Year: David Cawley.

Manager of the Year: Mick Cooke.

Premier Division Team of the Year: Gabriel Sava (Drogheda United); Ger O'Brien (St. Patrick's), Gavin Peers (Sligo Rovers), Jason McGuinness (Sligo Rovers), Ian Bermingham (St. Patrick's); Stephen McLaughlin (Derry City), Ronan Finn (Shamrock Rovers), Danny Ventre (Sligo Rovers), Sean O'Connor (St. Patrick's); Gary Twigg (Shamrock Rovers), Danny North (Sligo Rovers).

First Division Team of the Year: Barry Ryan (Limerick FC); Noel Haverty (Longford Town), Paddy Purcell (Limerick FC), Corie Treacy (Limerick FC), Shane Tracy (Limerick FC); Gary Dempsey (Waterford United), Colm James (Longford Town), Joe Gamble (Limerick FC); Danny Furlong (Wexford Youths), Kevin McHugh (Finn Harps), Sean Maguire (Waterford United).

Forgotten Footballer: Pongolle

Darren Mulryan

Most Liverpool fans will recognise Florent Sinama Pongolle from his short lived days on Merseyside. The Frenchman endured a sporadic career with the reds after signing from Le Havre in 2001 for an undisclosed fee. Florent's talismanic performances in the Under 17 World –Championships enforced his already growing reputation as a prolific marksman and the move to Liverpool was highly anticipated.

The form he showed for France did not transpire in England, making 38 appearances for Liverpool in a 5 year spell, scoring only 4 goals, albeit very important ones. Pongolle is rarely given credit for an inspired performance coming off the bench against Olympiacos in the reds triumphant Champions League campaign to equalise and help Liverpool progress to the final.

After a number of years with very few appearances Pongolle transferred to Blackburn Rovers in 2006 making 10 appearances. The visit did not last long and later that year a permanent move to Spanish La Liga side Recreativo provided the stepping stone to relaunch the striker's career. It proved a smart move scoring 22 goals in 66 appearances, finishing top scorer in 2006 and 2007 for the side. It was not long before the top Spanish sides took note of the Frenchman's prolific strike rate and in 2008 Pongolle signed on the dotted line for giants Atletico Madrid. Pongolle benefited from the injury to



Uruguayan Diego Forlan during his spell and enjoyed playing alongside a young Sergio Aguero. But with 40 appearances and only 4 goals a move across to the Iberian Peninsula prospered. Sporting Lisbon shelled out over €6.5 million to land the striker in what was a highly disappointing 2 year spell in which he was sent out on loan twice, to Zaragoza and St. Etienne respectively.

Pongolle's career seemed to prove a frustrating one and poor performances across the continent cemented his status as a under achiever. The frontman can now be found plying his trade in the Russian premier division with FC Rostov. After signing earlier this year he has made 7 appearances with just a solitary goal. Tottenham Hotspur playmaker David Bentley is also kitting out for Rostov on loan for the season. This may prove to be the last chance Sinama may hold to resurrect his fledgling career.

Sports Virgin: Bog Snorkelling

Gerard Flynn
Co-Editor

For an island so plentiful in bogs, lakes, rivers and streams, you have to wonder why bog snorkelling isn't our national sport.

Sure, the pace of Hurling, the passion of Rugby and the technique of soccer are all well and good but what's stopping us from throwing on an aul snorkel and hopping in the nearest bog to show a bit of national pride?

The Welsh it seems have this exact practice down to an art form as they stage the International Extreme Bog Snorkelling Championships in the town of Llanwrtyd Wells every year. Men and woman from across the world travel to snorkel in their beautiful and expansive bogs in order to take home the title of, presumably the world's... best...bog snorkeller? A column in the Guinness World Records book is also on offer to the winner.

Bog snorkelling can be traced back to 1976 near Llanwrtyd Wells when it was developed as an idea by a few friends having a few pints in the Neuadd Arms. Believe me, I wish it's past history was more illustrious too but in this case I'll refuse to tamper with the cold hard facts to bring a bit more entertainment to this piece.

Less than 10 years later, in 1985 the first World Championships were held in the same town (also known as Wales smallest town) and the tradition continues to this day with the competition date being every August Bank Holiday. The prestigious Waen Rhydd peat bog is the venue of choice and always has been. Every year up to 200 entrants participate, bringing



a great deal of revenue to the small Welsh town.

Bog snorkelling is not exclusive to Wales or Llanwrtyd Wells however and Australia and Sweden also hold events. Wikipedia claims that Ireland hosts a competition every year but I would guess that their sources greatly exaggerate the most common excuse for any "bog snorkelling" in Ireland – the removal of a heifer from a bog after a particularly aggressive downpour.

The object of the sport is to traverse a bog trench of 120 yards in the fastest possible time. The trench in question is

usually 60 yards long but competitors must do 2 full lengths. Those who opt to brave the bog also have to wear snorkels and flippers like any real diver but are not allowed to use swimming strokes to aid their passage through the peat bog. Hands must be kept relatively close to their sides and all they rely on for propulsion is their flippers. Wet suits are usually worn but as with anything, you'll get a few mad contestants who refuse to wear them in order to sample mid-Wales' peat bog temperatures au natural.

The current men's World champion

is Mr. Richard Addis who completed his 120 yard run this year in 1 minute and 26 seconds. A decent time but still not enough to beat the current world record held by 2011's winner, Mr. Andrew Holmes who completed the course in 1 minute and 24 seconds.

The current female champion, a Ms. Dineka Maguire has won the competition 3 times in a row with this year's showing of 1 minute 26.97 seconds her strongest effort to date, even breaking the women's world record.

Historical records of the bog

snorkelling winners and losers is extensive enough with the only exception being 1995 when the competition was called off due to drought, disappointing literally tens of people and a sheep named Daffyd.

Join me next week when I'll be exploring the wonderful world of women's underwater boxing, which at times touches on borderline hardcore pornography. All in all, a great reason to look out for the photo(s) in issue 6.

Should I Do A Masters?

The decision to undertake a postgraduate course is a significant one. In many ways it's like an investment decision so you have to look at the costs (investment) and the benefits (payoffs). The costs are familiar to students – fees, living expenses, travel expenses, etc. But what about the benefits?

The major payoff from undertaking a postgraduate course is that the skills, competencies and qualities you develop during your degree will enhance your CV and help you stand out in a highly competitive graduate employment job market. The course you choose allows you to either deepen your knowledge of your chosen specialism (e.g., the business studies graduate who goes on to do a masters in taxation) or broaden your knowledge into another discipline (e.g., the engineering graduate who does a masters in business management).

Just like an investment decision, there are timing issues. Reasons for going straight from undergraduate to postgraduate study might be: you are accustomed to being a student and have momentum; your study skills should be well-honed and sharp; you may have few obligations; and some occupations require an advanced degree even for "entry-level" positions. On the other hand you might like to gain some work experience before undertaking a postgraduate course for the following

reasons: you can get a better handle on your career goals by working in the field for a few years; you can bring a broader world view to your studies; you have a more mature outlook on college and work; you can save for the course you want to undertake; and some course require work experience.

The unprecedented economic downturn has made up-skilling more important than ever and consequently has added to the attraction of achieving a specialist post-graduate qualification. Many of the postgraduate courses at the Kemmy Business School allow you to specialise through optional modules and a dissertation or research project which is completed on a subject of your own choosing. This means that you have the opportunity to build a programme which reflects your own unique interests and which will prove rewarding in your future career. Additional features of Kemmy Business School postgraduate courses include credited professional development and career planning modules, international field trips, professional certification opportunities and the chance to work on live business projects as part of your course.

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Beauty Is In The Mind Of The Beholder

Robert McNamara
Sports Editor

Beauty can often be found in the most unlikely of settings. A flower in the favella, a sunset in a citadel, a daisy sprouting in the middle of a garbage dump. Not Stoke on a wet Tuesday night though. Not according to Steven Gerrard or regular World Soccer columnist Paul Gardner.

Gerrard likened the recent Merseyside derby tactics of Everton to Stoke’s regular style of play – defend for your life, get the ball and knock it towards the big man up front. The Liverpool captain was later forced to apologise for making a mere observation – the connotations being that Stoke’s way is the wrong way.

Gardner elaborated further in his assessment of Tony Pulis’ side. He labeled their game a ‘symptom of a very English disease’ and said that Pulis wore a baseball cap while encouraging his footballers to ‘perform like rugby players’. A harsh analysis you’ll agree.

Everyone likes to watch good football but surely Gerrard and Gardner are missing a trick. Is good football simply an effective style that gets results, or a way to entertain spectators? Fight for your life or run the risk of being beaten to a pulp? If

I were a Stoke fan, I know which I’d prefer.

There is no doubt that English football continues to lament a malaise that has haunted the game for decades. The national team suffers under the weight of misguided expectation while the media pick at the carcass like assembling scavengers. Bad coaching and the desire for instant results have left the game in a constant quandary.

Everyone has been swept up in the Barcelona philosophy and with good reason – they are simply stunning to watch. Not everyone can play like that though. In all probability, if Stoke were to try it, they would be relegated because they do not have the standard of player to do it effectively. Pulis would be more heavily criticized for taking that route. It’s no use blaming Pulis for the failure of the English FA to build the game from the ground up. He is merely doing what he and his players know best.

Why are Stoke so monotonous to watch anyway? Personally I delight in watching teams trying to break them down and match their physicality with skill. It’s what makes the game so unpredictable.

José Mourinho employed those very tactics for Inter Milan against Barcelona in the 2010 Champion’s League semi-final. The Catalans



Tony Pulis has his own ideas on how football should be played.

dominated from start to finish playing a beautiful tiki-taka game, yet the Nerazurri came out on top and went on to lift the trophy. It was a

fascinating encounter.

Football is about diversity and effectiveness in equal measure. There is a place for the Barcas and the

Stokes of this world within the wide landscape of the sport. Surely there should be no shame in playing to your strengths.

Hovering Above The Centre Of Irish Society

Eoin Scanlon

Looking down on the hallowed green turf from 44 metres is a dizzying experience but one that leaves a lasting impression of how impressive Croke Park really is. The pitch glistens in the autumn sun as five lawnmowers sweep over it, making sure Galway and Kilkenny have a carpet like surface on which to do battle in the All-Ireland final. Turn your back on the 128 year old home of the GAA and you can gaze out onto thousands of years of Dublin history.

Among the many notable landmarks that can be viewed from the 17 story high skyline are the GPO, the Phoenix Park, Glasnevin Cemetery, the Aviva Stadium and Trinity College. The two hour tour of Croke Park, of which I recently embarked upon, begins with a full briefing in the dressing room, where you are rigged up with a safety harness and handed your audio guide and headset. From there it’s an elevator ride to the nosebleed seats on the Cusack Stand and a quick climb up the steps to the skyline platform.

The first thing that strikes you is the bitter cold, being 144 feet above ground level means you are quite exposed to the elements. Once you have acclimatized you begin your walk to the first ‘viewing platform’, of which there are five. Each platform along the 0.6km skyline, which runs right around the

roof of Croke Park, shows a different view of Dublin. The first platform looks northward, the most striking landmark being the 51 metre high O’Connell Tower in Glasnevin Cemetery.

The second platform looks out onto O’Connell Street in the heart of the city centre, with the GPO, the Spire and Trinity College all visible to the naked eye.

Listening to the informative audio guide, detailing the history and background of each landmark, you get a sense of how the majority of these landmarks played their part in Ireland’s struggle for independence.

The tour guide, who accompanies you throughout the walk, is eager to impart his knowledge of the stadium and the city, point out specific landmarks, or chat about the hurling and football which takes centre stage far below each week.

Platform three points south towards Donnybrook, with the 51,000 seater Aviva Stadium an impressive landmark in the distance. It is at this point you realize how compact a city Dublin is. Each of the landmarks on view seem to be only a stone’s throw away from one another with O’Connell street and the Spire appearing only to be a puck of a sliotar from your position on top of Croke Park.

Having spent all this time walking around the edge of the stadium roof, the detour before platform four gives

visitors a chance to view the pitch from the birds eye walkway suspended over the pitch. Described by our tour guide as the ‘money shot’, the view of Croke Park below is quite stunning. If ever in the future the skyline is opened on a match day, this spot is the best in the house.

Platforms four and five turn their back to the bustling metropolis and gaze out at the Wicklow and Sugarloaf Mountains, Dunlaoghaire and Howth, and out onto Dublin Bay.

In the 0.6km trek around the Stadium you experience many aspects of Dublin and Irish life, from the occupied streets of the city – north and south – to the peaceful panoramic views of its nearby countryside. On concluding the tour and defrosting from the cold atop the skyline, you are free to wander around the Croke Park museum, which fills two floors of GAA history and memorabilia. The museum is packed with items of paraphernalia from down through the years, many donated from players past and present.

Some of the more impressive items for viewing here include a letter from Maurice Cusack to Maurice Davin in August 1884 - calling for the Gaelic Athletic Association to be formed within the year, a match ticket as well as the referee’s whistle from the ill-fated football match between Tipperary and Dublin in November 1920 – now known as Bloody Sunday and the



treasury of trophies collection from down the years.

The original Sam Maguire and Liam MacCarthy trophies, retired in 1991 and 1987 respectively, are housed here. The latter has seen better days, full of dents and scratches from 68 years of use. Numerous films recording the history of the GAA and some of its best moments can be found throughout the museum.

A ‘National awakening’ film, narrated by Michael O’Muircheartaigh, charting the GAA’s close affiliation with Irish politics is a particularly eye opening

account of early 20th century Ireland while upstairs, a number of interactive games can be played to test your own ability at the skills of both hurling and football.

It would be quite easy to spend hours wandering around the museum and any visit to Croke Park would not be complete without a visit here. Admission to the skyline tour is €25 for adults, €20 for students, €15 for children and €65 for a family ticket. Price includes admission to the GAA museum.

FOCAL Sport

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Giants Win World Series

Garry Irwin

For the second time in two years the San Francisco Giants are the best time in baseball. They steamrolled over the Detroit Tigers in only four games at the end of October and this brought the curtain down on the 2012 season. We should not be too surprised that the Giants came out on top so easily; they won the National League West with eight games to spare; while the Tigers, who may have finished first in the American League Central, would have barely scraped a wildcard place if they had been competing in the National League. The National League has supplied four of the last five winners of the World Series, as well as winning the last three All-Star games. The American League teams will have to up their game next season.

It was both managers third trip to a World Series, the second with each of their current teams; both had one win and one loss previously. But Bruce Bochy got the better of Jim Leyland this year thanks in part to the Giants better pitching staff. They achieved two shutouts in games 2 and 3 of the series, the first time a team had achieved back to back

shutouts in a World Series since the 1966 Orioles. The Tigers were held to twenty hits over four games, and a paltry 0.159 batting average, while the San Francisco batters racked up an impressive thirty two hits.

The coveted Most Valuable Player prize went to the Giants third baseman Pablo Sandoval, who hit three home runs, batted in a further four vital runs, as well as finishing with a 0.500 batting average. The Tigers players could not recapture the form that saw them sweep the Yankees in four games just a week before the World Series. In those four games Detroit managed forty six hits and nineteen runs but it was a false dawn, as they could find no answers when faced with the Giants.

And it is those answers that the other twenty nine teams in the Major League will have to find next season. San Francisco won its last seven games in the post season, a new franchise record, and over those games they outscored their opponents by a whopping 36 runs to 7, plus they had a pitching staff that combined for a 0.98 Earned Run Average. Come 2013 the San Francisco Giants are the team to beat once again.



Cyclist Wiggins' Book Reveals 'Revelation'

Robert McNamara
Sports Editor

So Bradley Wiggins is not the clean cut character we all thought he was. The Tour de France winner and Olympic Time Trial gold medalist may not be the man to save cycling from its tarnished image in the aftermath of the Lance Armstrong case after all. Not according to the latest 'story' to emerge about the Paul Weller obsessed modernist at least. Wiggins has apparently revealed in his new autobiography that in his early twenties, he consumed 12 pints of beer every day when his wife was at work. A fascination with Belgian beer – Wiggins was born there – went to such extremes that he would drive to the European mainland country and return with a van-load of the amber ocean.

If that is the only revelation in his book, then he should be just fine in a world of sports scandal, dogging footballers and brawling rugby players. It is widely known that Manchester United's Bryan Robson, Norman Whiteside and Paul

McGrath would drink before and after games in the eighties and still go out and perform at the highest level. They wouldn't have a chance of doing so today as fitness standards have been raised immeasurably and the level is so much higher. This raises a question as to the legitimacy of the passage in the book.

The sporting world has changed. While the moral standards of society may have taken a nosedive, the attitude to fitness and drinking in sport has dramatically shifted and sports people are now fitter than ever. The tabloids are sure to run with the Wiggins story but the Team Sky member is widely known to be meticulous in his preparation – the results are there for all to see. Wiggins' 'honesty' is a little questionable and in stark contrast to Lance Armstrong who Wiggins has criticised profusely. The scandal-hit world of cycling has more dirty stories set to emerge on a rolling basis and it looks like Wiggins is positioning himself to be the go-to-guy to reinvent the sport's image – "I like a few pints but I'm not Lance, I'm alright me", he might say.



Wiggins' is trying the hard-sell with his new book.

The story may also be a strategy to sell the 32-year-old's book, as a whiter-than-white image is admirable but not always conducive to book sales. It is all the more incomprehensible

as Wiggins admits to being short of cash at the time despite being a triple medal winner at the Athens Olympic Games. Whatever, it's enough to arouse cynicism and the thought

that Wiggins is playing the media game on the back of his success. His acclaimed razor sharp focus seems to have a multi-task function.

AN FOCAL Extra

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Our Eclectic World: The Genius of Gary Oldman & Bram Stoker's Dracula, the Triumphant Return of Student Speak and a Tour of the Windy City



The Hemming Way

Darragh Hogan

Ernest Hemmingway was a man known for his intense sense of masculinity as well as of course being a universally acknowledged brilliant writer (Nobel Prize winner in 1954). As you may know, ‘Movember’ takes place each year during November. This is a time for the more follicly capable of the male species to cultivate one of their own majestic tashers for charity. Hemmingway himself, was well known for his own glorious and immaculately kept stache. So whether you are a perfectly capable male specimen or a more struggling member of the male sex, this is as good a time as any to emulate this man, moustache and all, who is a complete epitome of manliness. Here are a few interesting snippets of information about this literary beast that one should take on board in order to annihilate the rest of the male competition this month, or of course, in general.

One thing the aspiring male god should know is that Hemmingway was well known for his ability to hold vast amounts of liquor, but you know what the most impressive part about this was? Unlike most men, he did not brag or even talk about it the next day like it was something to be proud about. He had a very true philosophy which many students will be able to identify with “Always do sober what you said you’d do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut.” Hemmingway usually had a few servings of alcohol for breakfast even: whiskey, wine, vodka and tequila being regularly married together at breakfast. One should keep in mind

however, that this may wreak havoc on those chiselled abs and six packs you have undoubtedly been working on. It was said of Hemmingway that “you could see the bulge of [his liver] stand out from his body like a long fat leech.” Not entirely sure if this is something to work towards though, so we’ll move right on...

In order to conform to this elevated form of masculinity, one must become comfortable with the natural world, particularly in the practice of hunting. Do not be guilty whatsoever in taking up firearms against a bird or a beast; just take it as natural selection in progress, survival of the fittest. One must become accustomed to this method of food attainment; Hemmingway himself was taught to hunt from the period of infancy. Unlike nowadays with our unnecessary decadence of hunting for pure sport however; Hemmingway learned to at least respect the animal by cooking it and eating it. I can only imagine the quiet rage Hemmingway would feel upon witnessing the plethora of students purchasing chicken rolls these days, having not hunted down the chicken themselves. It does not bare thinking about really.

Growing up, Hemmingway was forced by his mother to dress in the garb of a little girl. His mother clearly had some issues of her own, making him dress in bonnets, dresses and the like. He was encouraged to play with teacups, embroidery and other toys suitable for a little girl. She referred to him, in his cute lacy dress, as “Dutch dolly”. She said she was his ‘Sweetie’, or, as he pronounced it, “Fweetee”. Once, when Ernest was two, his



mother called him a doll once too often. He replied, “I not a Dutch dolly... Bang, I shoot Fweetee”. We can only intelligently assume that this was the main reason for his intent on constructing such a masculine identity for himself later on. So fear not if you were a late bloomer into this game of masculinity or simply an advocate of Hollister or Abercrombie

and Fitch (unfortunately the one direction look is not going to cut it guys). You still have plenty of time to compensate for such an unforgivable deficit.

To sum things up, one may become the perfect specimen of manliness by bulging up their liver to a size of a leech, physically assaulting innocent animals and eating them

and by denying any feminine or soft personality traits. I do not carry out this sort of behaviour myself (alas, I must be one of those inferior beta male types). This article merely serves as a guide for you to become a superior being in this society, so please do not hold me responsible for alcohol poisoning/bear mauling’s etc.

All Hallows Eve Celebrations

Alana Walsh

Halloween: the time of the semester where you realise time is flying by and midterms are fast approaching!

As children, Halloween was a time where we overloaded on sugar, now substituted with alcohol and got to watch Hocus Pocus, which has now been replaced by watching violent horror films.

The one common tradition held between celebrating Halloween as a child and celebrating it in college is fancy dress. It is the time of year where multi-purpose bed sheets are used for togas, ghost costumes or as the cape to any super hero costume.

DIY costumes are popular amongst us students as most people would prefer to spend money on the night out rather than the costume, especially considering the decent ones in shops usually start at around thirty euro.

This year, my friends and I decided to embrace all things Halloween and have two fancy dress nights out. It being our last Halloween in college and having been on Erasmus in different locations this time last year, we decided to milk it for all it was worth, including decorating our apartment Halloween style... decorations which we have yet to take down!

On the Bank Holiday Sunday we headed to Angel Lane and on the

Tuesday night we went to Icon. I have to say that the costumes in Angel Lane were far more impressive than in Icon, where not very many people had dressed up.

Within our group alone on the Sunday there were three Batmen, one Robin and a Superman, proving that superhero costumes are always in fashion. We also had a Princess Jasmine, a zombie, Audrey Hepburn, two cheerleaders, an army woman and a few nerds.

Whilst in Angel Lane we encountered many great costumes, my favourites being; all four teletubbies, a banana, a tiger, green toy soldiers (impressively sprayed completely green), the rubberbandits, black swan, zombie brides/princesses, smurfs, oompa loompas and a cow, to name but a few. There was also a surprising amount of guys in drag that night.

For our venture to Icon our group included; two Batmen, four Romanesque costumes, a ninja, a cat, a witch, Wally, a nerd, a sailor, a policewoman, a devil and so on. Effort was made on both nights and our costumes were a mix of things we already owned and bits bought to complete outfits.

I have to laugh though at being asked for I.D. when in costume, the dark make up and black and pink backcombed wig I wore Tuesday night had little or no resemblance to the brunette on my age card. It isn’t too



Rachel Barry - Zombie.

hard to put in effort, as usually one of your friends will have something you can borrow if you are really stuck but creating your own getup can be done effectively on a budget.

My friend who went as a zombie on the Sunday had bought some face paints, fake blood and scary contacts and her costume was brilliant (see picture). Combined these items were

not very expensive but made such a good zombie and clothes-wise all she had to do was add some rips and fake blood.

If you have gone as something ordinary in previous years, you can always take that costume and go as a zombie version the next year with the simple addition of fake blood. Zombie hybrids are very common

from zombie cheerleaders to zombie nurses/doctors.

Anything goes on Halloween and I have to say it was really good fun that everyone we were heading out with made an effort to dress up because in the case that no one else in the club is in fancy dress; at least you are with a group that also look ridiculous.

Pride At Stake

Evan O’ Grady

This article is about vampires. Actually, it’s about A vampire. THE Vampire in fact. And no, his name is not Edward. It’s Dracula who cannot be eclipsed by other recent entries into the vampire hall of fame.

I am talking specifically about his 1992 appearance in Francis Ford Coppola’s take on Bram Stoker’s classic book . A cultural phenomenon in Victorian England, it still remains a seminal work to this day. Coppola’s opening title says it all; a dilapidated church dome is enveloped in black smoke as an orchestra booms in the background. This movie is about the supernatural and all things freaky with Stoker’s original text. Except that it is also adding new layers to Dracula that were never evident before.

Played fang-tastically (OH HO!) by Gary Oldman, we see him turn from towering crusader to frail count and then to rather dandyish ladies’ man with Oldman’s usual acting grace. Dracula is old and wise but never loses the animalistic urges that drive him throughout the film. He has every intention of feeding off of all his enemies but never loses his patient menace for a second. He is the epitome of a good villain. Thanks to some welcome additions in this adaption, we see more of why he became the monster he is and how he still retains the faintest glimmer of humanity in his interactions with Mina, played by Winona Ryder.

In fact, Oldman pretty much dominates every scene he is in, so much so that most of the other characters come across as slightly

bland and uninteresting so it’s a relief when he starts making them vampires to liven them up a bit.....How ironic that is!

I also loved Anthony Hopkins in this movie. Van Helsing is a rather two dimensional, banisher of evil in the book but here he is mixed with plenty of humour to make him feel more sympathetic to a more modern audience. Keanu Reeves is there too, still doing his best to nail his audition for “Plank: The Movie.” His Harker really doesn’t stray far from the book, he is a dour, passive and somewhat dim lawyer. So much so that when it looks like Mina might prefer Dracula to him it comes at precisely 0.0 % on the Surprise Meter. Harker has one interesting scene though and I don’t think I have ever seen an image so Freudian in my entire life! I must admit the heroes of this story are by far less interesting than the villains.

Coppola goes all out in bringing fantastical characters to the screen and he makes quite a job of it. The cinematography is good. It suits the gothic roots of the material nicely with all its smoke and inky blackness. However, the opening scenes in Transylvania have not aged well. (Think of the most overblown metal video you have ever seen and reduce the budget slightly!) What is on screen was made with practically zero CGI and that is very noticeable in the supernatural takes such as Dracula’s different animal forms and the infamous shadow scenes. It’s not bad, in fact it gives the film a pitch perfect gothic atmosphere. Costume design in particular can be pretty wacky but in a way that suits



the film. Its melodramatic and a bit camp even but is still a worthy horror thriller that is the perfect antidote to whatever thinly veiled, poorly filmed abstinence metaphor they show in cinemas these days. For gloomy November kicks give Dracula an airing in favour of less biting vampire flicks.

Horror Franchises: Good Clean Harmless Fun

Tom Horan

Paranormal Activity 4 has been released in time for Halloween, answering all the questions audiences were presumably left asking after last year’s Paranormal Activity 3, which in turn was necessary to explain the events of 2010’s Paranormal Activity 2. But of course not! Really they are just a cheap way to make a guaranteed profit.

I can remember the hype that preceded the original Paranormal film, and stories of Americans passing out at screenings they were so terrified. I’ve never been a big horror fan but when the film made it across the Atlantic to Irish screens, I wanted to see it. Unfortunately, nobody passed out at my screening, even though I really did find a floor swinging a few inches by itself scary.

I could tell that the horror veterans in the crowd, apart from the likes of me, were the ones who laughed at the moments when everyone else squirmed and covered their eyes. Remembering that now, I realise that every time I rolled my eyes at the release of a Saw VII, or Halloween: Resurrection, or Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan, it was

because I thought they were soulless cash-cows, not realizing I wasn’t supposed to take them seriously. The hardcore horror fans lap up the likes of Paranormal without flinching, admiring the special effects between fists of popcorn, while us casual watchers jump ten inches every time a lamp moves two.

The descent of each horror movie franchise follows the same curve:

The first film is released to critical acclaim, crowds flock to see it and it makes a massive profit since it cost a couple of hundred thousand to make.

Eager to cash in on its success, the studio demands a sequel. The people responsible for making the first film any good clear off since they want to make films that interest them. The studio then hires some fresh hands to copy the format of the first movie, be it found footage, elaborate torture devices, or Jason Voorhees, then the crew bring in a new cast of actors to kill. Then repeat this yearly until completely exhausted.

They make good money though, so who am I to complain? Being generic isn’t limited to only horror movies and I’ve been to my fair share of dull comedies, comic-book adaptation and movies featuring

Shia Lebouf, to know that a generic movie with decapitations seems to be the lesser of two evils. Beyond being someone’s artistic vision, paying to see the next Saw is a tradition, and the studios capitalize on our subconscious compulsion to see things we’ve already seen, like going to your younger sister/brother’s Christmas nativity play. The same thing may happen every year; Mary and Joseph are told the inn’s full, Jesus is born and some wise men turn up but with new kids in the roles since the last ones have moved onto more advanced plays. In this case, “moving onto more advanced plays” is a metaphor for the Jigsaw killer having elaborately ripped off their arms in last year’s installment. At this point, I’d say we’re on Christmas Nativity Part XXVIII: Mary Returns.

One franchise I actually enjoy is Final Destination, though it only has a relatively meager four installments compared to Halloween’s ten and Friday The 13th’s twelve. The recurring villain in Final Destination is death but since death is a force, it can’t wear an iconic mask that would look cool on the poster. All it does is make elaborate death-traps out of everyday items, like an omnipotent



MacGyver. Since you don’t see death and every death in these movies is triggered by somebody leaving a window open, or incorrectly storing a nail-gun, death might not exist and all the dead pretty teens are just really, really unlucky. The series is

nonsense and probably can’t even be considered horror, but when watching them I understand the appeal of watching Michael Myers annually stab everything.

Once Bitten, Twice Shy

Jane O’Faherty

I still can’t forget my 16-year-old self, sitting in the cinema with my friends, waiting for what I thought was the greatest love story ever told.

It makes me cringe now to think of the intense appreciation and respect my friends and I had for the Twilight Saga. However, it seems strange that the infamous vampire romance is coming to a close.

The Twilight Saga follows the story of Bella Swan, a clumsy and socially awkward teenager who falls in love with the mysterious Edward Cullen. While their romance faces many obstacles, from love rivals to demonic babies, they succeed against all odds in the final part of the series, Breaking Dawn Part II.

I’d like to think I’ve grown up a bit and can laugh at the fact I was a Twihard. It’s a series that’s regularly mocked in conversation, online and in film parodies. However, not too long ago it was hailed as the best young fiction since Harry Potter.

Like it or not, The Twilight Saga was once a critic’s darling. The Times lauded the first book for encapsulating “perfectly the teenage feeling of sexual tension and alienation”. Publishers Weekly named Stephanie Meyer one of the most “promising new authors of 2005.” The subsequent film adaptation grossed more than €390,000,000 at the box office, even though it received mixed reviews.

Adolescent girls and grown women were equally sucked into this tale. It seemed like the perfect romance.

It reassured its fans that even the gawkiest girl could find true love with someone handsome, interesting and ever so slightly dangerous.

It didn’t take long for Bella Swan’s undying love for her undead boyfriend to grate on our nerves though. Once hailed as a role model for teenage girls, Bella became a symbol of everything modern women shouldn’t be. She didn’t just stand by her man, she was indelibly stuck to him. She was prepared to throw her life away and marry Edward, to become a vampire for him. Her shunning of friendships and family in favour of one guy is the whole premise of the Saga and indeed the movies.

Despite being deeply in love with Edward, Bella shows little or no actual emotion. Kristen Stewart’s performance throughout the movies is limited to mumbles, nods and constant blinking. Not that the rest of the cast are much better – their acting ranges from wooden to downright hammy.

While the films still command legions of fans, the films have become the subject of ridicule elsewhere. Perhaps we have all been overexposed to the phenomenon of Twilight. Maybe we can no longer accept literature as cheesy as that anymore.

Of course, front rows of cinemas will be jam packed with those eager to see Bella and Edward’s return to the big screen. However, there will still be those willing to see the film simply to mock it. At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter if you think that the films are silly or socially



relevant. They are far from classics, but it’s not often that films can inspire admiration and scorn in equal measure. Breaking Dawn may end the romance for some, but the legacy of Twilight – rightly or wrongly – will live on eternally.

Richard Kapp - Amok: Review

Rob McNamara

Many artists become constrained by the depth of their work, others flourish and grow. Four albums in and Richard Kapp is still falling on the latter side of that camp. This new record, his second with The Gowns, stays true to his piano pop ethos, yet is more revealing than his previous work, an uninhibited and true piece of craft.

Starting point Conditioned Man is less of a character observation in the style of The Kinks but more of a subtle, non-judgemental social comment on modern man, who as Kapp himself put it in an interview has, “slowly become disoriented and politically correct, almost androgynous creature”. As always, the melody leads, yet the lyrics touch on darker themes.

Ghost in the Lime is a nursery rhyme like sojourn with a sinister twist evolving into beautiful pop-suite, almost three songs in one. Happy Sun is a wonderfully delivered pop ditty with beautiful vocals by Agnes Rössler of The Gowns. It’s the kind of intelligent and quirky love song that we don’t hear any more in the mainstream. The brass that leads the song out is joyous.

Intentionally or not, Sly and the Family Stone are referenced on Be Unusual, the albums centre piece, an inventive chunk of funk and soul. ‘Be unusual/ and try to simulate you’re not/ so usual’ sings Kapp over a

melody that could have rode on the air right out of San Fran in the sixties. The lyrics reference Kapp’s disdain for labels or genres, if it’s good, he’ll soak it up, an admirable attitude.

Bobobonko must be a band in-joke that nobody else gets, a nod to African music with nonsensical lyrics, it’s a nice folly, if a little self-indulgent. You Fell Out Of My Bed mixes the limitless possibilities of electronica with organic musicianship seamlessly.

Master of Timarisu sets gangster rap against a chamber pop background on dessert preparation. It’s reminiscent of early Style Council, the kind of mad blend that Mick Talbot and Paul Weller would have revelled in. The electric organ gives it a great acid jazz feel.

Kapp strips it back on I’m So In Love, a string laden, storied love song with some nice lyrical couplets, “she used to rent some DVDs on her own, romantic style or culture clash alone/ she used to think he’d hate that stuff”. Striking images are conjured, a job so often neglected by songwriters.

Let It Go, Walking the Road, Each Day is a Gift finds Kapp at the top of his game, it’s within the territory of the perfectly assembled piano pop song that he is most comfortable and creative.

This albums points to a number of influences, none of which are intrusive enough to dilute the originality of Kapp’s music, his writing is too strong. The instrumentation provided by The Gowns is lavish



and the production work is right on the money, many sounds emanate simultaneously but never is the scene rendered too busy to enjoy the music.

If all Kapp did was remind you that there are still great songwriters out there, he would be a success but this album does so much more. This is a triumph in song-writing creativity.

Swift Changes Hearts With ‘Red’

Alex Sheehan

Taylor Swift, the country-turned-pop star, is renowned for her signature heart break anthems. Red is her third album and it doesn’t disappoint. It’s diary-honest and confessional which is what her fans, ‘the Swifties’, love about her.

Title song ‘Red’ sums up Swift in one song; it’s catchy pop with country influences, thanks to some funky banjo playing. The lyrics are metaphorical and so clever “Loving him is r-r-r-red” this is one song that all the ‘Swifties’ can relate to.

In this album Swift has more room to experiment but there are, of course, a few twangy country ballads such as ‘I Almost Do’ and ‘Treacherous’ where she sticks to her country roots.

There are also a few girly anthems that celebrate being young and having fun. ‘22’ will be the favourite among many young fans in which Swift sings about feeling “happy, free, confused and lonely”.

‘Holy Ground’ is another fun and catchy song that will be sung into many hairbrushes while dancing around a bedroom.

Despite the catchy, feel good ditties, the album as a whole has a surprising amount of indie-like songs. ‘State of Grace’ is the first song of the album and is a whole new Taylor Swift - indie rock meets dreamy girl with all

drum and definitely no banjo.

My favourite track, ‘Stay Stay Stay’, is a song with a distinctly girly vibe yet incorporates some indie influences. She even gets a dig or two in at a few Ex’s; what’s not to love?

Swift has a duet with Ed Sheeran in ‘Everything Has Changed’ which is relaxed and acoustic. The two voices go well together and, with no fancy effects or instruments, all you can do is sit back and appreciate the lyrics.

She also has a duet with Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol in ‘The Last Time’ - a truly romantic and magical song, a million miles away from ‘we are never ever getting back together’. This song will get Swift a new and mature fan base.

Another slow paced and sensitive ballad is ‘Sad Beautiful Tragic’ which is exactly what it says it is; sad, beautiful and tragic. This song is emotional and weepy, the ultimate heartbreak ballad.

In ‘I Knew You Were Trouble’ we see ‘T. Swizzle’ and not Taylor Swift - it’s fun, hip-hop and upbeat with catchy and repetitive lyrics “You found me me me me”, definitely a ‘get up and dance’ song.

Throughout the album, the ‘Teardrops’ songstress experiments with indie, hip hop as well as dance.

This could be just the album to give Swift haters a change of heart.



Bastille Live Review: Academy 2, Dublin

Wynona Grant

It was definitely no surprise that this gig was a sell-out. With three outstanding acts to perform in such an intimate venue, it was bound to be a gig to remember.

The show opened with up and coming Dublin singer/songwriter, Orla Gartland. In recent months, Orla’s Youtube channel has reached a massive 9 million views, and having seen her live plenty of times before, this was a performance I was really looking forward to. I suppose it’s never easy being the opening act; having to stand up and play while everyone is still wandering into the venue and finding a place to stand but it didn’t stop Orla doing what she always does. Orla performed outstandingly, and as always, succeeded in connecting and interacting with the crowd that were, sort of, scattered all over the venue- apart from a line of people who were basically standing on top of her. The thing about Orla is, when she performs, it’s unique and it’s quirky. Her passion for what she does just shines, and her tendency to pull faces never fails to add to the performance!

Her set list contained a perfect balance of songs- from opening with a new song ‘Jealous’, to including a cover of ‘Cross Your Fingers’ by Laura Marling,

to finishing with some familiar tunes such as ‘The Ground’ and ‘Devil On My Shoulder’. Not only are Orla’s lyrics incredibly honest but she performs them with such passion and love for music. Anyone who has seen this girl live knows she has a rare talent and is bound to go far.

The show switched from the lovely acoustic atmosphere of just Orla and her guitar to an electric sound of synth from dance-electro-pop group, Swiss Lips. From the minute this five-piece band start belting out their songs, you can just feel the energy of the crowd building. The songs are catchy, so catchy that you could leave the venue singing lines from each one, having never heard the band until just then.

It took one song, if even, to have the crowd jumping uncontrollably to Swiss Lip’s extremely lively rhythms. It was hard to believe that this was the band’s debut Dublin performance. They could have easily played for the entire night without any objections from the crowd. They certainly knew how to get the crowd exactly where they wanted them and their performance was flawless throughout.

I really thought the atmosphere in the crowd couldn’t get any livelier. But as soon as headline act, Bastille, began the opening lines of ‘Icarus’ , it was

clear they were in top form and ready to perform. The crowd were straight in, showing their appreciation of lead singer, Dan Smith’s, incredible voice, along with the amazing harmonies and melodies that the band produces. When the band moved onto playing ‘Overjoyed’, there’s that beautiful sound of an entire crowd singing perfectly in sync. It was obvious how genuinely amazed the band were by the support they had.

They then moved onto songs from their EP ‘Other People’s Heartaches’, which consisted of covers and mash-ups of other artist’s songs. With these songs being essentially some of the most well-known songs that Bastille had released; you can imagine the reaction of the crowd now. The speed of the vocals in ‘What Would You Do?’, their cover of City High’s song, didn’t stop the crowd from singing every single word without fail. After all the hype, it was probably about time we heard one of their more mellow songs. When Dan went over to the piano to play ‘Oblivion’, it gave the crowd a chance to retain their voices so they didn’t disappoint when given the chance to sing their hearts out again for ‘Bad Blood’. Throughout the entire show, Bastille were just really enjoyable to watch. They interact with the fans pretty much every second they’re up on



stage, which really is the whole point of seeing a band live; you don’t go to listen to exactly what you can hear on your iPod.

When it was time for what we thought was the last song - ‘Flaws’, Dan put up his hood and walked through the crowd, giving hugs and high fives to everyone, while still singing every note of ‘Flaws’ perfectly. For me, that was definitely the song of the night. It was just played with such a beautiful energy that can be hard to find in a lot of artists.

The band stay on stage and Dan looks into the crowd and says “I’m not gonna pretend-we’ve a few more!”. As the crowd go crazy, Dan then apologises

for “killing the vibe” as they go on to play ‘Get Home’. The night ends with another song from ‘Other People’s Heartaches’- ‘Of The Night’. This song really summed up the entire night; the energy from the band on stage combined with the reaction of the crowd creating a wonderful atmosphere around the venue. The fans don’t stop cheering and clapping, even as they leave the venue and walk down the street. Abbey Street just becomes full of voices shouting lyrics from different Bastille songs. If this is Bastille as a relatively unknown band, I can’t wait to see them in a year or so.

All Time Low - Don't Panic: Review

Chloe Fallon

All Time Low, a 5-piece pop-punk band from Baltimore made up of Alex Gaskarth (lead vocals, rhythm guitar), Jack Barakat (lead guitar, backing vocals), Zack Merrick (bass guitar, backing vocals) and Rian Dawson (drums), recently released their fifth studio album titled Don't Panic. A slightly ironic title since panic is exactly what every fan did when they heard there was a new album on the way.

After the unbelievable let down of Dirty Work, their last album which they released last June (after a 3-month delay) under Interscope Records, fans were not entirely sure what to expect. For Dirty Work, a bunch of producers and outsiders were brought in to co-write the album and although big names like Rivers Cuomo of Weezer helped pen the songs, it left fans disappointed. Their fans, known as Hustlers, blamed the label for trying too hard to make them what they're not and changing All Time Low's sound completely. The album was over-produced and lacked almost everything fans loved about the band and their sound. It seemed like All Time Low had sold out.

However, fast forward 12 months and we see All Time Low return

back to Hopeless Records, the label they had been with for 3 years before signing with Interscope in 2009. The boys announced their new album Don't Panic would be released on October 3rd, 2012. Thankfully, this album brought them back to their roots. In a press release, Alex said "This time around, rather than taking influence from anything we were listening to at the time or anything we want to touch on generationally, the goal was to make an album that we felt reflected the best aspects of our previous releases." All the songs on the album are written by Alex, except the song "Outlines", which was co-written with Patrick Stump of Fall Out Boy.

With catchy lyrics and music, the album was a big hit with Hustlers. It is obvious from the sound they had a lot more freedom and fun with this album than with Dirty Work. There is a lot less outside influence and thankfully no feel of them being pushed by the major label producers to be more mainstream and "marketable". Songs like "Somewhere In Neverland" and "If These Sheets Were States" have the feel of some of All Time Low's previous albums, Nothing Personal and So Wrong, It's Right. The boys also pay homage to their hometown with a track titled "For Baltimore". The album also features guest



vocalists Cassadee Pope, Jason Vena and Anthony Raneri.

Overall, Don't Panic is an exceptional album and a very welcome comeback

after Dirty Work. For those of you who have never heard of All Time Low, you should look them up. If you like bands You Me At Six, Paramore

or The Maine, you'll probably like them. For all you Hustlers who haven't already bought or listened to the album, do it now!

Lewis Watson Live Review: Academy 2, Dublin

Wynona Grant

I always love gigs in the Academy 2. There's just something about the place. Usually when you think of an 'intimate venue', you probably think of a tiny room with poor lights and sound. But The Academy 2 succeeds in being a beautiful, intimate venue, without losing the sense of a proper venue. And who better to perform on that stage, than 20 year old, British singer/songwriter, Lewis Watson.

The show opened with Dublin singer, Jack Lynskey. Although Jack has been in a band called 'Easy Target' and has been uploading videos to Youtube for some time, he isn't very well known. It would have been hard for Jack to come out in front of probably one of, if not the biggest crowd he'd played to as of yet and play songs that people had probably never heard. Despite this, he came out and put on a brilliant show. It was obvious the guy was a bit nervous but as any musician will tell you, confidence is half the battle. He showed confidence and interacted with the crowd, and he certainly became more comfortable on stage as his set went on. Jack's setlist was clever. As a relatively unknown songwriter, he introduced us to his own music, and also did a cover of "Rehab" by Amy Winehouse, encouraging the crowd to get involved and get a clap going. It's always important, as a support act,

to give the crowd something they're familiar with and can sing along to, as well as playing originals of course and Jack did exactly that.

It was then time for the second support act; Orla Gartland, who is definitely no stranger to the Academy 2 stage! With a similiar sound to Lewis himself, this was going to be quite a comfortable performance for Orla, with the majority of people there probably familiar with her music. Herself and Lewis have even done a cover of 'Twist and Shout' by The Beatles together, along with Hudson Taylor and Gabrielle Aplin. Even beforehand, in the queue, people were singing Orla's songs and talking about how they couldn't wait to see her. Every time I see Orla live, she seems to get more and more relaxed and comfortable performing. This girl has had so much experience gigging, that her performances are so lively and entertaining- this was no different. She kicked off her set by doing one of her well-known originals 'The Ground', and later did a fantastic cover of Ben Howard's 'Old Pine'. The whole way through her set Orla spoke and even cracked jokes with the crowd. Her witty sense of humour just makes her so much more enjoyable to watch, never mind her absolute passion for what she does. We heard a lot of Orla's songs, including a brand new one, which got an incredible response. Orla

is a fantastic songwriter, a beautiful singer, but over anything else, she's a true performer and with every gig she just gets better and better. I'd strongly recommend you get to one of her gigs.

When headline act, Lewis Watson arrived on stage, the sound of young girls screaming was almost deafening! Lewis dived straight in with his song 'Once Before'. Barely opening his eyes for the entire song, I knew it was going to be an intense show throughout, which is something you get used to watching Lewis. He had the entire crowd staring up at him singing his lyrics back at him. The next song he played was one of his most well-known- 'Bones', before moving on to 'Calling'. This song is about being with your friends, drinking in the park, which Lewis claims people need to do more often! When this song was finished, he laughed and said "and that's the end of happy songs for the night, sorry!"

I suppose, what can you expect from a guy who was selling EPs at the back of the venue (think he'd let us forget it? Not at all!), called 'Another Four Sad Songs'. The thing about Lewis is, he doesn't just step up on stage and sing for an hour and a half; he allows people to get to know him while he's there. He told a story about each song before he played it and got the crowd very much involved in his performance. Watson knows how to please a crowd. A simple



lyric tweak in his song 'Calling' made the Irish fans go crazy- "we got those good vibes from a GUINNESS can!"

The best was still yet to come. One of Lewis' newest songs 'Even If', was the last song of the night. The music video for this song is yet to be made and Lewis had the idea that the start of it would be a crowd of people at one of his shows singing the lyrics; this crowd, at the Academy 2. A photographer stepped up on stage and once Lewis counted to four, the crowd started singing. The sound of a crowd of people singing in sync is just such a lovely sound, and everyone kept perfectly in time with Lewis' guitar. It was a beautiful way to

end such a fantastic show.

It didn't stop there though. After going back to the dressing room, Lewis came out to meet everyone. He signed tickets, EPs that people had just bought at the merch stand and took pictures with people. For a lot of musicians, once this goes on for a certain amount of time, you can see them getting frustrated by the amount of people still queued up but Lewis is such a friendly guy that it was obvious he was enjoying it himself. Between an absolutely flawless performance, and such appreciation for the fans, Lewis is definitely on the list of people to see again!

An Apple A Day

Una Roddy

Picture a doctor in your mind. For most people it's a blank but friendly face you can throw your symptoms at and will make you all better. Occasionally you need to show them something embarrassing but it's okay because we all know that they're not really "people" regardless of what Grey's Anatomy tells us. They are Doctors, capital D. The white coat stands for impartial, knowledgeable and non-judgemental advice that you don't get anywhere else. But in the immortal words of Spiderman, with great power comes great responsibility; and few people in our modern society hold the kind of untouchable power of a Doctor.

Like 100 million women worldwide I am on The Pill. Getting the contraceptive pill wasn't taboo, I went to the Doctors in college, they asked me some questions and handed me a prescription. Wham, bam, thank you ma'am. I even did the unthinkable and broached the subject with my mother. I told her I was going on it and she was in total support, declaring she wasn't ready to be a glamorous granny just yet. Also in the student lifestyle, whether right or wrong, it is more of a controversy to not be on the pill. So, in this very liberal mind frame I was sent home for the summer to the rural backwaters of the west of Ireland.

It came to July and my previous prescriptions had run out. So I made an appointment with my local GP, in the anti-metropolis. My natural instinct was to bring up the subject of contraception with a brass neck and a little bit of a blush, after all Doctor X has nursed me from all manner of sniffles and snuffles since I was a child. The onslaught of judgement was so unexpected and severe that it literally took my breath away.

Dr X began by assuming I had a boyfriend if I wanted to go on the pill, when in fact my relationship status is none of his business or anybody else's. He didn't seem to understand the fact that this is the 21st century and my contraception and my relationship status are two completely unrelated

things. He then went on to declare that "co-habiting" (he made little quotation marks with his hands) couples had a higher rate of break ups than married couples. He also threw in the fact that "fellas" (quotations are my own this time) often experience so much they don't know what to settle for, excuse me I'm not something to settle for!

I felt so affronted by this I just had to ask what the hell this had to do with my contraception. He immediately backtracked and threw statistics at me about how the majority of UK Doctors wouldn't prescribe their wives the pill and how it could lead into the whole abortion debate. With this he lit my ever short fuse and I stated in no uncertain terms my extremely clear pro-choice views on abortion and how the pill had nothing to do with it. My doctor attacked my views as outdated and immature. In my defence I stated that I didn't care what he thought because they were my views and had nothing to do with him. He simply stated I was just wrong.

I'm generally stubborn to a fault but in coming up against this wall of judgemental criticism so unexpectedly, I just gave in and left the surgery. His parting words were "I hope I've given you something to think about". I replied rather tartly "Not at all".

I was in complete shock for the first while, with a thin veil of rage. But as they both wore off I started to analyse every word said in the surgery, something that kept coming up alongside his refusal to administer the pill was "but I don't want you to get pregnant". My response was, naturally, well then give me the pill. The intense message that was conveyed was that I shouldn't be having sex, in a committed relationship or not. In this day and age when the media is saturated with sex and teenagers are having sex ever younger, surely the message to a consenting adult should be 'be safe' rather than 'be ashamed'? Sex is completely natural thing, yet



The kind of stares you're likely to receive from rural doctors when the topic of the pill arises.

this trusted medical practitioner made me feel ashamed rather than responsible.

This horrible catholic guilt regarding our own sexuality still festers in the more rural parts of Ireland. It makes me so angry that the general psyche of our nation would accept that a doctor reserves the right not to administer this drug. I had done three courses of the pill, I was well aware of the risks and consequences and I am a consenting adult choosing to be responsible; yet the doctor still asked were my parents aware of why I was there.

It occurred to me, while filling the forms in for my new doctor, what if I had been going in there a younger, more impressionable girl trying to

do the responsible thing? Having sat through the tirade that was directed at me I think I can confirm that a less stubborn girl would have probably never had the confidence to ask for contraception again. This seemed so dangerous to me that I felt the need to out my contraception problems to the student population of UL. The very idea of this betrayal of power and how Dr X's refusal to administer the pill can come under the umbrella of 'religious beliefs' made me so angry I couldn't keep this story to myself.

I don't care that everyone knows I'm on the pill. Or that I'm having sex. What I do care about is the fact that people like Dr X remain in their unquestionable position of authority. I care that I'm not allowed to name

him in this article because he's still my family's doctor and even my very liberal mother saw nothing wrong with a doctor refusing to administer a drug that I had already been on and was taking under full knowledge of the consequences. Her attitude of 'Doctor Knows Best' makes me incredibly angry. This tendency to never question authority has caused so much trouble in regard to the Catholic church and our corrupt politicians, yet it still remains, it infuriates me. I only hope that this story makes someone have the confidence to question their Doctor.

November 2012

Brian Lighthouse

Men's health is an issue that's being tackled every year during the month of November with the Movember campaign. Men prefer to talk about sport, hobbies and politics with each other. The only health issue we are generally open to discuss is the "mad" hangover we have from last night with the lads we were with last night.

So, what is Movember? Movember is responsible for all the sprouting moustaches you see on the men folk as they parade around the campus. Well the majority of them anyway. It is also a way to raise money for the Irish Cancer Society.

Why? Well, simply to raise funds for vital research and awareness of men's health issues. This year the focus is on prostate cancer. Just to let you know, Irish men have the highest prostate cancer rates in Europe; one in eight

men will develop it according to the Irish Cancer Society. That is nearly two of your GAA team, rugby team or soccer squad who will develop this disease.

Can I help? Yes of course. You can join the Movember campaign or donate some of your cash to a Movember participant. The guys growing moustaches would prefer if you donate directly to the website. <http://ie.movember.com/donate>

This is a more transparent method of donating to this venerable cause.

I don't know anyone participating in Movember 2012 but I'd still like to donate.

Fear not good citizens. One of your fellow students, Brian Lighthouse is working hard to grow some handlebars this month. He's busily eating fertiliser in an effort to produce something monumental. You will be able to follow his progress

here: <http://ie.movember.com/mospace/5325525>

He will also be attempting to grow a comb-over in the style favoured by many elderly gentlemen. Brian says: "I feel the comb-over has been neglected by the main fashion houses along with the gentleman's moustache. By looking a bit odd I hope people will remember why I'm doing this and go to the website and donate some hard-earned."

As winter begins flexing its muscles and darkness falls earlier, please remember that by helping this cause you could contribute to making the summer last longer for a family just like yours.



One moustache and comb over combo away from perfection.

ULKC Charity Paddle Raises €1988.36 For Concern

Oisín Bates

Charitable, Kind, Generous: these are all adjectives . . . absolutely glorious adjectives that reflect the philanthropic character of UL Kayak Club. Some claim that you can't put a figure on a club's commitment to charitable fundraising... -€1988.36- there you go, I just did. Now you've got the figures and a string of charitable synonyms you probably want to know what we did exactly to come up with such a sum of money?

As part of UL's UL40 celebrations, 40 UL students, alumni and friends paddled a 25km stretch of the River Shannon from Lough Derg to the UL Boathouse over the October Bank Holiday Weekend. The primary goal of the trip was to raise awareness and funds for Concern's work in Uganda. The trip was initially conceived by UL staff member and kayaker Andrea Deverell; from her initial interest, a crack-team of cold-blooded humanitarians was assembled.

So, on that fateful Monday, the group set off with nothing to their names but their hopes, dreams, and the necessary packed-lunch that most had the foresight to bring. The first leg of the journey took the group 10km downstream from Lough Derg to Parteen Weir; after walking around the weir, a further 5km to Castleconnell Rowing Club. From here, the group passed alongside Castleconnell Village and, through a 3km stretch of whitewater, and a final 7km to the UL



Boathouse. The group finally arrived at UL just before 6 p.m. tired, but contented.

A big thanks goes to Andrea Deverell, Mike Jones from UL Activity Centre

and Simon McCormack (ULKC Captain) for overseeing the organising of such a large group. Thanks also to the Scholars Club who provided some tasty post-trip snacks and to the Lodge

Nightclub who provided concessions which raised €150 for the cause. Last but not least, to everyone who donated money or took part in the paddle and to you for reading this, unless you

skimmed the main body and are only properly reading the first and last lines.



Unite the Union, University of Limerick Branch

10 reasons to join unite the UNION

- 1** You can earn more- It is a fact that workers in Unionised workplaces enjoy higher rates of pay than those in non-unionised workplaces.
- 2** You could get more holiday You are more likely to have over and above your statutory holiday entitlements by being a member of a union.
- 3** You are less likely to be injured- unionised workplaces ensure employers meet their health and safety responsibilities at all times
- 4** You can get better maternity or paternity leave- workers in unionised workplaces enjoy better leave than just the legal minimum
- 5** Membership of unite- protects you and strengthens you voice in your workplace
- 6** Training for reps- Unite provides training for our reps to ensure they are up to date on their representative skills
- 7** legal support/advice- Unite provides legal advice on personal injury claims.
- 8** You are less likely to be discriminated against- than non-union colleagues – Unite constantly campaigns for tougher anti-discrimination laws
- 9** More job security – The union challenges job cuts and campaigns when workplaces are under threat of redundancies or closure.
- 10** Be part of an organisation that champions fairness – Unite uses its influence to challenge injustice at work and in our communities.

UL Ninjas Ultimate Frisbee

Travel To Trinity Tea Party

Caoimhe O’ Sullivan

Airbrushing has been used to alter photographs since the pre-digital camera era. Humans are a vain bunch, there is no denying that but what is troubling is the effect excessive airbrushing has on people, namely women, and their self-perception. You would be hard-pressed to find a photograph that hasn’t been doctored in post-production. A bit of tweaking here and there of colour or lighting is acceptable but the altering that happens in fashion advertising is a different beast altogether.

We have all seen the Photoshop mishaps where the photographer has been over-zealous in touching up after-effects. Take pity on those poor models missing vital body-parts like elbows and ribcages. Recently, untouched pictures emerged of Victoria Secret model Doutzen Kroes for their swimsuit catalogue. Kroes, a successful runway model and best known for her ad campaigns for L’Oreal, is certainly the last person you’d think would need airbrushing but the people at Victoria’s Secret were apparently able to find fault.

The slimming down of models with airbrushing is so commonplace these days that we barely notice. This is enough cause for worry until you consider the fact that many

models are also airbrushed when they are deemed to look too skinny. The general message seems to be: be skinny but not so skinny that you might remind people of the frightening effects of trying to achieve this arbitrary notion of perfection.

Natalie Portman’s ad for Dior mascara was banned after a complaint from L’Oreal (a company that is certainly no stranger to retouching photographs either) to the Advertising Standards Authority. L’Oreal’s argument was that the photo exaggerated the effects of the product. Cue a resounding “duh” from the rest of the world because, really, who has eyelashes of that magnitude without resorting to lash extensions and a little innocent Photoshop? And yet, it can be hard, especially when bombarded with these images in every television ad and magazine, to remember that what we are seeing is not actually real.

Airbrushed images, whether in advertising or in fashion spreads, assume that there is an ideal body that everyone should aim to achieve. Seeing it constantly messes with our idea of what people really look like. We can forget that human bodies fold in weird ways or that people have wrinkles and visible pores and scars. While companies such as Dove have tried to use ‘real women’ in their advertising campaigns, it’s not a trend



that seems to be catching on.

It would be silly for us to expect advertisers to suddenly stop using enhanced or airbrushed images. They are, after all, out to make money and

are doing pretty well for themselves by trading on people’s self-esteem issues. Perhaps it would be better than to have a critical eye when looking at such images instead. So the next time

you see a model with the skin of a newborn baby or thighs that look like they’ve never even heard of cellulite, best take it with a pinch of salt.

UL Poker Player Wins Student Masters Tournament

Philip Watson

The UL Poker Society provided the winner of Student Masters Tournament which took place on October 25 last. Forty-two players competed for a jackpot of €1000 at the event which was staged in Caesars Palace, Galway.

Other colleges represented included NUI Galway, Louth, Galway IT and Athlone IT. Philip Watson, First Year Journalism, took the top prize of €500 and will represent UL next March in the Paddy Powers Student Masters Main Event 2013.

UL had a strong representation in Galway with four players making it to the final table. They were Philip Watson, Adam Lahart, Seamus Delaney and Kevin O’Flaherty. Kevin O’Flaherty and Adam Lahart were the two early casualties of the final nine coming 9th and 8th respectively.

Seamus Delaney got felted in 6th place when his top pair of queens ran into a three-of-a-kind Sevens. Philip “The Doc” Watson eventually emerged victorious after nine hours of play when, with a nine to one chip lead, called an all-in from his opponent holding king/10 versus Watson’s queen/jack.



The tournament was all over when two more queens came on the flop. A jubilant Watson said after: “I struggled all night but I felt I’d a real chance of winning with seven players left.”

“With three left I felt I had the most experience and used it to bully my opponents. Luckily, I had a hand each time they fought back,” he added.

My Experience Of UL Parkour As A First Year

Jonathan Micoud

I came into this University having joined the rugby, sailing and Parkour clubs. Of those clubs I have dropped one and haven’t gone to a single meeting of the other. The club that survived was the Parkour club. Why? Parkour is a very misunderstood sport. It’s not about showing off or competition or doing crazy stunts. Parkour is about being efficient, aesthetic and most importantly controlling in the way you move around your environment.

That’s why I go to as many training sessions as I can manage, even if I’m injured, I go to help out. Every training session I try something new, I improve and I gain more control. The sessions are very physically challenging but there is no, go hard or go home attitude, you do what you can and we encourage you to be the best you can be.

I have complete confidence that I am safe training and jamming, the first things we learn are how to protect ourselves while doing Parkour in case we fall. The motivation is equally good, during training we try to laugh through the effort with jokes and that creates a good atmosphere. The people



are really nice and there are no social groups within the club, everyone in the club hangs out together.

Even though I’m only in first year I already feel integrated into the club, I have also gotten the position of Welfare Officer (care bear). I like

being able to help the club by doing surveys and generally helping people out. I can’t really see myself being involved much with any other club in UL and I hope UL Parkour grows and that Parkour is finally understood by people.

Banterstar Galactifunk Emerge Victorious At Battle Of The Bands

Eanna Brown

Banterstar Galactifunk proved that they were UL's next big band on November 1st, when they walked away as victors of UL Live: Battle of the Bands. The quintet, who describe their sound as "Insane Funk and Body-Bopping Beats", blew the judges away and earned them the top prize of €250 at the competition, which is organised each semester by the UL Music Society and with prizes sponsored by the Stables Club.

Battle of the Bands veterans Milk Baby came in a very deserving second place in what was a very tight race for the top prize - there was 3.5 points separating the top two bands - while Aces High, a band relatively new to the scene but one to watch nonetheless, came in in third place. Banterstar Galactifunk saxophonist Oisín Bates said that the band "really enjoyed being part of the competition. The standard of musicianship among all the contestants was crazy and the music soc's equipment was top-notch."

Keyboard player and backing vocalist, Richard "Captain Dangerous Dick" Daly said that it was "great to be able to compete in the Music Soc. Battle of the Bands this year. We were delighted people responded so well to the funk-ed-up music we play, it was exciting, loud and electric!" Music Society President Eanna Brown said that he was happy with the way that the event has happened. "Considering

that it was the night after halloween, when the world and its mother was out either at a house party or in town, we still managed to get a decent crowd into the Stables for the event", he commented. "Also, the standard of bands that took part was a massive step up on last year's selection (which was a challenge in itself), so I'm looking forward to working with them for next semester's battle and for the other gigs that we will be organising this year. I also just want to thank all the roadies that came out and helped, they made my job and Tighearnan [Noonan, Music Society Treasurer]'s job a lot easier."

Banterstar Galactifunk will be playing the Stables on November 16th as part of the UL International Society's T.G.I.F night. They will also be headlining the UL Music Society's "Piss On Pop" night in Bakers on November 15th, which also features performances from Aces High, Kings Can't Rule Together, Mullet Up Your Ass, My Drunken Lovely, Overture, Mayo-based pop-punk band Struck and Galway-based rock band Reckless Youth. More details will be available on the Music Soc facebook page, facebook.com/ulmusicsoc, in the very near future.

Queries to ulmusicsoc@gmail.com



(L-R) Oisín Bates, Ethan O'Brien and Andrew Park of Banterstar Galactifunk at the Music Society Battle of the Bands. Photo courtesy of UL Photo Society

UL Ógra FF Retains Cup

Enda Costello

The Con Colbert Cumann (UL Ógra) retained the Jack Lynch Cup last Saturday and will host the competition again next year for the fourth year in a row as a result.

The day kicked off with an Education Seminar in the Schuman Building where guest speaker Prof. Tom Cosgrave (involved in designing Thomond Park) spoke about the Maths curriculum and point system in 2nd Levels Schools from a commercial and third level perspective after he provided the audience with some insightful and interesting thoughts about the state of politics in Ireland today. This was followed by a Q&A session.

Next was the throw-in of the Jack Lynch Cup, with UL Ógra once again proving triumphant. The Jack Lynch Cup is a Gaelic Football competition. After a difficult semi-final and final in particular (against Mayo Ógra and Tipperary North Ógra respectively), UL were deserved winners. Making sure Jack didn't leave Limerick!

The day was finished off with the annual Ógra Halloween Party, making the whole day a very enjoyable event and as UL Ógra looks forward to having the same amount of craic again next year when its hosts the event in Limerick.



Members of Ógra Fianna Fáil pictured with party leader, Michael Martin at last Monday's Yes Vote Referendum campaign.

DebU's Debates To Date

Michelle Coyle

This semester has seen DebU have many interesting and controversial debates. They've ranged from hunting, the hilarity of the hipster culture, intervention in foreign conflicts, the US election and most recently the relevance of Pride.

"This House Would Hunt" kicked off the semester in week 3 and was a very heated and exciting debate on the issue of hunting. Guest speakers from the Irish Hunting Association of Ireland, PETA and the Irish Master of Fox Hunting along with members of the society gave us classic lines like "babies don't contribute to society either and they don't deserve rights" and "old hungry foxes can't retire and get an old age pension, so hunting benefits them and ends things quickly."

Our comedy debate "This House Regrets the Rise of the Hipster" took place in conjunction with UCC Philosophical Society in week 4 and was a great success. Debaters from UCC and UL joined together to give us a hilarious evening filled with banter about hipsters. The Jonathan Swift Theatre heard the infamous lines comparing hipsters to gonorrhoea and how having hipster apathy in the world lets fat cats win. The debate was followed with a DebU-Philosoph night out in Limerick which was a great, if slightly hazy night!

"This House Would Intervene" featured noted and well respected journalist Charlie Bird. This debate focused on intervening in foreign conflicts such as the situation in Syria. Along with other guest speakers including an ex-UN peacekeeper and a UL politics lecturer everyone was able to hear the pros and cons of this method of conflict resolution. Charlie Bird offered amazing insight from his time as a journalist reporting on conflicts and war zone areas such as the Gulf wars, Somalia and Vietnam



Former RTÉ Journalist, Charlie Bird, who was a guest speaker at last month's "This House Would Intervene" Debate.

and the violence he witnessed.

Perhaps our rowdiest debate came in the form of the US Election with the motion "That This House Would Re-elect Obama". We had guest speakers from the Democratic and Republican parties including Vincent Lavery; a four time Democratic Candidate for the US Senate, Sean Dunne; a member of the Democrats Abroad, Paul MacDonnell; former director of

the Open Republic Institute and John McGurik; a former member of the Freedom Institute. The question and answers session saw the Republicans and anti-Obama believers take quite a thrashing from the audience. Ultimately just like we saw in the US last Tuesday, the Democrats and Obama won with the audience.

Finally during Rainbow Week we finished with the debate, "This House

Believes Pride is Irrelevant and Would Not Support It". This debate focused on its ability to benefit the LGBTQ community and its vital historical role in breaking down discrimination along with opposing views on the glamorised and commercialised festival that Pride has become. It was a fabulously interesting debate.

The Motions that won: 1. This House Would Hunt, 2. This House

Would Intervene and 3. This House Would Re-elect Obama (called it!)

The Motions that were opposed: 1. This House Regrets the Rise of the Hipster (whatevs...) and 2. This House Believes Pride is Irrelevant and Would Not Support It.



STUDENT SPEAK



ULFM Station Manager Kevin O'Brien braves the SU courtyard in his never-ending struggle for knowledge.

This time he wanted to know your opinions on the upcoming student referendum.

Aoife Ashworth & Mairead O'Connor
"We don't have a clue what it's about."



Samantha Berry "I'm kind of divided; I can see how it's helpful and unhelpful."



David Richardson
"What Referendum?"



Derek Well
"I don't know what it is but it sounds like a lot of money!"



Darren Kiely "It'll go ahead anyway if we vote no, it's putting extra money on students!"



Michael Dooley
"Why should we pay for something that we'll never use?"



Henry Wylde "I don't know a lot about it but I felt it's something that will benefit a lot of groups of people."



Patrick Bergin "It's a good idea, I don't know if the nightclub idea will work though."



Laura Nestico
"Is that about the new buildings?"



Niall Fitzmaurice
"Vota Vae! I want a new student council!"

www.

please
talk

.ie

Talking is a
sign of
strength,
not of
weakness.

The Please Talk website provides a directory of support services that are available to students. If students experience problems at home, college, or in their private lives, there are people who can help.

Log on to www.pleasetalk.ie to see what services are available to you.

www.pleasetalk.ie

The Windy City

James McDonagh

Before Hurricane Sandy started to blow inland, Chicago had always been known as The Windy City. Colorful and insanely bright, the city has an amazing light that is unrivaled by any other city in the States. Calmer and cleaner than New York but still boasting a fast pace, Chicago's endless activities offer some once in a lifetime opportunities, I almost walk by a movie or television set on a daily basis downtown.

For those interested in the arts, Chicago offers unbeatable museums with the finest collections from around the world featured in the amazing architecture of the Museum Campus. The campus grounds house the four main museums. First, the Field Museum, home to Sue, the oldest and most complete dinosaur skeleton in the world (anyone seen Night at a Museum?).

Secondly, the world famous Art Institute of Chicago, which features some of the most iconic pieces to date. To get an idea of what is in store just look at the opening titles of Desperate Housewives. The largest indoor aquarium can be found at The Shedd, featuring thousands of mammals and fish, dolphin shows and 4D movie experiences, as well as meet and greets with the whales which can also be arranged. Finally something out of this world, join the Adler Planetarium after hours for cocktail drinks and the best views of

the galaxy on their rooftop telescope lounge. The Museum of Science and Industry, located just outside the campus, is one of the best interactive museums, with the most fascinating being the Science Storms exhibition, which looks into natural disasters featuring tornado wind simulator tubes and a life sized man-made hurricane.

Outside in the fresh air Chicago offers some amazing experiences. Shopping in downtown Chicago is a fashion-forward person's dream. The aptly titled Magnificent Mile features upscale malls and designer stores bound to break the bank but only a train ride away, with vintage boutiques and independent stores offering some of the best deals. The city holds the only free zoo in America. Lincoln Park Zoo displays a Polar Bear Pool, Reptile House, African exhibits with giraffes, bears, lions, tigers, you name it and they have it, free of charge. Just south of the zoo is Navy Pier which boasts a 15-Story Ferris wheel, wave swingers, crazy golf and with stages that recently held the likes of Justin Bieber, it's easy to see why it's Chicago's most visited attraction.

When night falls, Chicago comes alive with a thriving nightlife that has something for everyone. Urban and R&B music dominates the booming club scene. The House of Blues offers a more relaxed environment, featuring jazz musicians and vocalists every day of the week. For a slightly more alternative night out



look no further than the Evil Olive on Monday night, for their famous Porn and Chicken Dance Parties, which are becoming increasingly popular. It is exactly what it says on the tin; enjoy a free buffet of chicken and dance under the dirty videos projected on its plasma screen TVs

and experience a nightclub like never before! A word to the wise that living the student life under the age of 21 can be tricky with Americans asking for ID for almost everything, so be sure to take the appropriate measures before entry to the States.

Chicago is the perfect city to

live in on a budget with countless offers released on a daily basis. The people are incredibly friendly and it is impossible not to find future opportunities here. With so much to discover and so much I could not fit into this article, all I can say is visit it.

**Discount booklet
with over €1000 savings
in local eateries!**

**For sale in ULSU
Only €5 for UL students
(RRP €10)**

www.eatmytown.ie



Just Come With Us And Then You'll See...

Aoife Murphy

This, our town of Halloween. Halloween may be well over but it's worth talking about the Canadian experience. Halloween in Sackville was a spooky affair indeed. The town itself seems to have an extraordinary paranormal past. It does not help that some of that past revolves around the campus. These spooky stories really set the tone for Halloween. One of these stories I knew already, the numerous variations of the tale based around Hart Hall (one of my lecture venues). I've heard that it was a hospital, there's a woman that haunts the attic, the basement, the piano plays by itself, the stories go on really. I never really paid much attention to them but I guess with it being Halloween the place had an eerier feel to it. I had no paranormal encounters but the semester is still relatively young!

I would have to say the highlight of the day was one of my lecturers bringing his baby in dressed as Link from The Legend of Zelda. It was not horrifying or scary, that much is true but it was adorable! My Halloween unfortunately had to be a quiet one due to mid-terms. But it still didn't stop me getting into the spirit of things. Again, Sackville is a small town so they do a lot of the traditional things; pumpkin carving,

decorating, costume contests, numerous little events and the big event - Thalloween, a house party in one of the on-campus residences. Halloween is celebrated the same way, you dress up with friends and go out. The only difference is you're minus the bonfire. I guess the tradition of throwing everything into an open fire hasn't really caught on in this small town.

Halloween traditions aside, the academic life here is very different from UL. For those of you who ever want to go to Canada I would highly recommend Mount Allison University in Sackville. Even with the workload you still get a lot of opportunities to take part in social events. I guess I would say that the workload was the biggest culture shock of all. The students here are pretty academic too (not dissin' on the UL students, of course!) but you don't feel pressured into performing to a standard. MTA would be a great university for any student wishing to study abroad. It's a small university but it has a big community and you're instantly welcomed as one of the family!



The workload is the biggest culture shock of all in a Canadian university.

The City Is My Campus

Aoife Coughlan

CA Foscari does not really feel like a university. There is no real campus with landmarks we are used to like the student courtyard or the union office. The college buildings are spread out all over the city and there is no college bar or even traditional clubs and societies that are ubiquitous at home. This may annoy and alienate some people or delight others. The downside is that it makes finding friends with similar interests harder, if one needs that sort of social outlet. On the other hand it does away with the college politics of such student ventures and the "bubble" that can trap some people.

There is no such thing as RAG or Charity week here but a student night out is not forgotten with the smaller scale one night version that is staged. The Feste Delle Matricole is a one night event for all college students in Venice, which takes place a short walk out of the city in a giant warehouse. The night started with my flatmates and I doing the pre-party routine known to every student in our flat. Then after 12am it was a merry group of us who moved on to the Campo for some more mingling. One o'clock and we hit the party, queuing with everyone, the time was not noticed passing. Finding random people and having the bilingual banter was all part of the atmosphere. On entry I found there

were five different stages with either DJs or live bands. The music ranged from hard-core rock to popular disco beats to trippy and alternative. It was amazing, such a good vibe from the hundreds attending the event. Whether you danced, drank or mingled in the balcony smoking area, the electricity was always evident. At 4am I (somehow) made it home!

I spent the night with my flatmates and their friends which is always fun despite the language barriers. I would put that on my highly recommend list of things to consider if going on Erasmus to Venice, or anywhere else I suppose. Finding accommodation privately gives you a much richer experience. You are able to have a more authentic student life as opposed to just mingling with other international students and you do have to make an effort with the language. In my case, accommodation is far superior to the college accommodation offered to international students. The latter is hostel style with no kitchen and a vaporetto (water bus) stop away from Venice island. For me a fully fitted out kitchen, nice bathroom and a lovely big room in the heart of the student quarter of Dosoduro really make living in Venezia a pleasure.

Erasmus in Venice really shows that the city is my campus and the world my oyster.



The Feste Delle Matricole is a one night event for all college students in Venice.

Don Barry – A CAO Offer You Can't Refuse



Aubrey O' Connell

President Barry commending the award winners at 2009's Bank of Ireland UL alumni awards.

He may not be seen devouring books in the library or addressing lectures in the Foundation but behind the scenes Don Barry pulls the strings in UL. An Focal sat down with the President to find out what he thinks about student life, campus development and the creep of University fees.

Generally maintaining a low-key approach, the paths of students and their President don't often cross. Apart from the initial welcome speech, sightings can be rare, with Mr. Barry reservedly toiling away in Plassey House. So what exactly is it that our President does? In accounting for his role, he announces the position as having three main responsibilities; Development of the Strategic Plan, Public Representation and what he refers to as his most "onerous" duty, being accountable to the Oireachtas for how money is spent.

However, even with such pressing matters at hand, the students remain a key part of Barry's focus. Referring regularly to the "student experience", he explains that University is about more than simply hitting the books. "Life continues while you are a

student. We want students to have a good social life and be challenged by things that might have nothing to do with their program. A good example is the President's Volunteer Award, where we try and provide explicit recognition of students' contribution to society and of course it helps enhance a CV!"

Indeed considering the student experience to be so important, it formed part of last year's 'Pioneering and Connected' strategic plan, which aims to tackle areas like University drop-out rates and increase research by 2015. Although only a year into the plan, Mr. Barry announces his contentment with progress made. The 7 Weeks programme, which serves to ease the transition for students from secondary level to University, has been a particular success. "We're in our second year of operation and are continually trying to make it better. I think it has been well received by students so far. Drop-out rates too have shown a modest decrease and we hope to reach a 95% progression rate from first to second year by the plans completion".

UL this year placed in the top 100

Universities under 50 years-old, to the particular delight of its President. While stating his intention to run the University by the strategic plan and not become "obsessed" with rankings, he concedes their importance on the international stage. "It was a great achievement to place in the top 100. Our position in league tables is important in terms of how the world sees us when it's looking at us from very far away. The second goal of Pioneering and Connected talks about research performance, this really is the aspect which we need to work very hard at over the next five years and one which would provide a natural increase in our league rankings".

With UL40 (UL's 40th anniversary celebrations, if you've been in a cave!) now well underway, Mr. Barry considers it a great time for students to get involved in the action. "I think students always like a celebration! They have a lot to be proud of and a lot to celebrate and there will be a lot of opportunities throughout the year. The current students are all part of the story of UL and I hope they will see opportunities for themselves to

participate and celebrate 40 years of the institution."

As the student contribution now looks set to continue its increase for the foreseeable future, Mr. Barry feels that the future of funding is an issue with no easy solution and one which he too finds it difficult to wrap his head around.

"There are projections now for much larger amounts of students going through third level education. This is going to have to be shared between students and the taxpayer but striking the right balance is very much a political decision and is in the hands of the government".

It isn't all bad news, however. The unparalleled growth and construction experienced on campus in recent years seems set to continue with two new research buildings on the cards. Located in the Lonsdale, state funding will see an extension to the current MSSSI building while Chuck Feeney will support the construction of a second research development. This building will house the Bernal project which seeks to enhance the University's science and engineering capabilities. These however, won't be

the only developments on campus: "Probably what I'm most excited about are a number of student-orientated developments around the University. Among these will be the redevelopment of Maguire's field to make it more of an asset to students and an extension to the Arena, particularly a climbing wall which was taken away during redevelopment of the sports science building and a new diving facility".

"Most exciting, though, are the plans to create an advanced student centre on campus with much better facilities than are currently available. "Of course it's a tough time for students financially but this is an investment which will benefit future cohorts of students and one which they can be very proud of".

You can have your say on these developments when the Student Levy Referendum goes to vote on Thursday, 15th November.

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AN FOCAL?

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