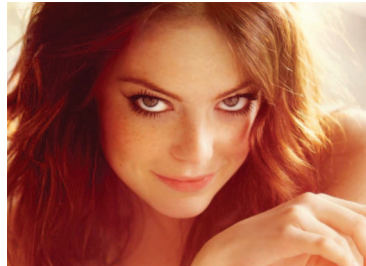




Read about the aftermath of the Savita case and the UL students who are campaigning for X-Case legislation. Page 4.



Has Kidney taken the Ireland team as far as they can go? Page 16.



Catch up on Emma Stone's meteoric rise to stardom. Page 19.

# Former U.S President Visits UL For Scholarship Event

Gerard Flynn  
Co-Editor

Former President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton visited the University of Limerick as a guest of honour last weekend to award the JP McManus All-Ireland scholarship to 125 students.

In his speech, Mr. Clinton spoke about the importance of scholarships, stating that in his lifetime he had received three, which enabled him to study at famed colleges such as Oxford and Yale.

It is believed that Mr. Clinton received a six figure sum for attending the awards, with the sum in question largely thought to be in the region of \$250,000 but Mr. McManus and his representatives have refused to comment on the accuracy of this figure yet.

The awards aim to offer scholarships to 125 third level students from all over Ireland who have completed their Leaving Certificate/A Level exams in 2012. They are estimated to be worth around €6,750/£5,500 per year for each year that the student continues their studies in their selected undergraduate course.

The scheme is overseen by a Trustee Board and is issued by the Department of Education and the Department for

Employment & Learning, with added support from Northern Ireland's Education Department.

The awards were established in 2008 by JP McManus, who donates €32 million of his own money to the scholarship scheme and it's estimated that over 1,300 students from across Ireland's 32 counties will benefit from the scheme's duration.

Previous guests of honour at the awards ceremony have included former President of Ireland Mary McAleese, current Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Charlie McCreevy and Irish choreographer Michael Flatley.

The event itself, which was strictly invite only and manned by secret service, was held on Saturday, November 17th and saw a select amount of 600 guests gather in the University Concert Hall to witness the former President's speech.

The event was a media blackout with the 600 guests being made up of strictly VIPs, the scholarship recipients as well as their families.

Notable VIP guests of the event included Finance Minister, Michael Noonan, rugby player Paul O'Connell and former Ireland rugby international Keith Wood, who himself is heavily involved in the University as a UL Arena board member.



Last weekend's visit was not President Clinton's first to Limerick however, as he had visited before in

September 1998 while in his second term as U.S President. On that particular occasion more than 40,000

people lined O'Connell street in the hope of witnessing the 42nd U.S President deliver an address.

# Talks to Hold New Referendum

Lorna Bogue  
Co-Editor

On the 15th of November the student levy referendum failed to pass as a 66% majority was not achieved. In the highest turnout in the SU's history, 4281 students voted on the motion, 'To extend and increase the Annual Student Levy to contribute to the development and maintenance of a New Student Centre, Arena Extension and the Redevelopment of Maguire Pitches?' According to the ULSU constitution in order to pass the Referendum required a two thirds majority to vote in favour of the referendum. Translating in this case to 2,854 Yes votes. The number of students who voted yes was 2,626, meaning that while the Majority of students voted Yes there was a shortfall

of 228 Yes votes and so the referendum did not pass. However there is now a suggestion from several sources that there is a move towards calling a second referendum, possibly in second semester. Paul Lee, the Clubs and Societies development officer alluded to such moves at last week's C&S council meeting.

Supporters of such a quick turnaround have cited the winding down of Chuck Feeney's philanthropic organisation, Atlantic Philanthropies as necessitating a re-running of the referendum in order to green light an application for funding for the student centre. Had the referendum passed it was envisioned that the proposal for the student centre would have gone before Atlantic Philanthropies before the organisation winds down in 2020.

Opponents of re-running the

referendum have pointed out that the rejection of the students centre came from a very high turnout of voters and should the decision that was made be disrespected, that high turnout would be greatly reduced in future referenda. Even a referendum in a different form would not be enough to prevent a backlash somewhat similar to that produced by the re-running of the Lisbon referendum.

The idea to re-run the referendum appears to have not yet taken a concrete form and is unlikely to do so until second semester.





# Limerick Graffiti Artist’s “No Banksy” Says Leddin

Fintan Walsh  
News Editor

A Limerick city Councillor has claimed graffiti artists in the city are “no Banksy” as concerns about illegal graffiti grow.

Independent councillor Kathleen Leddin made the statement after Labour councillor Joe Leddin said he wished to “name and shame” the graffiti vandals last week. Cllr Leddin said he would ask members of Garda Síochána for their names and will then want to name and shame them, but did not mention how.

This comes as more than 40 fines of €150 euro have been issued in Limerick this year in relation to illegal graffiti. The former Mayor said the damage done to Mary Immaculate College walls and residential and commercial property was “desecration and criminal damage”.

Fine Gael Councillor Cormac Hurley supported Cllr Leddin’s call. “It is disgraceful. There has been a spate of it in the last while. It has to be stopped in some way,” Hurley said.

Independent Councillor Kathleen Leddin said that the city’s graffiti has no “art value” and that the graffiti artists were defacing shops, walls and streets.

Limerick City Council funded the city’s first legal graffiti wall in Athlunkard Street, which was completed last week by All Out Design,



A sample of just some of the graffiti to be found in Limerick city that has Councillor Leddin so upset.

a graffiti organisation in Sarsfield Street. The Council said the project almost cost nothing, as equipment was stored and there was a lot of help from Limerick City Gallery of Art and Limerick School of Art and Design.

“It basically cost us nothing except man hours to help coordinate and arrange designation of the site with

LCGA and LSAD,” the Council’s Head of Environment Paul Foley explained.

Graffiti Artist Eoghan Barry who completed the Athlunkard Street project, disagreed with the Councillor’s proposal and said the reason why All Out Design was established was because of bad publicity of street art. “We were getting negative feedback, so

we gathered together, talked and held discussions,” Mr Barry said.

Committee Member of All Out Design Steve O’Donnell said that he doesn’t see a huge advantage in naming and shaming the illegal artists, and that the Gardaí are charging “absurd amounts” for reparations.

“You try telling people who own

houses that they have to go repaint their house, and you see what they think. They should be brought before the court. They must pay the price,” Cllr Leddin said in response to the criticism. Mr Leddin said he will be bringing the issue to the next City Council meeting.

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# Solo Trip Around Ireland by Kayak: Mike Jones UL Talk

Oisín Bates

On June 4th last, UL kayaker and KBS Masters Student Mike Jones set off from Cobh with the aim of circumnavigating the island of Ireland. Over the next 40 days and 1,000 miles, his expedition would push his physical and mental abilities to their limits. Thankfully, Mike had recovered by Wednesday of Week 11 and was in energetic form to present his expedition to a well-packed room in the Pavillion.

Over the course of just over an hour Mike gave the audience a near day by day account of his expedition. After meticulous planning and training, Mike travelled in a clockwise direction around the southern tip of Ireland and up the west coast. Travelling with full safety gear and living supplies, he aimed to paddle an average of 30 miles a day for a length of 35 days. Unfortunately, severe weather conditions and illness proved a considerable obstacle at times; setting the final date, the following 40 days would prove a gruelling test of mental and physical stamina; Mike would have to contend with both personal sickness and – at times – severe weather conditions. Though missing out on the current-record for solo kayak circumnavigation by five



Mike posing with his kayak before his trip to circumnavigate Ireland in June this year commenced.

days, completion of the expedition stands as a considerable feat in itself with only a select few having completed the task.

After the presentation Mike hosted a number of questions from the crowd; perhaps one of the most memorable

answers – when asked what thoughts would go through his head during the extended periods of isolation – ‘whether my next snack’s going to be a granola bar or a rice krispie square’. This wasn’t Mike’s first major expedition; in 2010 he was part of the

first six-man crew to row an ocean, rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic from Africa to the Caribbean.

\*Further information on Mike’s Irish circumnavigation and previous expeditions can be found at [mikejones.ie](http://mikejones.ie)



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# Limerick Students for Abortion Legislation Group Set Up

Stephanie Howard

On Thursday the 15th of November over 30 students attend a public meeting to set up a student group to campaign for the abortion legislation after the tragic death of Savita Halappannavar in Galway University Hospital. Seventeen weeks into her pregnancy Savita was found to be miscarrying. During enduring three days of extreme pain she was prevented from having an abortion because a foetal heartbeat was still found. Once the foetal heart beat stopped however, the foetus was removed. Mrs Halappanavar however, contracted septicaemia and died several days later. An inquiry has been set up to investigate this tragic death. Many have advocated that this situation would have been prevented if the government or previous government had implemented legislation regarding the X Case ruling which happened 20 years ago. The meeting of students was also attended by Mary Sweeny, who had organized a candle light vigils for Savita and her family the day before in Galway. Dr Eimear Spain also attended to give the students clarity on what legislation currently exists and background to the X case and the ABC Case. Dr Spain gave the background to the X Case where a fourteen year old girl was raped by a family friend. She

fell pregnant from the rape and went to England to have an abortion. Her parents informed the Guards about the abortion as they thought DNA evidence could be collected from the foetus. The Guards were obliged to tell the attorney general who sought an injunction to prevent X from having an abortion. The case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that abortion was allowed when the life of the mother was in danger. The Supreme court also recommended that the government put legislation in place for these particular circumstances. Since this ruling no government has put in place the legislation, leaving doctors to interpret what constitutes a danger to the life of the mother. In April this year United Left Alliance TD Claire Daly put forward a bill called Medical Treatment: Termination of Pregnancy in Case of Risk to Life of Pregnant Woman, which provided limited abortions. Abortions under her bill could only be performed when there was a real threat to the mother's life. The bill was rejected by the Dáil by 111 votes to 20. The aim of the bill was to clarify and enshrine the judgment made over 20 years ago and provide women the option to terminate pregnancy in certain circumstances. If this bill had been passed then perhaps there would not have been such a delay in acquiescing to her wishes to have a

medical abortion. Since this tragedy was revealed to the public many have held vigils and taken to the streets across the world, with protests happening outside the Irish Embassies in London and India. A protest attended by over 12,000 people was held in Dublin on the 17th of November. A protest was also held in Limerick. Limerick Students for Abortion Legislation was founded to campaign for the necessary legislation to be put in place by the government. It aims to represent students who attend any of the colleges in Limerick and feel that the government need to legislate for the X Case now. In the last week over 500 signatures have been obtained for a petition which will be presented to Limerick TD's demanding that the government legislate for the X Case. Students who wish to take action on this issue can sign the petition or email TDs and let them know their reaction to the current lack of legislation. The Irish National Women's Council has a campaign to do this where you can email all the TDs in your area. It only takes two minutes. Limerick Students for Abortion Legislation has a Facebook group if you would like to get more involved with the campaign on campus.



Savita Halappannavar, who's miscarriage and subsequent death a fortnight ago has caused the X Case legislation to be put under review.

# Savita Halappannavar: What Happens Next?

Lisa Blake

What is a story without balance. Balance has never been so crucial to a story, as it is to the one of Savita Halappannavar. Balance between Praveen Halappannavar's voice and the voice of the doctors at Galway University Hospital, balance between the significance of the foetus' heartbeat and the significance of Savita's heartbeat, balance between Savita's right to life and her baby's, balance between what's wrong and what's right. Savita Halappannavar's death has transformed the Irish abortion debate. Men and women have turned out in their thousands to show their shock and outrage at the circumstances of her death. Protests have been held not only nationwide, but at Irish embassies abroad too. Ireland's name internationally has been dragged through the dirt, with headlines such as "Ireland's medieval laws murdered an innocent woman." No longer is our céad míle fáilte country regarded as one of "the safest places in the world to have a baby." While the circumstances surrounding Savita Halappannavar's death remain unclear, her husband's heartbreaking account of her suffering and the treatment she received raise serious questions about the medical management of her case.

As a Hindu living in Ireland, Praveen has been giving interview after interview over the past few weeks telling his story of how he lost his wife to septicaemia and E-Coli. He remained dignified and calm on a Prime Time special as he told Miriam O'Callaghan how a doctor informed him that as the foetal heartbeat was still present, the pregnancy could not be terminated. The doctor in question allegedly told the couple that "this is a Catholic country" referring to the legal position in relation to abortion. Savita herself allegedly made repeated requests for a termination, given her worsening health and the fact that she was miscarrying, which became apparent soon after she arrived at the hospital. Her requests were repeatedly denied. She developed the shakes and shivering, and began to vomit. She was given antibiotics but later died of septicaemia. Galway University Hospital have declined to publicly comment on the case so far. Ireland's Medical Council guidelines state that "abortion is illegal in Ireland except where there is a real and substantial risk to the life (as distinct from the health) of the mother". The guidance also informs doctors that they "should undertake a full assessment of any such risk in light of the clinical research on this issue". It goes on to state that "rare complications can arise where therapeutic intervention

(including termination of a pregnancy) is required at a stage when, due to extreme immaturity of the baby, there may be little or no hope of the baby surviving. "In these exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to intervene to terminate the pregnancy to protect the life of the mother, while making every effort to preserve the life of the baby." The last part is particularly relevant to the case at hand. It is yet to be determined whether the delay in ending an ultimately unviable pregnancy contributed to Savita's death. Only the results of a medical enquiry will provide an answer. May the pro-life and pro-choice campaigners continue to march up and down Kildare Street with hard-hitting one-liners emblazoned on banners, t-shirts and posters. These people have every reason to protest and long may they do so, as Mr. Halappannavar expressed his fear that if there hadn't been such public pressure that there may have been no inquiry happening at all. What's most crucial though is Praveen's concern that the best interests of his wife were ignored, the threat to his wife's life was not discovered in time, and her doctors believed they were bound by a legal position which in turn left them unclear as to what action should be taken. Amidst the confusion and tragedy



A young woman displaying a banner at one of the protests after Savita's death. Photo courtesy of Ciara Gibbons.

surrounding Savita's death, one thing is for sure. The HSE's desire to investigate itself on its own terms, in private, poses a very substantial risk of bias. Salaried members of the HSE carrying out an investigation concerning fellow members of the same organisation may very well be too close to home. Thankfully as Barrister Asim Sheikh pointed out on Prime Time, there is a coroner's inquest that is obliged to happen in public, which will be open to any questions being directed from any interested party through the coroner. Praveen Halappannavar has outlined his wishes in his quiet, solemn manner. All he asks for is that no other family endure what he did over the past horrific weeks. He has stated that this hasn't changed his view of Ireland or its' people, he simply says if the law is changed he knows Savita will rest in peace. Let's hope she will.



# Facebook Putting On A Brave Face

Enda Costello

The darling of the social media age, a phenomenal success, over 1 billion active users and is the most visited website in the world on a daily basis. It has been linked with having a major impact on the media, politics, business and our society. Facebook has changed the world.

How could such a valuable, successful and influential entity be under enormous pressure and face major criticisms? The company had one of the biggest market debuts in the history of the stock exchange on May 14th with over €80 million shares being traded on the Nasdaq within the 1st minute of going public with the stock jumping immediately by 11%. Racing to over €100 million within the 1st four minutes compared to Google's €2 million in the same time period. But after a hectic day of trading where people made and lost millions the share price only marginally grew over its opening day on the market.

But after the initial clamor of its shares when part of the company went public on the stock exchange thinks quickly toke a turn for the worse. As shareholders and potential investors started to calm down and examine facebook's revenue, profit and growth opportunities, they got worried and as a consequence its share price fell accordingly. Coupled with users concerns over security of their private

messages, facebook had some difficult questions to answer and endured a rough time in the media. Many began to question its main founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg. They hailed him as an "IT genius" but questioned his ability to manage a huge global cooperation and meet the demand of all its stakeholders.

The Internet soap opera continued after it was revealed that 83 million or 8.7% of accounts were fake. Many analysts and investors are left wondering how facebook can turn a billion users into a billion consumers willing to purchase products and services. This issue will continue to fall under greater scrutiny as questions remain about the amount of actual users facebook can boast. Many speculate that facebook is in a "no win expectations game for the foreseeable future". No one denies that facebook has enormous potential, but people are worried that the powers that be at its helm lack the vision to see the opportunities or the ability to make the most of them when they do.

On Wednesday 31st October, 234 million shares held by employees were able for the first time to sell restricted shares. The price fell again. The reason was because a lock-up period had expired allowing the employees to finally make some money and sell their shares. Lock-ups are common after initial public stock offerings and are designed to prevent stock experiencing the kind of volatility that might occur if

too many shareholders decide to sell at once. The last lock-up expiration came on November 14th, when a further 777 million shares and stock options became eligible to be sold. Investors fear that these addition shares could flood the market and squeeze the price further. Currently facebook shares are worth just over \$21, well down from its IPO price of \$38.

Ultimately what is sad about the facebook story is people buy stock in public companies as investments. There's nothing wrong with this, but it creates pressure on these companies to care more about investors than they do about customers. When facebook went public last May, Mark Zuckerberg insisted the goal of Facebook Inc. was unchanged and they will continue to strive for a more connected world. That objective will be continually diluted over the coming weeks and months as angry investors demand revenue and profit increases to gain a return on their investment. By going public, facebook has created a situation where it will be forced to consider advertisers over individuals and make use of all the data it has on you and me.

Many have suggested facebook should have acted smarter by ensuring the company's interests (i.e. its owners/investors) were closer aligned with the interests of its customers. That means, for example serving your customer base instead of deluging it with ever more intrusive ads. Whether that was



ever possible in another argument.

But according to Bruce Kasanoff "facebook should have remained a world-changing private company, and instead of going public should have tried to become one of the most customer-centric firms on the planet. Instead, it was stupid enough to go public, and that opens up an exciting race to dislodge facebook from its dominance in social media. My guess is that within a year, it will be fairly easy to recognize the firm that will out-facebook Facebook."

It seems almost impossible to envisage Kasanoff's prediction, at least in the next 5 years. But in the current unpredictable and fickle economic markets who knows what the future might bring for facebook and the millions of us who use social media.

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# Referendum Results Signal Drug Legalisation On The March

James Bradshaw  
Co-Editor

On the day that Barack Obama was re-elected as President, two hugely significant referendums took place in the states of Colorado and Washington. For the first time in American history, voters approved the complete legalisation of marijuana, a development which could mark the beginning of the end of the ‘War on Drugs’.

The phrase dates back to 1971, when President Nixon declared that drug use was “public enemy number one” and had to be fought aggressively. The counter-cultural movement, rising crime rates and the large-scale use of narcotics by American servicemen in Vietnam all led to public support for Nixon’s initiative, which has been continued by each of his successors in the Oval Office.

This brought with it major changes in American society-all of them disastrous. The number of Americans in prison has risen dramatically since 1971, with well over two million Americans now behind bars. Of that number, about 500,000 have been convicted of drug crimes. America, with 5% of the world’s population, operates a justice system that contains 25% of the world’s prison population. The operation of prisons, the funding of law-enforcement agencies and all other aspects of the drug war are estimated to have cost the American taxpayer

at least \$1 trillion over the last four decades. In spite of all this, recreational drug use remains common in America, as in most Western countries.

And yet it is not in America where the most damaging effects of this policy are felt. A large percentage of the drugs consumed in the United States are imported from Latin America. This process has generated enormous profits for drug lords, while also fostering greater corruption among public officials and fuelling violent conflicts that have killed tens of thousands of people.

Before his death in 1993, Colombian drug baron Pablo Escobar had achieved international notoriety as one of the world’s wealthiest and most deadly criminals. His Medellin cartel smuggled enormous quantities of cocaine into America and their violent feuding with the other criminal and terrorist organisations had made Colombia the most dangerous country in the world.

The shocking violence there, in addition to the threat posed by Communist revolutionaries, also funded by drug profits-led to the Clinton Administration instituting ‘Plan Colombia’. \$7 billion of military and civilian aid from the US has helped to curb the growing of coca and stem the violence, yet it has become clear that production of cocaine has simply shifted to Bolivia and Peru. Were similar efforts made there, remote areas of Ecuador or Venezuela could just as

easily be used. After all, where there is a profitable market for a product, a way to produce it will be found.

It is not just the production areas that experience the social destruction brought about by the illegal drug trade. After major crackdowns on the shipping routes into the United States, many dealers began to use Mexico as a land route into the United States. Thus began the growth of narco-terrorism there. Since President Calderon’s deployed of the military to fight the cartels in 2006, an estimated 55,000 people have been killed, with violence ranging from the mundane (regular assassinations of police officers, witnesses and prosecutors) to the psychotic (mutilated and decapitated bodies dumped in public as a warning to rival gangs). Such terrorist atrocities were not a part of Mexican life until recently and there can be no doubt that it is being fuelled by the demand for illegal drugs in America.

But change now seems afoot, not just among the electorates of Colorado and Washington but among political leaders across Latin America. In September, the Guatemalen President Otto Pérez Molina joined President Santos of Colombia and President Nieto of Mexico in proposing drug legalisation before the UN General Assembly, a move that angered Washington. In the past, Latin American leaders looked to America for guidance; now many of them are leading a drive that the United States may soon start to follow.



Pablo Escobar, leader of the Medellín Cartel, who rose to prominence as a drug trafficker during the 1970’s.

Drug prohibition has done an enormous amount of harm in promoting lawlessness and causing violent criminality, just as alcohol prohibition did in the 1920s. Practical arguments aside though, the idea that the state can and should regulate what consenting adults choose to put into their bodies represents a dangerously paternalistic strain of thinking. America, as the land of the free, should embrace the idea of allowing people to make their own decisions about

drug use within a basic regulatory framework.

Drugs were once legal in the United States, up until the passage of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act in 1914. This prohibitionist law paved the way for the mistakes of the last century. With two years to go before its centenary, it is surely time to ensure that the next 100 years do not see the same failures. The voters of Colorado and Washington certainly seem to think so.

# Enough With the Elephant’s View

Anthony Kennelly

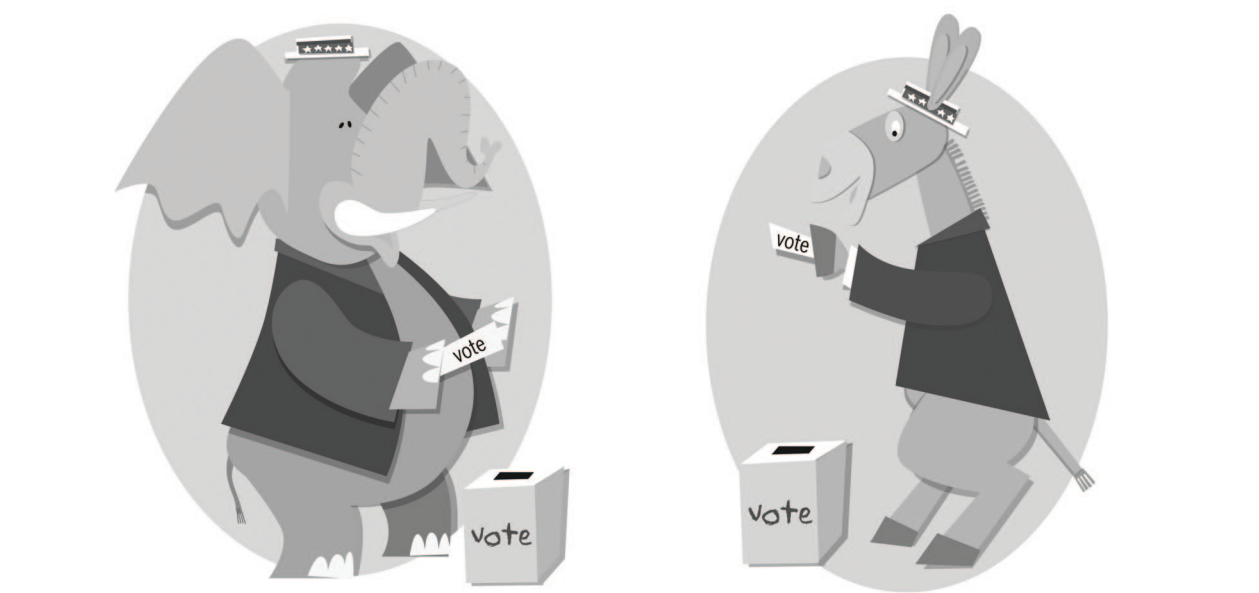
Reading Michael Shea’s article on the US election felt quite surreal. For someone I know to be intelligent and ordinarily quite reasonable in his ideas (even if I don’t agree with them), some of the conclusions he drew from the election seemed ill-informed or else feigned for the purpose of writing a more entertaining article. In this response, I hope to respond to some of the assertions made which I felt either misrepresented what happened in the election, or else were simply untrue.

The first point I want to make concerns the unreliable nature of Michael’s statistics. Michael claimed that a lower proportion of the vote and a lower voter turnout undermines Obama’s claim to a mandate. He claims that Obama received a lower number of votes in 2012 did than John McCain did in 2008; despite the fact that Obama received 61,170,405 votes in 2012, compared to McCain’s 59,948,323. When I asked Michael for the source of his figures, he did not respond. I would suggest this undermines the reliability of a number of his arguments about Republican turnout, as it suggests Michael’s figures are not accurate.

Michael also tries to claim that the Romney campaign did not attack Obama’s past or his character, in contrast to the Obama campaign’s labelling of Romney as a ‘vulture capitalist’. That would be a valid point except that John Sununu, former Chief

of Staff under George H.W. Bush, and with close ties to the Romney campaign, tried to drag up the ‘birther’ rumours again, only to backtrack when he realised how ridiculous it made the campaign look. This is not to mention the fact that Romney joked at a rally in New Hampshire that ‘no one ever asked to see my Birth Cert’. There is also the fact that the Romney campaign couldn’t respond more effusively to the Obama campaign’s Bain attack adds largely because they were factually accurate, not to mention that they were intended to give an example of Romney’s much touted business experience, in which he had supposedly created employment. The point of the adds was to show that Romney’s experience, which he claimed would enable to him to reduce unemployment, was actually in engaging in the kind of business practices which have magnified job losses in the US economy in recent decades

It is also quite amusing that he suggested Republicans shouldn’t be ‘afraid to get dirty’, considering that Republicans pioneered modern negative campaigning; highlights include attacking Hillary Clinton in the 1992 election for not being a stay at home mother, to attacking both Clintons over their private financial affairs, to Swift Boat Veterans for Truth in the 2004 campaign, to Jeremiah Wright and Bill Ayers in 2008. For Republicans to suggest they are hard done by in the add wars indicates the



ironic victim complex they suffer. In reality, they are merely getting a taste of what happens when someone beats them at their own game.

He then complains that Romney and his supporters were mischaracterised as ‘rich, white misogynists’. Yet he completely ignored Romney’s comments in the 47 % video, in which he not only made shocking comments about the poor but also remarked that ‘if I were Hispanic I would find it much easier to win’. In addition, he also ignored the fact that while Romney condemned the ‘legitimate rape’ comment by Todd Akin, Paul Ryan co-sponsored a bill in Congress with Aiken that would have restricted abortion rights. He also ignored the fact that Romney refused

to revoke his endorsement of Richard Mourdock. And as a matter of fact, the issue over contraception was not only whether the government should pay for contraception but also whether employers would be able to decide if it would be included in their employees’ policies.

He also claims that outlawing abortion was not a campaign issue, even though Romney was committed to nominating Supreme Court Justices who would provide a majority vote to overturn Roe v Wade, an entirely plausible scenario in the near future if he had won, as there are currently three US Supreme Court Judges in their late 70s.

But what I found truly astounding about Michael’s article was the conclusion he drew. Not only did he

make an argument for Republicans trying to rely more than ever on their base, an argument which doesn’t seem credible considering the query over his figures, but he also undermined this argument in the penultimate paragraph by saying that Republicans should be willing to compromise with candidates missing bona-fide conservative credentials simply to beat Democrats – the justification being that government only works when people compromise. Michael should consider whether conservative Republicans should apply that idea to dealing with the rest of the American electorate, and to use his terminology, moderating their position, to become ‘more like Democrats’.



# AN FOCAL

## Gerard Flynn

Seeing as my co-op is up at the end of next month, so is my tenure as editor of An Focal. So with this last editorial I'd like to properly welcome Journalism Masters student James Bradshaw to the fray as my successor for next semester.

There was much talk and debate over whether I'd continue on as co-editor with Lorna next year but ultimately I felt that editing a paper from my Erasmus destination of Stockholm would be nothing but a hindrance for all involved and I have full faith in James and his capabilities.

With the influx of new co-op students into the SU, we'll more than likely see a new An Focal and this should continue for as long as there remains this constant change to editorial teams. Personally I don't think this is a bad thing and if anything it gives more people the opportunity to be involved in the editorial process.

I only hope that the paper constantly changes and adapts to the changes in personnel and maybe gets into a habit of taking more risks both in the design and layout as well as the way it covers everything that happens on and off campus.

Overall I reiterate Lorna's sentiments that that the paper is in good shape for the future especially

if we keep getting new contributors who have helped us out in recent weeks with a glut of articles. When I first stumbled into this position I knew it was going to be hard to combat the stigma that An Focal seems to have around it at the moment. I knew it was going to be a long process and we aren't even halfway where I want the paper to be at if I'm being brutally honest but this is a building process.

We're building with each issue, expanding sections and diversifying pages thematically as well as bulking up the number of articles per page (something that always annoyed me when I looked back on Finn's reign in charge and saw that certain sections were bursting at the seams with content). Having come from a position where people didn't want to contribute or get involved at all, I think that seeing the paper now is cause for great pride in the work that everyone has done so far.

So I'm signing off on my reign as editor at last. All I can hope for is that when people look back on my time in charge, they'll be able to say that the paper I produced wasn't complete crap.

## Lorna Bogue

Gerard Flynn: co-op student, co-editor, co-friend. Ok, cheesy

but I feel that he will appreciate it. Granted, when I read this out to him he physically cringed, but I still think he will appreciate it. It is thanks to the work of Ger that we've managed to make it to the end of what has been an extremely turbulent semester in the life of An Focal. Not only have we managed to survive, but An Focal is in pretty good shape for the next semester. I'll do my best to ensure that we continue to improve next semester as co-Editor by publishing the information that students need and providing a platform for student opinion.

One example of why it is important to have this platform is the Savita Halappanavar case, which unfolded before a shocked and angry nation over two weeks ago. A tragedy which shamed us not only domestically but also on the world stage. Our website anfocal.ie broke the story on campus and this is an example of what a news source can do. Once the student body was informed the need to take action followed. Facebook groups and online activism has exploded on this issue. Thomond Student Times recently published an article of student opinion, and it was interesting to read different perspectives and interpretations of what had happened. What was apparent throughout the article though was that online activism can only go so far. Anger can only propel

a movement so far, particularly the impotent anger of a keyboard warrior confined to his own bedroom. It is by going out and interacting with other people that change is made. We can all write about the way we think the world should be in the vast hyperreality that is the internet, but at the end of the day, what does that achieve? Except for the validation from the anonymous reader for the self-indulgent writer not much. The way to instigate change is not by bickering on the internet, which usually disintegrates into a cynical and ostentatious battle to have the most impressive soundbite or to win the argument. Generally this only results in the sacrifice of the real issue on the fire of the writer's own self-interest. Representation isn't just about having the most popular opinion; it's about finding out what the consensus opinion is and then doing something about it. Representation is saying 'Here is how I think the world should be and here is the list of actions that I am going to take in order to achieve that reality'. I would recommend reading and contributing to this interesting discussion that is currently taking place on TST, in An Focal and on campus in general.

There is now an action group on campus that is campaigning on this issue. Student activism is alive and well in UL. There is

currently a petition with over 500 signatures that is growing day by day and will be presented to local TD's so they know that we won't forget, and that we won't stand idly by and watch this happen to any woman, ever again on the island of Ireland. There is also a petition to mandate the Students' Union to take a position on this issue, which will be presented today at class reps council. By going out and talking to real people face to face change can happen. So there you have it, Ger had his call to arms two editions ago, Here's mine: Go out and talk to someone about what is happening, and don't just talk at them, listen to what they have to say. Give their ideas the due consideration that you would like your own to have. You are allowed to disagree, of course, when an argument contains at its very heart a logical flaw and it is hard to allow that argument to perpetuate itself, but staged outrage that is for the sole purpose of benefitting the identity that you have constructed for yourself trivialises the issue. The important thing is the issue that affects real people, and in the case of Savita Halappanavar, an issue that disproportionately affects women. Your inflated ego is, funnily enough, not quite as important. Go and put yourself on the line and actually do something about it.

The Irish Aid Father Michael Kelly World AIDS Day Event 2012

# Education, sports and music - social vaccines against AIDS

Hosted by Irish Aid in collaboration with the Irish Forum for Global Health and University of Limerick

To commemorate World AIDS Day 2012, we are delighted to invite you to attend the **Irish Aid Father Michael Kelly World AIDS Day Event** which will take place on:

**28 November 2012**  
in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance Building (Theatre 2), University of Limerick at 5 – 7pm.

*Followed by Refreshments*

This year the theme of the Lecture will be **“Education, sports and music – social vaccines against AIDS”** and we will have short presentations from a number of speakers giving different perspectives and experiences.

- **Professor Sarah Moore**, Associate Vice President Academic, University of Limerick
- **Joe Costello, TD**, Minister of State for Trade and Development
- **Father Michael Kelly**, HIV and Education
- **Ann Mason**, Red Ribbon Project, HIV/AIDS in Limerick
- Entertainment by **Irish World Academy of Music and Dance**
- **Marcus Horan**, Munster Rugby Player, Sport and Health

Panel discussion chaired by Professor Tom Lodge, University of Limerick

**rsvp to: [info@globalhealth.ie](mailto:info@globalhealth.ie)**



# Dear Angie...

Dear Angie,  
I've just recently started going out with a lovely boy, you know nothing serious, just a few cups of tea every now and then. The other day we had a bit of a scare when he touched me on the knee, but my Doctor assured me that I wasn't pregnant. Apart from the odd little bump in the road things are good...except for one problem. A trusted advisor has told me that he has been seen flirting with other girls. I'm starting to read into everything he does. The other day he was talking to my friend and he asked her how she was, but in a kind of leading way you know, as in, 'how are you'. My friend of course denied that anything was going on, but I know her well enough to know that she's a notorious home-wrecker. While I still trust her, I didn't talk to him for a week just to be on the safe side. Am I over reacting?  
Please help!  
C.

Dear C,  
First of all if your friend says that she didn't do anything then I would trust her. I think you took the right course of action by punishing your boyfriend for indiscretion instead of her. There is a tendency within society in general to place the blame and burden of inappropriate behaviour onto the female in any situation. Particularly in affairs of the heart. This burden is something that we all as women have to fight every single day. Even if we are not aware that we are even fighting at

all. The only way I can explain this to you is with the theory of Oppositional Dichotomous Difference. This is the idea that when society is faced with two things that could objectively be said to be opposite but equal, those two things will never be viewed by society as equal because of bias ingrained in society throughout its long and oppressive history. The best way to explain this concept is with an example. Let's take the example of emotion versus reason. The two things are said to be opposite to each other, and they should also be equal. Objectively emotion is just as powerful a tool and incentive as reason is. However society places a greater value on reason. Why is this the case? The explanation can be found in history. Emotion and reason were examined and given meaning by philosophers. But who were these philosophers? I can't remember many names from my compulsory Marxism-Leninism course, but I can give a pertinent answer; men! They were mostly men. They gendered the two qualities of reason and emotion. Reason was something that men had, emotion was something that governed the actions of women. Necessarily that meant that they placed a higher value on reason as a male quality and used the degradation of emotion to oppress not only women but other groups. Emotional women needed reasonable men to govern them in the home, the native populations of



colonised countries (such as Ireland) were irrational savages who were being ruled by reasonable colonists for their own good. But I digress, Even world leaders such as myself have faced problems due to societal attitudes. Of course I generally pretend that problems don't exist when they arise. I wasn't really aware that there was a problem until much later in life because I hadn't been exposed to it in an obvious way growing up. In East Germany the working mother was a common occurrence, When I went

to the Central Institute for Physical Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin-Adlershof to study physics I was in a world that was dominated by men and historically always had been. I didn't really realise at the time how I was affected by this, but looking back those societal attitudes were there. Then I moved into politics, and naturally societal attitudes became much more apparent...  
Where was I? Oh yes, maybe ask your boyfriend if he is cheating on you, if he says no, then he probably is. Although

it's probably not your friend, maybe it's someone else, or two or three, who knows. Your reliable source is probably reliable, so you should definitely listen to them, they are more likely to have your best interests at heart. And no, you will not catch pregnancy if he touches your knee. That's not scientifically possible.  
Alles Liebe,  
Angie xoxo

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AN

FOCAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

The Editor, UL Students’ Union, Castletroy, Limerick. T: 0860435304 E: sucommunications@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.

Dear Editor,

The result of the November 15th referendum was hard to swallow for Yes voters. At over 61% of student voters there was significant agreement that the projects were seen as value for the student levy. Many said afterwards that “the people have spoken” and they did – in favour of the proposal.

Since then, many views have been expressed as to why the Yes campaign was not enough to get the necessary two-thirds majority as required by the ULSU constitution. A significant chunk of those views are coming from No voters and are currently being considered by the Student Union. In my own opinion there was quite a bit of misinformation out there – maybe that’s a bit harsh, maybe the correct word to use is misinterpretation.

There are questions to be asked: Who is responsible for the misinterpretation? What misinterpretations exist? What’s next?

There is no doubt in my mind that misinterpretation exists due to the SU failing to address on a wide enough basis, certain points which came up during the campaign week. Clearer detail (particularly in relation to the Student Centre) could have been put forward that would have fostered better understanding of the proposal. In addition, many have claimed a lack of information coming out about the proposal. I think the SU would acknowledge their part in this. However, given that there were regular Facebook updates, An Focal articles, Thomond Student Times articles and information nights where people could ask questions, have concerns addressed and be informed then the student body could accept some responsibility in their own understanding of the referendum also.

I in no way mean to insult the electorate with that sentence. I think it would be more insulting and indeed, condescending to the student body to spoon-feed you with information when it was so readily available.

So what misinterpretations were out there? Well, a lot! First, the Student Centre plans as presented should never have been put out to the student body without making clear that the drawings were essentially concept and not final designs. People saw the word “Cinema” and reacted with “we’ve a perfectly good cinema just 10 minutes away” and they were right too. This space should have been highlighted as multiple use space for use by any student who wished to use it for an appropriate purpose – debating, comedy, drama, music, gaming on a big screen, showings of any film by any student group whether a member of a club or society or not.

“What is the need for a nightclub?” was another misinterpretation. What nightclub? It was labelled as a “venue” and was again a multiple use space. It would be obvious to anyone who attended information meetings that the draughtsman who drew up the concept plans stuck in some lights and dancers. There would have been masses of uses

for this space.

There were genuine reasons to vote No and mostly they came down to money. But, there were, again, some misinterpretations going on there too, most notably that the intended €36m would be for students to pay. Not so. The referendum was to authorise ULSU to allow the Arena to seek half of the funding for the project. So the €36m being the total anticipated cost means that students would fund €18m and the Arena would secure funding for the other half. The availability of this funding was one of the reasons for putting all three buildings together. One known source (and historically a very generous source to UL) is winding down its philanthropic work. The timeline is under pressure and seeing this as an opportunity to provide something for all students, the referendum grouped these visions together. In the event of the Sports Department not being able to source that funding, the project simply wouldn’t progress.

Another point in relation to money was how the SU “made such a mess of running the shops”. It’s not unreasonable for students to perceive this as an issue but it’s not really a valid point. The intention of the retail units in the proposed student centre was to rent out the space with tenants taking responsibility for their own fit out and success with essentially no financial risk to the SU or, more relevantly, the student body. This concern was also expressed in the management of paying back the intended €18m mortgage. History can inform us that again, this is a very limited risk. In any previous referendum where funds were generated through the levy, the mortgages have been paid off ahead of schedule. So it was never a case of extending the levy for 20 years – it was always up to 20 years.

“I’ll never see it built.” This was true for some of the UL student body but not for all. It was true for pretty much everyone who voted in the 2003 referendum that facilitated the boathouse but the timelines for this proposal were different. Maguire’s timeline was 1 year, the Arena extension about 18 months and the Student Centre planned was to be completed before final year for next year’s first years.

There are other misinterpretations and it’s likely that these exist on both sides of the debate. I feel it would be unsympathetic to the reader to express an opinion on all of them at this point. So, what’s next?

It can’t be ignored that more than 3 out of 5 voters were in favour of this proposal. At this point I think it’s almost predictable what I’m thinking, or maybe not. I think that another referendum should happen. Now, I’m not talking of just keeping on plugging at the same projects until the result comes that 61% of students have already said they would like. I’m talking about getting feedback from both sides on what is important to them, getting more comprehensive details out there and reacting to students’ needs and wishes. That feedback can at

any time be given to the SU – it’s there to take your views on board, not enough people engage with that open door in my opinion.

But the feedback needs to provide something which has an expectation of having a minimum of two-thirds of the electorate agreeing. And there is a massive amount of scope there. Here are some (of my own) suggestions on what could be considered:

A levy which increases incrementally to a maximum amount over the first 3 years

A look at the plans for the student centre; there is an apparent waste of footprint space in having a triple high roof (two balcony floors) above a venue

Consider the need of the planned space, could the space be better utilised & do students know what is there for them? Could reducing its size (and thus its cost) and planning for extension possibilities be an option?

A comprehensive engagement process around the student centre design to make the best use of the available space

Written commitment from the Sports Department/Arena Board of Management on access to facilities being built

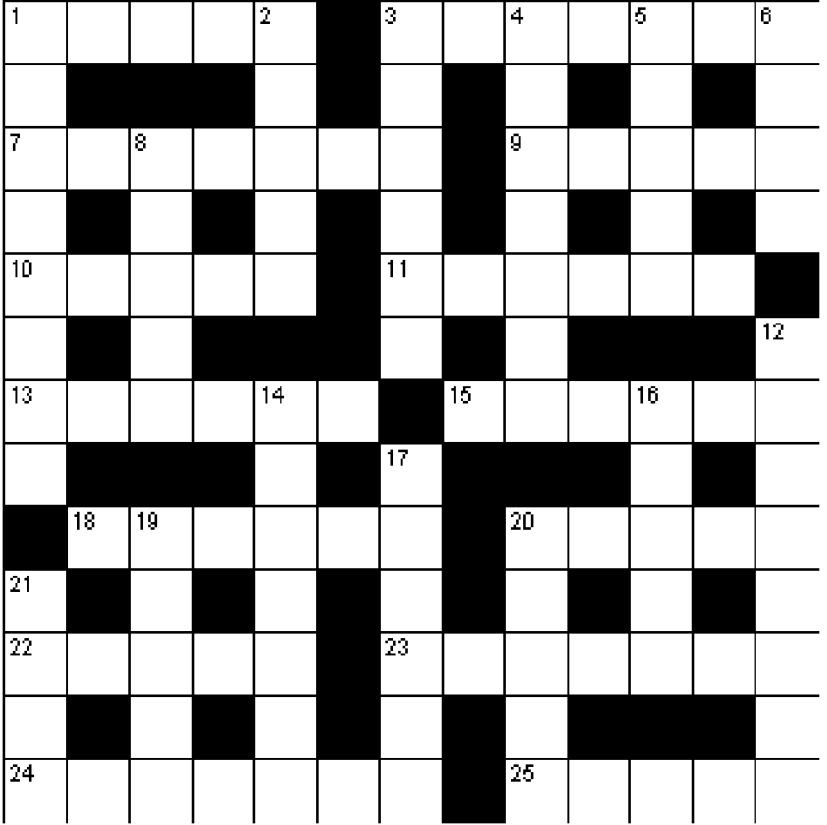
A reduction of gym membership costs as could be facilitated easily given that the Arena operates on a surplus

Written commitment from the Sports Department/Arena Board of Management on lead times and transparency about addressing issues that already exist (Hockey, Ultimate Frisbee & Tennis club in particular are suffering)

At this point, I would like to avoid but can’t ignore one other possibility. That possibility is to have a referendum to change the two-thirds requirement. To me, this would be the biggest mistake ever. The majority said “Yes” this time but making it over the two-thirds really nails home a vote for which true ownership and student identity can exist within the vote. To put this into perspective, take a look at details on other colleges with respect to their requirements. One in particular has a constitution which sets quorum at 10% for such a project (ULSU is set at 15%). The same college operates on a simple majority so 1 vote can carry or defeat a motion. In fact, this college had a referendum for €50m and only 1,997 votes were deemed valid. It passed with 60.3% of the vote. ULSU’s system encourages engagement, punishes complacency and is considerably more representative, meaning that the SU must commit to actually listening to the needs of its students.

There is no doubt the referendum on the 15th, despite not being passed, was a great success. Beating previous voting records says something about the depth of feeling around the projects and hopefully more feedback will come to the SU that could bring a more cooperative view on the vision. The last thing anyone wants is another referendum offering the same thing. I’m sure the post mortem began on the morning of the 16th Nov.

Yours sincerely  
Tony Canning



CLUES

<http://www.puzzlechoice.com/pc2/Ukp022x.html>

Across:

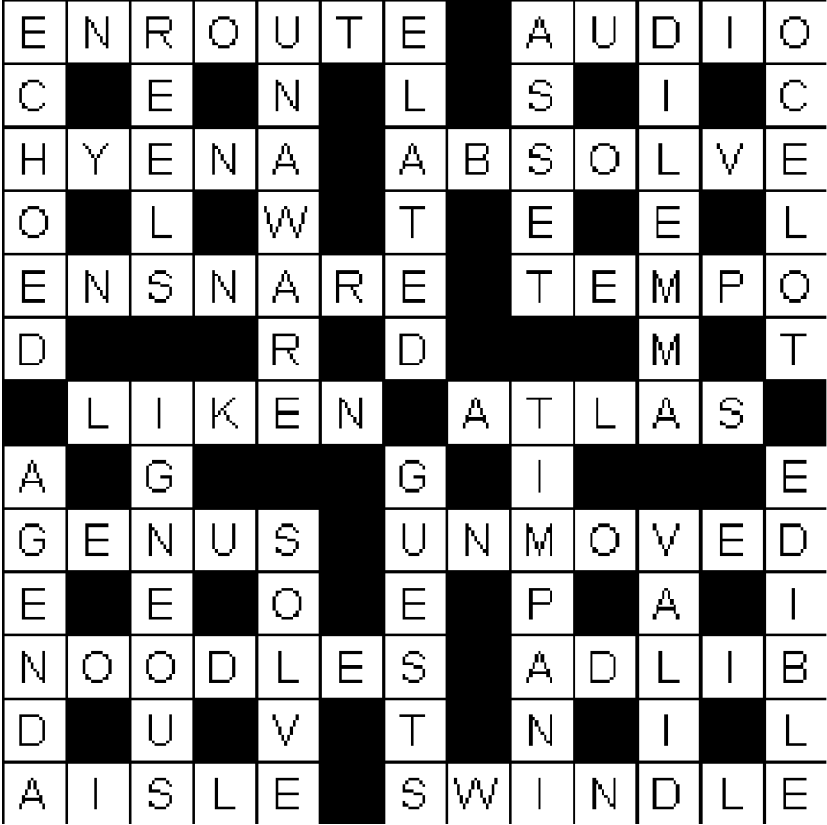
- 1. Extremely cold (5)
- 4. Boring, old hat (5)
- 8. It can be dangerous (7)
- 9. Unimportant actor (5)
- 10. The bride walks down it (5)
- 11. Unlawful (7)
- 12. Natural abilities or qualities (6)
- 14. Conundrum (6)
- 18. Malleable (7)
- 20. Irritated (5)
- 22. Medieval weapon (5)
- 23. Acute (7)
- 24. Stringed orchestral instrument (5)

25. Overheads (5)

Down:

- 1. A gentleman should be so (7)
- 2. Takes charge (5)
- 3. Distinguish (7)
- 4. Graphite implement (6)
- 5. Royal Dutch (5)
- 6. Lured (7)
- 7. Intended (5)
- 13. Curt (7)
- 15. Ludicrous (7)
- 16. Interminable (7)
- 17. Sheep known for its high quality fleece (6)
- 18. Fourth Greek letter (5)
- 19. Utopian (5)
- 21. The men who rule Spain and Norway (5)

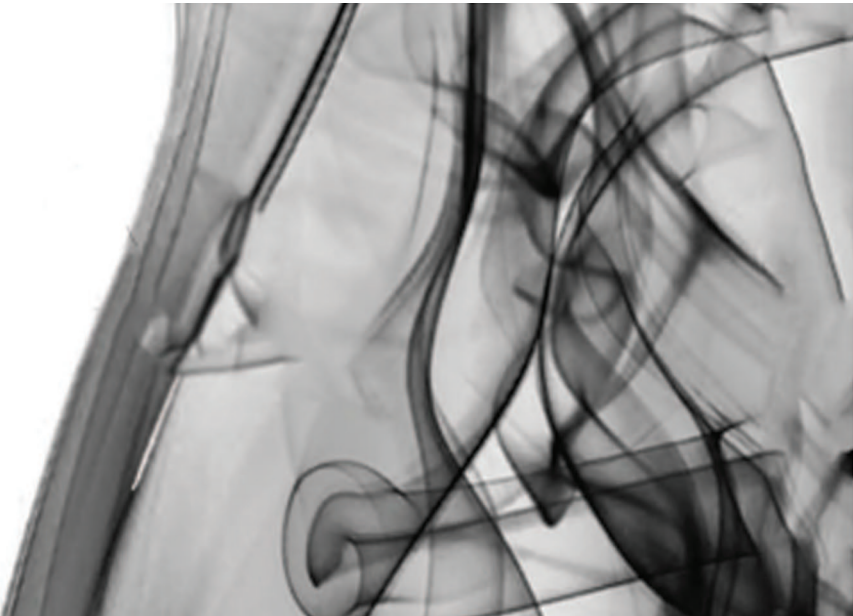
ISSUE #5 SOLUTIONS



Want to write for

AN  
FOCAL?

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Lorna.Bogue@ul.ie





# Hairy Girls Need Love Too

Emma Norris

A couple of months ago, I decided to grow my underarm hair as a sort of personal challenge. I blogged about my decision and I explained my feelings on the whole ‘Hairless Woman Troupe’. I received mostly positive feedback, the most inspiring of which told me that the natural woman has body hair and a woman in her natural state is the most feminine she can be. Ergo, a hairy female is a feminine female. Months later, I’m sporting hairy legs and underarms out of laziness more than rebellion and I’m totally okay with it.

Movember is all about hairy bros. Mo Sistas are encouraged to get involved and raise awareness on men’s health but Will Ferrell and other twitterphiles would have you believe that, as a woman, if you participate in No Shave November, you can look forward to ‘No Dick December’. (I get the feeling that the boys who frequent Confessions of a UL Student would probably support that sentiment.) This is 2012 and amid fake eyelashes, hair extensions and vajazzling, it’s apparently unacceptable for a woman to still have the hair puberty blessed her with. (Interestingly, in German, the word for pubes is Schamhaar – literally Shame Hair.)

I know that men and women are both conditioned to believe that body hair on a woman looks at least ugly, if not unnatural, and I accept

that. I disagree, but I accept the fact. However, it’s my body and I won’t shave my nether-regions for anyone’s approval. Stereotypically, underarm hair is a feminist thing, a lesbian thing, but it’s also a male thing and man, as a metaphor, is a pretty impressive thing. If I want to emulate that strength in a symbolic way, I’ll go right ahead and do that, thank you very much. I might not have a penis but I will make up for it with gratuitous amounts of body hair.

When did we decide to shave our pubic hair? It must have something to do with the shiny, aggressive and plastic-looking porn that’s been in vogue for the last fifteen or twenty years. Go to the “Vintage” category on most porn sites and you’ll find that it’s pretty much ‘Muff Central’. So, fashionistas, thinking of a throw-back to the 60s with bright prints and platform heels? Let your hair grow free to complete the look. In the same way that many boys are now plucking and tweezing and waxing, and the rest of the world looks on calmly, us forward thinking girls should be able to sport our shame hair with no shame whatsoever.



# The British Invasion Of Iconic American Institution

Marie Enright

The iconic Victoria’s Secret show hit the runway once again and introduced a host of new faces and some of fashion’s favourite Angels. The lingerie fashion show took place in New York’s Lexington Armory and featured models including the beautiful Miranda Kerr and Britain’s hottest export, Cara Delevingne. What is it about the Victoria’s Secret brand that makes it such an anticipated event every year? Whatever the answer, it certainly never ceases to amaze as it has once again completely outdone itself in both fashion and celebrity appearances.

One of the most notable things about this year’s show was the British invasion into the American institution that is Victoria’s Secret. This year the show featured appearances from British models Cara Delevingne and Jourdan Dunn who have been taking the fashion industry by storm recently. The two young British models made their Victoria’s Secret debut with Delevingne sporting a pinball themed miniskirt and crop-top and Dunn wearing a futuristic, monochrome leather jumpsuit. The girls made sure to leave an impression and look set to follow in the footsteps of veteran and fellow British Victoria’s Secret model, Lily Donaldson.

This year the models took to the catwalk alongside performances from some of the top names in the music industry including Bruno Mars and

Justin Bieber. Also performing was international superstar, Rihanna, who took to the runway in two different ensembles whilst performing new songs from her upcoming album ‘Unapologetic’. Rihanna certainly seemed to fit in with the models as she wore a black Vivienne Westwood corset top and a floor-length black skirt with a dramatic slit. For her second performance, she wore pink lingerie and could almost be mistaken for one of the Angels as she performed her new single ‘Phresh out the Runway’.

The highlight of the show was undoubtedly when Victoria’s Secret model, Alessandro Ambrosio, took to the runway wearing the 2.5 million dollar gem-studded ‘fantasy bra’. The famous piece of lingerie that is re-designed every year for the show featured 5,200 stones including amethysts, sapphires, rubies and pink and yellow diamonds. The piece was also teamed with a jewel-encrusted belt and the Brazilian model certainly stole the show.

However, one of the outfits featured in the show caused a certain amount of controversy and has since resulted in the brand issuing an apology. Victoria Secret has publicly apologised after putting model Karlie Kloss on the runway wearing a Native American inspired headdress that was immediately met with many complaints. The lingerie house said that the outfit would not be featured in the broadcast show in December and



Kloss also tweeted an apology assuring her followers that she did not mean to offend anyone.

Despite this unfortunate incident, the

show has definitely been a hit for the Victoria’s Secret brand and has garnered much praise for its spectacular display of fashion and performances. It will be

exciting to see how they can possibly outdo themselves next year!



# The Duvet Day Solution You've Always Wanted

Emily Maree  
Fashion Editor

Have you ever not wanted to get out of bed in the morning and wished you could bring your duvet with you to work? Well ladies, now you can because the Maison Martin Margiela (MMM) x H&M collection has literally created a duvet coat.

For one of the most fashion-forward brands in the world, this is nothing new but this crazy avant-garde design has captured the hearts of all fashion-lovers and although the coat that will set you back a cool €249 might not be the most attractive of cover-ups, it looks like we won't get any warmer in this cold, dark winter than the MMM 'down' coat.

Unfortunately for those of us who want to participate in a very expensive and extreme version of a duvet day, H&M have already sold out of the coat, which was released with the rest of the collection on November 15. Although it seems like a crazy and unnecessary feat of fashion engineering, think about how much less complaining we'd do about wanting a duvet day!

However, this certainly isn't the craziest style we've seen to come from designers, in fact its rather tame.

Fashion trends evolve and change as much as the average person changes their socks and now we're accustomed to seeing celebrities and designers wearing the maddest things we've ever seen. We have seen that style madness of Lady GaGa with her meat dresses and portable giant embryos. We've had Bjork and her immense creations on the red carpet and during her shows. Hell, even Rihanna can create a style shocker once in a while when she steps away from the hot pants and army boots combo she loves sporting.

The difference with this duvet coat is we have always been able to watch the fashion madness from afar. This is one of the first times that we've been given the chance to participate in a trend so peculiar and it is the thought that we could emulate our favourite celebrity and their kooky style that entices us.

How else can we be so warm and en vogue at the same time? I'm going off to queue for the next shipment of duvet coats in preparation for the harsh Irish weather. Who's with me?



# The Kardashian Epidemic

Emily Maree  
Fashion Editor

Everyone has heard of the Kardashian super-brand at this stage. Loud, opinionated women all controlled by one CPU control, Kris Jenner. The three sisters Kourtney, Kim and Khloe have created a storm of businesses and collaborations in their few years as high-powered businesswomen and have used themselves as prototypes for the average women in their number of stores and designs.

This year, UK brand Dorothy Perkins run by Sir Philip Green and the Arcadia Group bought into this epidemic that surrounds the Kardashians and collaborated on a collection that brought the Kardashians to their first British line. Between the three sisters, they have a range of body sizes, shapes and heights and their collections have a little something for all women. However, no matter how much their clothes suit the women of the UK, does their reputation?

Kim Kardashian has a notorious reputation for being an airhead with no discernible talents. While I disagree that she is in any way thick, a woman who can utilize her assets to create that amount of money and attention has to be intelligent, I don't think that she creates a positive image for young women nowadays. Kim, now arm candy of the eloquent Kanye West, is more famous for flashing her assets than the work she actually does, just take her rise to fame in the first place with the very famous sex tape. Is this

the kind of woman we want selling clothes to teenage girls?

Kourtney and Khloe are more suitable to be ambassadors to the young women of Britain and Ireland but are always pushed to the background by their attention-grabbing sister with a hand from another pushy woman, their mother Kris. Kourtney is the mother of two young children and Khloe is happily married, both work hard and have pride in the work they do with fashion. But unfortunately you can't get two without Kim and the Kardashians are, as always, a package deal!

Their new line, now available in Dorothy Perkins stores across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, is a mixture of styles from all three girls and whether you are looking for something figure-hugging, a party outfit or a stylish statement piece for work, the sisters have got you covered. There is a touch of Pat Butcher style with some leopard skin thrown in there, but hey, it wouldn't be a Kardashian collection without some animal print!

This could be just what the UK high-street store needed as the new collection drags it into the 21st century. Although Dorothy Perkins is still a popular store for wardrobe staples, Kourtney, Kim and Khloe may have given the Arcadia run business the kick up the behind it needed to move into modern time with some glitz, glamour and just a little bit of sexing-up!





# Cookery Corner: Sweet Parsnip & Curry Soup

Barbara Ross

Winter is most definitely here and it's time to say a sad farewell to summer (I know, I know, what summer?). There is nothing nicer than tucking into a nice hot steamy bowl of soup after trudging home in the pouring rain from a long day at college. This recipe is easy to make and can be made in large quantities and frozen for future use.

- Ingredients**
- 4 large parsnips, roughly chopped
  - 1 carrot, roughly chopped
  - 3 onions, roughly chopped
  - 4 cloves of garlic
  - 1 small potato, chopped
  - 2 teaspoons curry powder
  - 2 vegetable stock cubes
  - 1 tablespoon sugar
  - 1¾ pint water
  - 150ml cream
  - Salt and black pepper to season

**Method**

Place the carrot and parsnips in a roasting dish, toss in oil, salt and black

pepper and roast in the oven for 30 minutes at 170°C.

Chop the onions and garlic and sauté in a saucepan until softened, add the curry powder, potato and the roasted carrot and parsnips.

Add water, stock cubes and sugar and bring to the boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes until the potato has completely softened.

Add cream before again bringing to the boil and then liquidise in a blender.

Add salt and pepper to season. For a stronger flavour add some more curry powder.

This recipe is so easy and it is not only healthy but filling too. It is the perfect dish to have prepared in advance for those days that you just don't feel like cooking.

It's perfect coming up to exam time and will get you through more than one study week.

Mild curry powder is recommended for this recipe so it does not overpower the sweetness of the parsnips.

For a thinner or thicker soup, alter the



amount of water added but remember that the roasting process will dry up the vegetables. Adding a little water when reheating the soup will also alter the consistency of the soup.

# Empowerment Or Demeaning?

Barbara Ross

Rosanna Davison will be the first Miss World and more importantly the first Irish girl to grace the pages of American Playboy.

The opportunity arose to meet Playboy boss Hugh Hefner in LA after she stripped off for German Playboy last month. Her incredible figure could earn her six figures if rumours that she'll grace the cover of the US edition of the magazine next April prove true.

Despite being a household name in Ireland, Chris de Burgh's daughter is not well known in America. However, all that could change with the Playboy bunny stamp of approval.

Since first hitting top shelves in 1953, some of Hollywood's biggest stars have bared all for the magazine, including Marilyn Monroe, Catherine Deneuve and Ursula Andress. Of course this does bring up the question, do magazines like Playboy empower women or just degrade them?

There are many who think that these 'soft porn' magazines are demeaning to women and encourage men to see their female counterparts as sexual objects. It reinforces the stereotype that pretty women are less intelligent and can only get by on their looks and be successful by using their bodies.

Of course all the rumours about the grotto and the star-rating don't help matters. A rumour started about Hefner and the Playmate of the Month because of markings on the front covers of the magazine. From 1955 to 1979 the "P" in Playboy had stars printed in or around the letter. It was said that this was either a rating from Hefner according to how attractive she was, the number of times that he had slept with her, or how good she was in bed. The stars actually



indicated the domestic or international advertising region for that printing.

There are also those that think these magazines empower women. Women have a lot more control now and with more opportunities available to the fairer sex it is no longer such a taboo to pose for Playboy.

While these women are beautiful, they are also intelligent, career driven successful businesswomen. They know that they can make a life changing amount of money for one Playboy photo shoot and today we are in a time where

that kind of money is not growing on trees. These women know how to use their bodies to improve their lives and that is empowerment.

While men are in the mindset that it is done for them, women know that they have the power to give or take it away. Women are making the choice to pose for these pictures, that sexiness, confidence and intelligence are the definition of empowerment.

Sex sells and when it comes to sexy women, Playboy has it all.

# Energy Drinks: Hindrance or Help?

Sophie McDermott

In the run up to the end of the semester, there can seem like a never-ending list of assignments and projects to do and exams to study for. Let's face it, even with good intentions, chances are all these things on the to-do list have been left until the last minute and now, it's freak out time. There's 12 weeks' worth of cramming to be done and not enough hours in the day; the only quick fix solution? Overload on energy drinks, develop insomnia and hope for the best.

However, energy drinks to aid you in your all-nighter sessions can actually be detrimental to your health and here are the reasons why.

Energy drinks contain twice the amount of caffeine than in a normal cup of coffee. One can equals 500 mgs of caffeine which means that an energy drink binge can cause severe caffeine overdose. Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea, anxiety and muscle tension.

The sugar in energy drinks can also contribute to type two diabetes and obesity. Some energy drinks claim that their drinks are 'sugar free' but, these drinks contain sugar in a different context such as glucose or fructose or syrup. This high sugar content leads to a spike in your insulin level which causes the 'crash like' feeling.

Drinking excess amounts of energy drinks can adversely affect your sleeping pattern. While being able to stay up all night may seem like a golden opportunity to catch up on college work and study, the 'crash' from the energy

drinks will leave you exhausted and unable to concentrate on your work and may make you unable to sleep at all.

Energy shots are marketed as a convenient alternative to the larger versions of energy drinks. However, these energy shots contain the same amount of caffeine, guarana and ginseng as the normal sized energy drinks which increases the risk of caffeine overdose and negative effects on your heart rate and blood pressure.

Instead of picking up a can of Red Bull or Monster, try some of the alternatives available that will allow you to concentrate on your study and have much more productive study sessions and still manage to get your well-needed 7 hours of sleep a day.

Make sure to drink plenty of water so your body stays hydrated and alert. By replacing water with caffeine, we cause our bodies and our minds to become sluggish and spaced out. This is definitely the opposite of what you need in the run up to exams.

It's also important to include protein in your diet such as eggs, chicken and turkey. These kinds of foods will fend off fatigue, leaving you feeling bright and alert all day long.



# FIFA 13 or PES 2013?

Darren Mulryan

The rivalry of PES versus FIFA goes back to the glory days when Konami made an audacious move by releasing Goal Storm as it was known in Europe to compete against EA's FIFA franchise which had been tagging around since 1993. During this 16 year rivalry, both franchises have had their ups and downs. In recent times FIFA has taken the plaudits by creating a much smarter game engine to combat poor computer AI. This year brings two great titles to the ring, but only one will persevere. We all remember the iconic FIFA titles on the old Sega Mega drive and PlayStation 1. Those games were the pinnacle of a childhood lost to a block television set and a cartridge you had to blow into for the game to work properly. Gaming has taken a technological step forward since. I still blame my assignments not being completed on the many hours I devote to soccer gaming. We all have that friend who will insist that Fifa or PES is way better and will try to switch you over to the other side. Let An Focal make life easy, as we discuss this year's titles to discover who comes out on top of your table this Christmas. First off, the figures speak for themselves. Recent reports suggest FIFA 13 is selling more than PES at a ratio of 10:6. But Konami might ask themselves why are sales still slack after they released a widely acclaimed smart passing system which allows for

smoother and more realistic play on all areas of the pitch. Konami have made inroads in developing a well-crafted game to appeal to the connoisseur of football titles. People will appreciate the intelligent passing and shooting dynamics this year. First touch control can be a little glitchy and this is where the avalanche starts. The answer is that this generation's consumers want more than gameplay. They want official Kits for all 23 participating leagues. They also want every brand of boot that is worn on every star player in the world. Not to mention every football stadium from here to Brazil. FIFA provides you with a sense of atmosphere and relevance which doesn't really transpire in the new PES title. Don't get me wrong, I am a gameplay player and nothing else really matters. It's just that the FIFA licensing just makes the game more credible and authentic. We all remember playing as "Man Red" in recent PES titles. And this is something the Fifa franchise exploits. With the addition of Leo Messi on their front cover this year, and the impressive online features such as "Seasons" allowing a player to competitively rise up the ranks, EA are in the driving seat once again this Christmas. It seems no matter what Konami can do, EA do it better. They are worse than a bunch of children in a schoolyard. No doubt this battle will ensue for a few more years. All in all, Konami and EA have



**For players like Carlos Tevez, the methodical graphical accuracy of both games has always been a personal complaint.** provided us with two great exciting titles. But the real question is what do you want from your football game. Half a pint for the lady, or a pint of lager for the man? If you want great gameplay and all the official merchandising to back it up then you want FIFA. If not then pick up a game of Michael Owen's World League Soccer, available on all good Ebay stores for around 99 cent.

## To Hoof Or Not To Hoof

Andrew Cunneen

Did we just see Ireland pass the ball? Surely a saving grace for Giovanni Trapattoni's tenure at the helm of the Irish job. The response to the Greece game has been positive. I may be the only Irish person in the world who sees something very wrong with that. The personnel were slightly altered. This is good. For quite some time, I've said that we cannot reach our highest standards with the players Trap was selecting, but I do also believe that if he continues to opt for a 4-4-2 system while trying to play decent passing football, we will be picked off as easily as we were in Poland. Look at the very few sides who try to pass the ball around the park. Please excuse me for using the more obvious examples, because I dare not tread in sub-Saharan under-16 teams. Barcelona, Liverpool, Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund: what have they all got in common? There are two relevant facts. The first is that their players are of a far better quality than those that Ireland have at their disposal, and the second is that the age-old vision of 4-4-2 died for those clubs many moons ago. Why is it such a necessity to pass the ball around the place? It appears to be a modern trend among football clubs. What happened to playing to your strengths? Ireland's strength certainly does not lie with its footballers. It lies within the passionate displays of our veteran centre-half Richard Dunne and our tactical genius of a manager.



Why can we not base our philosophy around that? It is, quite simply, because Trapattoni will be sacked for bombarding his way to another set of finals. The reasoning of the Irish public right now is ludicrous. If everybody passes the ball, the side with the best footballers will win. We do not have anywhere near the best footballers, therefore we will not win many important games. If we play to our strengths, which again, are our ruggedness and desire, we might have a hope. Stick McClean and Brady to the flanks, make them run at full backs and have our gifted striker Shane Long wait for the ball to come into the box. Yes, certainly, he is better at running in behind. If you see a defender off balance, while Shane Long is running off his shoulder, hoof the thing, do not just pass it back to your centre-half because you fear losing possession. I swear, the politics of football get worse every day.

## Fab Four Will Do It All Again In 2013

Robert McNamara  
Sports Editor

If it is remarkable that today we marvel at two seemingly superhuman footballers in their prime in the shape of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, it is almost incomprehensible that tennis provides four men of the quality of Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Andy Murray. These players provide almost endless entertainment to millions, with battles of such epic proportions that you'd nearly want to pack in your job to keep up with it. You'd imagine the quality of tennis would be diluted by now, but time after time this quartet serve up yet more brilliance, more impossible shots, more unlikely comebacks and more drama than most other sports could boast. Djokovic ended the year with the ATP World title in London, after he swept aside Federer in straight sets. Questions are being asked about the Swiss star's ability to mix it in the latter years of his career, but you can be guaranteed the 17-time Grand Slam winner will be back looking for more titles in 2013. Still just 31, he didn't exactly have a slack year as he picked up the Wimbledon title while reducing Andy Murray to tears. He finishes the year as world number two. Speaking of the Scot, his most successful year to date in terms of titles and personal development has definitely been 2012. Stepping back from the wreckage of his Wimbledon final defeat to Federer must have been hard and to face the Swiss genius at the same venue just weeks later



in the Olympics final, under massive scrutiny from the media, was a huge test. He passed that, yet some dismissed the Olympic win as a token prize – only Grand Slams matter in tennis after all. Murray finally delivered on all the promise of his early career by winning the US Open in dramatic fashion at Flushing Meadows after nearly throwing it away, again to Federer. The most significant development in Murray's year has been the removal of the psychological barrier that he previously had against the other three. He is still behind the Serb in terms of ability and technique but he has surpassed Federer for now and if Nadal's injury woes continue, he may overtake him too if only temporarily. He finishes the tour third in the ATP rankings. Nadal's season effectively ended at Wimbledon and his knee problems showed no signs of going away as he missed the ATP finals. The supremely talented Spaniard is hoping to be fit for the start of the 2012 season but the first

Grand Slam tournament in Australia will surely be too early for him to make a real challenge. Still, a Grand Slam winning year is a good year and Nadal picked up the French Open, beating Djokovic in the final after losing his three previous finals against the Serb. Despite this, he has fallen to fourth in the world rankings. 2011 was the year of Djokovic as he romped home to three of the four Grand Slam titles. Still number one, 2012 has not been as successful, but adding the ATP Finals to his Australian Open win means the 25-year-old has little to complain about. The four Grand Slams were shared between the fab four this year and this could very well be the case again next year. With the development of other players like David Ferrer, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Juan Martin Del Potro added to the mix, 2013 could be the year when tennis goes supernova.



# Future World Player of the Year Candidates

Robert McNamara  
Sports Editor

We all know the contenders for FIFA's Ballon D'or. The usual suspects of Messi, Xavi and Iniesta will battle it out with Ronaldo for the coveted prize. Maybe Andrea Pirlo will spring a surprise and pick up the trophy after leading Juventus to the 2011/12 Serie A title and performing superbly at Euro 2012, while Radamel Falcao is the only other player you could possibly expect to be in with a chance. What about the star performers who won't be anywhere near Sepp Blatter's big, brash golden balls at the end of November? Well here are a few select candidates that didn't make the shortlist but will surely stake claim in the future.

Marco Reus: The Dortmund-born striker, who returned home to the Westfalenstadion this summer after three years at Borussia Monchengladbach, is equally at home on the wing or up front and is absolutely devastating when moving infield from wide positions. He tormented Ireland's defence in the World Cup qualifying rout for Germany and made a real name for himself in the Champions League with a well taken goal against Manchester City. Dortmund have made a stuttering start to the season domestically, but Reus has been in good goalscoring form. His future looks as bright as the Ruhr side's shirts right now.

Iker Muniain: The 'Basque Messi'

has won every tournament going with Spanish youth sides but a promising 2011/12 season ended in bitter disappointment as Marcelo Bielsa's Athletic Bilbao ran out of steam in the all-Spanish Europa League Final against Atletico Madrid. They fell foul of a brilliant Falcao display and then cruelly lost the Copa Del Rey final to a Barca side eager to win for Pep Guardiola in his last game in charge. Muniain was a victim of fatigue as much as his young teammates, but his displays against Manchester United would suggest that he has the ability to take teams apart despite his small stature. He will surely be a target for bigger teams in the summer after making his senior Spanish debut.

Javier Pastore: The former Palermo man was convinced to join the Paris revolution in 2011 and was one of St. Germain's first big signings after they were bought out by wealthy investors. An Argentinian international since 2010, he has yet to score for his country but is regularly finding the back of the net in Ligue 1. Despite playing with stars such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Thiago Silva and Ezequile Lavezzi, his performances are falling under the radar due to the low-profile of the French top flight. As soon as Paris St. Germain become an established Champions League team – an inevitability with their wealth and Carlo Ancelotti at the helm – his will be a name you will hear a lot more of.

Paul Pogba: Manchester United



found themselves in hot water when they were accused of tapping up the French youngster while he as at Le Havre in 2009. United were eventually cleared and Pogba went on to become a revelation in the Old Trafford youth sides. After being touted as the new Patrick Vieira by some and straddling the edges of the first team, Pogba decided he wanted more regular football at the top level, despite being just 19. Much to Alex Ferguson's

dismay Pogba let his contract wind down and did a deal with Juventus after just three appearances for United. He has broken into the Juve first team and has earned plaudits for his skill, tackling and strength in equal measure. A future star, there is no doubt.

Wilfred Zaha: Currently the subject of a tug-of-war between England and Ivory Coast, the young Crystal Palace winger is also commanding the attention of

Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal and a whole host of European clubs. One thing that may go against him is his scoring record – he has just 11 goals in nearly 100 games for Palace – but his ability to terrorise defences cannot be doubted. A diamond in the rough, the 20-year-old needs a few more years to develop but should be playing in the Premier League soon.

# Unbeaten & A Date With Destiny Versus NUIG

Jamie Flynn

In what has been an interesting season so far for the UL Soccer Club, it is the men's senior team for whom league glory seems most likely. Currently unbeaten, the men's team now face NUI Galway, also unbeaten, in the final league game of the season.

The season started with an away trip to GMIT. After going one down in the first half, UL showed great fight and character in the second half. The equaliser came in the 58th minute when, after a scramble in the box, the ball fell to Stephen Devane five yards out with his back to goal. He calmly squared it up for Kevin Tattan who buried it to make it 1-1. UL pushed on looking for a winner but the breakthrough just didn't happen and the match finished one apiece. An away point to start the campaign was a decent result, but UL were disappointed not to come away with all three points.

The first home match of the season saw a visit from IT Sligo. In what was a very professional performance, UL dominated the game and won 4-0. After a penalty in the 11th minute, UL never looked back and came in 3-0

up at half time. Going back out after half time, UL kept a clean sheet and managed to add another goal making the final score 4-0.

In the third match of the season, UL hosted NUI Maynooth at home. In what was a scrappy and tight game, the teams came in 0-0 at half time having each had chances to score. With the game on a knife edge, Maynooth struck first in the 63rd minute. UL showed great determination to fight back and in the 79th minute, Eoin Walsh played in a free-kick that was met by the glancing header of Garbhan Coughlan. The ball drifted into the far corner of the net leaving the Maynooth 'keeper with no chance. 1-1. Heading into the final minutes, a draw appeared to be the most likely result...that was until Garbhan Coughlan picked up the ball 12 yards out from goal. After showing great close control, he carried the ball 8 yards from where he received it and despite being under savage pressure from Maynooth defenders, Coughlan picked his spot and slotted the ball home for an 87th minute winner. UL managed to keep Maynooth out in the final minutes to record a dramatic 2-1 win.

In the penultimate game of the league season, UL made the trip to Athlone IT. UL went 2-0 up in the first half after two similar goals coming from quick counter- attacks with Garbhan Coughlan finishing both. They could have made it three as they had a goal ruled out for offside minutes before half time. Athlone, who had been pressing after going two down, deservedly got one back a minute before half time to make it 2-1. Both teams upped their performance in the second half and there were chances at both ends. UL struck first with Garbhan Coughlan completing his hat-trick and bringing his league tally to seven goals in three games. In the 65th minute, Athlone drilled a free kick low and hard from 25 yards to make it 3-2. In the 74th minute, Athlone won a corner. After an Athlone forward managed to lose his marker, he took his free header at the back post to equalise. The game finished 3-3 and UL left Athlone feeling like it was definitely two points dropped as opposed to one point earned.

The table looks like this heading into the final game:



Team	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
UL	4	2	2	0	+5	8
NUIG	4	2	2	0	+4	8
Athlone IT	4	2	2	0	+3	8
IT Sligo	4	1	1	2	-5	4
NUI Maynooth	4	1	0	3	-1	3
GMIT	4	0	1	3	-6	1

This means a draw would ensure that UL finish in the top two and qualify

for the quarter-finals, but a win would more than likely be needed to top the group and ensure a home quarter-final. It's all to play for as UL face off against NUI Galway at the north campus's 3G Astro on Tuesday 20th November. The game kicks off at 2pm.



# College Football Rankings Explained

Garry Irwin

If you look at NCAA Football standings, you may wonder what exactly is going on, and how exactly they determine who is the best college team in the country? There are over 600 college teams between the top four divisions in the NCAA, and this fluctuates most years. If you add in the NAIA and Junior College teams, this brings it to over a thousand teams. The NCAA is the largest organisation and generates the most money.

The highest level of college ball is the Division 1 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), formally Div. I-A. The best two teams compete in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) National Championship Game, with the identity of the two teams being determined by coaches and press polls as well as six different polls of computer generated statistics. Aside from the BCS National Championship, there is still the traditional Rose, Fiesta, Sugar and Orange Bowl games, which are between the next best eight teams in the country. The current BCS Champions are the Alabama Crimson Tide.

Things are much easier to figure out in the division below. The Division 1 Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), previously named Division I-AA, plays out a twenty team post-season play-off series to determine its winner. Last year, North Dakota State Bison were champions. Of course there is no promotion or relegation as such in

college ball, your placing is determined by how much money the college puts into its sports programmes, how many different sports the college competes in, how their scholarship programme works, the average attendance at games, and so on and so forth. And colleges also move from conference to conference sometimes also: twenty four teams moved in the last year alone, mostly in an effort to get more TV and prize money to improve their standing in the college football game. To give an indication of how crazy it gets, the Big12 Conference now only has ten teams in it, most are Midwestern colleges except for the east coast college of West Virginia University. That college is further east than all bar one of the colleges in the Big10 Conference, which has twelve teams in it!

The FCS comprises eleven conferences of varying sizes as well as four colleges that are unaligned independents. It is not possible for every team to play every other one over a college semester, so they play a twelve game season and then a series of bowl games at the end. If a play-off system was introduced it would run over the semester timetable (the final bowl game is in the first week of January), which would hamper some colleges in organising their courses and exams. Also, according to NCAA rules, students have to keep up a certain grade average in college in order to be eligible to play - more games means less coursework time.

There are other advantages to the

current system too. Every game becomes a must-win as teams compete with a hundred other colleges in the rankings for a spot in the BCS Final. Otherwise certain games in some conferences would become dead rubbers or colleges would be able to organise easier schedules for themselves. TV companies also want to keep revenues and attendances high and the numerous Bowl games played at the end of the year is a way of doing this.

Apart from confusing fans with the ratings system, most fans would prefer a regular play-off tree structure, the current way of doing things means that it is open to bias. Certain coaches may favour certain teams in the poll rankings. Or teams that lose one of their early games may consider that the season is effectively over as they may not play an unbeaten team over the course of the season and will therefore not have a chance to pass them out in the rankings.

Are you ready? The Rankings.

First the BCS take as one third of their overall rank those included in the Harris Interactive Poll. From a panel of over 300 made up of people nominated by the different conferences (including media, former coaches, administrators, et cetera) they take a random 115 rankings and determine a list of the best 25 teams in college football week after week. Each person picks 25 teams and the team with the highest average placing gets the most points. The same is done with a coaches poll, but this



time there are 59 coaches to determine form, again ranked by best 25 and given a coefficient. The final third is made up of the six computer generated rankings (which if I were to explain each one would take up the whole of An Focal!). Of these six computer polls, you remove the highest and lowest scores given to each team, then you take an average on the remaining four. You then take those three scores, Harris, coaches, and computer rankings, and get an average. Then voilà, you have your college rankings. The team with the highest rating is the best team in football.

There are six main conferences, and the winners of each are guaranteed a spot in a Bowl Series game, unless two teams below them are somehow

ranked higher. Teams who win other conferences can play in a Bowl game if they are also ranked inside the top twelve of the BCS rankings, or inside the top sixteen teams and above a BCS conference champion. Notre Dame, as an independent, gets a final spot if it finishes inside the top eight in the rankings. Only two teams can qualify from any given conference, irrespective of individual BCS ranking.

So there you have it. Next time you are watching a college football game on TV - and there is quite a lot of them on every week - you will be able to understand the vagaries and permutations of every match-up. Or not! I'm not even sure the NCAA understand the system sometimes.

## Fiji Win Shows Promise For Ireland



Robert McNamara  
Sports Editor

So an Ireland XV captained by a Leinster man, in the heart of Munster rugby, ended the five game losing streak and injected some positivity back into the game in this country. For an international that wasn't deemed important enough for the RFU to award caps to the players, there was intense media coverage before the game. Many commentators felt Declan Kidney needed a win as much as he needed to experiment with his side.

In the end rolling over Fiji in a comprehensive shutout, with many new players seeing action in the green shirt, was the perfect antidote to the bad results Ireland have had this year - and of course the bitter disappointment of the 2011 World Cup.

Iain Henderson and Craig Gilroy were impressive, while Simon Zebo and Conor Murray further confirmed that they are the kind of players that will be around the set up for years.

Captain Jamie Heaslip said: "For some of the younger guys, they really stepped up to the mark as if it was a full international. They did the jersey proud"

Declan Kidney echoed the sentiment by adding:

"It's a new time for Irish rugby. There's a whole new squad coming through and some fellas got their chance and showed that they want more of it."

Beating Fiji is hardly an earth shattering statement of intent, but there is cause for optimism ahead of 2013 for Irish international rugby.

## Sports Virgin: Underwater Boxing

Gerard Flynn  
Co-Editor

Usually when starting an article for this section of the paper, Wikipedia is my first port of call but sadly underwater boxing doesn't even have a Wikipedia page. Such is the lack of notoriety for such a noble sport.

So much of this sport drapes itself in myth and is therefore impossible to properly research. Yet there's much to be admired about the simplicity of the sport and to some degree the difficulty. While all the rules of boxing apply, with the exception of time durations, an underwater boxer must be applauded for both lung strength and air withholding capabilities.

One could argue that a great degree of skill is needed in underwater boxing, which is essentially the sporting equivalent of Usain Bolt running in treacle or Ronnie O' Sullivan playing snooker with a length of rope.

It's not known how long underwater boxing has existed. Some websites have (no doubt faux) videos from London's Wembley Empire Pool in 1939 which show two men boxing beneath the water as a cameraman and referee look on. Much of the action resembles schoolyard fisty-cuffs, albeit at a slower pace. The video ends with one man seemingly knocking the other out as he sinks onto



the pool's floor. It's all a bit morose, if not slightly hilarious depending on whether you believe its authenticity or not.

Women's underwater boxing has only come into prominence recently with it starting out as part of a photo-shoot by American underwater photographer, Mick Gleissner. The photo-shoot took place in 2011 in waters off the coast of the Philippine Islands and as a result of which, has led to many Philippine

natives giving the sport a go.

The sport's popularity is said to be rising outside of Europe but for some reason I don't consider this latest new found infatuation with underwater boxing to be capable of knocking sports like soccer and rugby off the top of the popularity list any time soon.



# Roman's Revenge

Mark Allen

Following only one win in their last five games including a hefty 3-0 defeat at the hands of Juventus, Roberto Di Matteo has been axed by Roman Abramovich. The Chelsea chairman, who is renowned for his ruthless manner regarding the handling of his managers, has now sacked eight managers in his nine years in charge of the club. During his 23 games at the helm, Di Matteo dramatically won the UEFA Champions League and the FA Cup. Abramovich who regarded the UEFA Champions League as the holy grail of European football also procrastinated when offering Di Matteo a full time contract following the heroic win in Munich last May. Chelsea, who were unbeaten and odds on favourites to win the Premier League only one month ago now find themselves third in the table and 4 points adrift of league leaders

Manchester City. Mere hours after the departure of Roberto Di Matteo, former Valencia and Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez was named as interim manager until the end of the season. Benitez, although an accomplished manager, is a controversial choice for the vacant seat at Stamford Bridge. Winning the UEFA Champions League in 2005 with Liverpool in similarly dramatic circumstances, Benitez may prove successful with the London side. However Blues fans beg to differ and have threatened to rip up their season tickets in protest of the man they once described as a “fat Spanish waiter”. Only time will tell whether or not the Spaniard will prove successful at his new club and although he may be worried about winning over his new boss, it may prove even tougher to win over the hearts of Blues supporters.



Di Matteo looking visibly disappointed during Chelsea's 3-0 loss to Juventus last Tuesday night

# The Ides of January

Michael Ramsay

Next month, you are going to hear a mixture of moaning, whinging and relieving sighs. Unless your pastime involves cupping your ears to the dorms of Plassey, you will already have an idea what I am referring to. The January transfer window is essentially four weeks of grown men huddled in a playpen, telling Johnny (or 'Arry, in recent years) how he isn't allowed to play with their toys. It has always been an unsettling and tumultuous period, with heads turned, tensions risen and cash waved under the noses of reluctant chairmen. The window has been criticised in recent years for having a destabilising effect on half the teams in the league, as the rich fat cats come sniffing around their prized assets. However, aside from condensing that laboured summer of transfer sagas into just four weeks, it provides teams with an escape route. A chance to recruit the final pieces of the jigsaw – the ones who can turn a season around dramatically. It would be foolish to write off the month as nothing more than a chance for papers to line their pages with an assortment of nonsensical rumours. It seems pretty unbelievable that the tag 'fantastic signing' could be attributed to famously infamous David Bentley, prized waster at FC Rostov. However, cast your mind back six years and that is exactly what he was when Blackburn forked out a couple of million for the winger's services. Deployed on the right, with a delicious cross and a sumptuous shot, he slammed in a hat-trick against Manchester United on his permanent debut, before producing a string of fantastic performances to elevate Blackburn to sixth in the

league, allowing them to have a crack at the UEFA Cup. Eventually sold for 15 million, two and a half years later, the flash Cockney can rightly go down as one of the great winter signings. Gary Cahill began last season as he meant to go on, scooping in a glorious 25-yard strike at Loftus Road, as Bolton began the season with a 4-0 triumph over QPR. Nine months later, and he would be guiding Bolton to a final-day victory at Stoke City, capping off a fine mid-table finish, which would hopefully cement a place in England's Euro 2012 squad. Little did he know that he would instead be drenched in adulation in the Allianz Arena, with a Champions League medal hanging around his neck, following a £7 million transfer to Chelsea. One of the best players never to have won a cap, Mikel Arteta is still showing his class at the heart of the Arsenal midfield. However, it was at Everton where he first sunk his teeth into English football, as a loan signing from Real Sociedad in January 2005. With influential Danish hardman Thomas Gravesen having (somehow) packed his bags for the home of the Galacticos, David Moyes opted for a bit of flair to replace him. The Spaniard produced a string of top-class performances which allowed the Merseysiders to claim fourth spot at the expense of their bitter city rivals. This was the beginning of a six-year love affair in Liverpool, during which he collected an assortment of 'Player of the Season' awards, before the seductive Londoners employed the home-wrecking tactics they had learned from Barcelona. Of course, January has not always worked for certain clubs. Fernando Torres' CV might look impressive, but

in London, he has rarely replicated anything like the sort of form that made him the quickest Liverpool player ever to hit 50 goals. On the same day, there were tears lining the streets of Newcastle as their prized No. 9 was on a jet to Liverpool to pen a lucrative deal. Two years later, and the Toon club have used that £35 million to rebuild their squad, while the Merseysiders languish in the bottom half of the table, with Big Andy struggling for goals at newly-promoted West Ham. Finally, let's spare a thought for the winter signing which would reap the direst of consequences, worth in the region of £80 million, for the seller. Having been flogged to Wigan by Sheffield United in January 2007, Neil Warnock's men probably thought they could forget all about David Unsworth's existence. However, it would be the defender who would have the last laugh, in a cruel twist of fate, as his final-day penalty at Bramall Lane demoted his former employers to the Championship, thus preserving his Lancashire club's status. Sheffield United have not been seen since. Whether you're one of the big boys eyeing up the likes of Marouane Fellaini, one of the smaller clubs looking to hold onto the likes of Ryan Shawcross, or simply enjoy watching adults reduced to playground tactics, the month has it all. As an aside, keep an eye out for the annual confirmation of transfers from the driver's window of 'Arry's BMW. He gets bored.

# Progressive Management Urgently Needed



Craig Gilroy, who scored three tries on his full international debut against Fiji this month.

Gareth Morrow

The Irish rugby team needs a progressive manager, for the good of the game and for the good of the people involved, players and supporters. Take for example the treat of rugby we had when Ireland played Fiji. Craig Gilroy on his first cap scored three tries. He lit up Thomond park, much like he had done over six months earlier, inspiring an Ulster win and an oh-so rare Munster loss in Thomond park. Yet, Gilroy did not make the Ireland team for the 60-0 loss in New Zealand or indeed any of those 3 tests. Furthermore, young Irish players who have excelled at underage level, such as Ian Henderson and JJ Hanrahan have to wait in the wings while others their age get to play top grade rugby for their respective

countries and beat our “old fellas”. It is time for Ireland to unleash its talented youth when due their chance, and to think that they may not even get to the cap number the current crop are at, and what a shame that could be, unless of course someone better comes along! To conclude therefore, let there be a coach who comes along and trusts that if a player is better at Pro 12 level or Heineken cup he will probably be better at international also. Ireland need a visionary. If this means getting rid of the current manager so be it, nothing personal. I leave you with this Brazilian proverb “Love the principle, work the dedication, progress the goal.” Time to think of the future.



# AN FOCAL Extra

27<sup>h</sup> November 2012

Volume XXI  
Issue 6 FREE

## Our Eclectic World:

Doctor Who, A Hungarian Perspective on Ireland  
and a Student's Experience of Toronto





# XO XO Gossip Girl

Alana Walsh

Gossip Girl (based on the books by Cecily von Ziegesar) first hit our TV screens in 2007 and became an instant teen drama hit. The show revolves around wealth, sex, friendships and of course, lies. However, now into its sixth season, CW have announced that this one will be the last and will only consist of ten episodes, concluding in late December 2012. The final scenes wrapped up filming on October 23rd in New York.

For those of you that are not familiar with the show, 'Gossip Girl' is a rumour spreading blogger that narrates the show (voiced by Kirsten Bell), focusing on the lavish lives of the Manhattan's elite and their first world problems. GG's infamous slogan features at the start of every episode, "...and who am I? That's one secret I'll never tell. You know you love me... XO XO Gossip Girl." The privileged socialites receive instant updates to their phones every time GG decides to unleash her latest gossip. Needless to say, half the time the private information GG releases into the public domain is shockingly true as the characters of the show lack the possession of a moral compass (something money cannot buy) or any loyalty to their so called friends and consistently send in tips about each other to her site.

While this premise sets up a show that is superficial to the extreme and perhaps not the best way to spend our

viewing time, it also can be considered as escapist viewing, worth viewing for the amazing fashion it features alone. The trend setting style of the fashionista characters saw The New York Times label Gossip Girl "a fashion market vehicle". Earlier this year when Gossip Girl reached its 100th episode, Mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, acknowledged the cultural impact the show has had on the city, "Gossip Girl has made New York a central character [...] the show also attracts many of them [fans] to visit New York, contributing to our incredible 50.5 million visitors last year". Gossip Girl has become more than just another TV show about rich brats, it is a cultural phenomenon.

All series of the show include the intertwined drama of the lives of the five 'it' girls - Serena van der Woodsen (Blake Lively), the Queen Bee aka Blair Waldorf (Leighton Meester), the eternal bad boy - Chuck Bass (Ed Westwick), the Golden boy - Nate Archibald (Chace Crawford) and the outsider Dan Humphreys (Penn Badgley). These characters have found themselves in more than one love triangle over the six series. For example, Blair's first long term boyfriend was Nate but she is destined to be with Chuck (Nate's best friend), yet she has also dated Dan. It would literally take hours to tell you their individual love life histories but as you can imagine, they are all super complicated. These characters fall in and out of love almost as often as they



change outfits, which is a lot. Naturally it is difficult to feel any empathy for these spoilt characters but their outlandish lifestyles and scandal filled days make the show somewhat compelling and easy viewing (also aided by the fact that every cast member is easy on the eye).

However, it is appropriate that the time to finish the show has come. There are only so many times Serena's mother can remarry or Blair and Chuck can declare their love for one another yet refuse to be together or Serena can run away after royally messing things

up yet again etc. The six series have been one heck of a rollercoaster for our favourite fictional Upper East Siders, here's to hoping that the season finale finally reveals who the troublesome 'Gossip Girl' actually is.

# Is Something The Matter With Who?

Evan O'Grady

Ok, before I talk about the last season of Doctor Who give me a moment to get behind some bullet-proof glass. I know that speaking about this show can raise some tempestuous arguments and occasionally fists among TV geeks - myself included - but we may as well get the debate rolling before the new series arrives. But here are my subjective two cents on Doctor Who Season 7.... It was rife with problems.

I adore the show. I have loved the new series since it began in 2005. I especially love Matt Smith in the role and Steven Moffat has brought some great new ideas to proceedings. However no show can escape criticism. Season 7 was way too short: at five episodes we had to run through all that had happened since season six in a filmed short no more than five minutes long. Pond Life essentially was telling the audience that Amy and Rory had split and that was that. It was an abbreviated episode that just seemed too sudden for it to register and was resolved too soon afterwards for it to be relevant.

This brings us on to the first episode: Asylum of the Daleks. One of the issues rather than problems of the Daleks in recent years is that they are no longer in the least bit scary. The Doctor has defeated them so many times that you may be justified in thinking he is a much more intimidating character

blowing up these innocent murderous space mutants time and again. Asylum was by no means bad, it was a good start for the series with some twists and a glimpse of the new companion for 2013.

Dinosaurs on a Spaceship was let down by some truly awkward scripting and a premise that was intriguing but did not quite finish with as much of a high as it started with. Having said that Mark Williams was great as Rory's overly prepared and slightly nutty dad and he gave off a great warmth throughout the episode. My problems with this episode were really nitpicks as I believed at the time that the introduction of Rory's dad was going to bring in its recurring theme for the series....

And then, oh dear.

A Town Called Mercy and The Power of Three. Both of these episodes had opposite problems. Mercy had interesting ethical conundrums, but was poorly handled. Three had a somewhat tame premise and a shockingly bad ending, but the first and second acts were oodles of fun as the Doctor settled in for a year with the Ponds.

First off, Mercy had royalty, Ben Browder in it. Unfortunately he was underused and unrecognizable in the episode which focused more on the Doctor's own twisted morality. Three I had hoped would redeem the series again. But most fans even agree it fell

down not at the first hurdle but at the very last one. It was so close to being put into the Who canon as a standout show and in the end it was completed messed up. The first act did some catching up on some of the "timey whimey" quota the show had been missing. But the end was a shame with a poor excuse given for the intergalactic invasion: pest controllers who targeted humanity for no other reason other than they felt like it. Maybe these Shakri may turn up again, but if not, you may as well write this episode off.

The Angels take Manhattan, I consider to be the most wretched, contrived, emotionally hollow and generally weakest episode of Doctor Who that I have ever seen. The Ponds get stuck in 1930s New York and can't get out. Really though, I pity anyone who grew attached to the Ponds. They had to leave at some point but they had been such a staple for so long it's easy to see why people were sad after this episode. The paradoxes and continuity breaking errors in this episode are staggering so I really cannot list them all. Needless to say instead of outright killing the Ponds or just saying "they wanted to leave the Doctor to live out their lives in peace," the show instead imploded and forcibly removed them with no emotional clout behind the act.

Honestly I find it impossible to see any good in this episode. This is not some fan-boy nitpick: the story wasn't



flawed, it was broken. What mystifies me still is that a scene was cut in which Rory's father finds out the news of his son's fate. Why was such a pivotal scene cut? The episode didn't provide any closure and failed to provide even an illusion of closure.

Angels was bad but I am asking about the series itself. Doctor Who has been running for decades and deserves the

right to have a miss for the dozens of hits it makes. But still it is a shame to see season 7 thrown away as an uneven, overly short and with a very weak narrative for Doctor Who. It really remains to be seen if the show can gather itself again to tackle issues that affect the pivotal figure of the show... Who are you Doctor? Who are you?



# Stone Cold Famous: Actress Profile

Alana Walsh

Emma Stone has been on our radar and on her way to becoming a household name since her film debut in the teen hit *Superbad* back in 2007. The Arizona native immediately moved to L.A. and began being home schooled at the age of 15 in order to pursue her acting career.

Emma went on to appear in *The House Bunny* with Anna Faris in 2008 and in 2009 she starred in *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* with Matthew McConaughey and Jennifer Garner as well as *Zombieland* with Jesse Eisenberg and Abigail Breslin and an independent indie film *Paper Man*. In 2010 her husky voice was that of the character Mazie in *Marmaduke* and she had the starring role in the comedy *Easy A* which secured her a Golden Globe nomination for ‘Best Actress in a Musical or Comedy’.

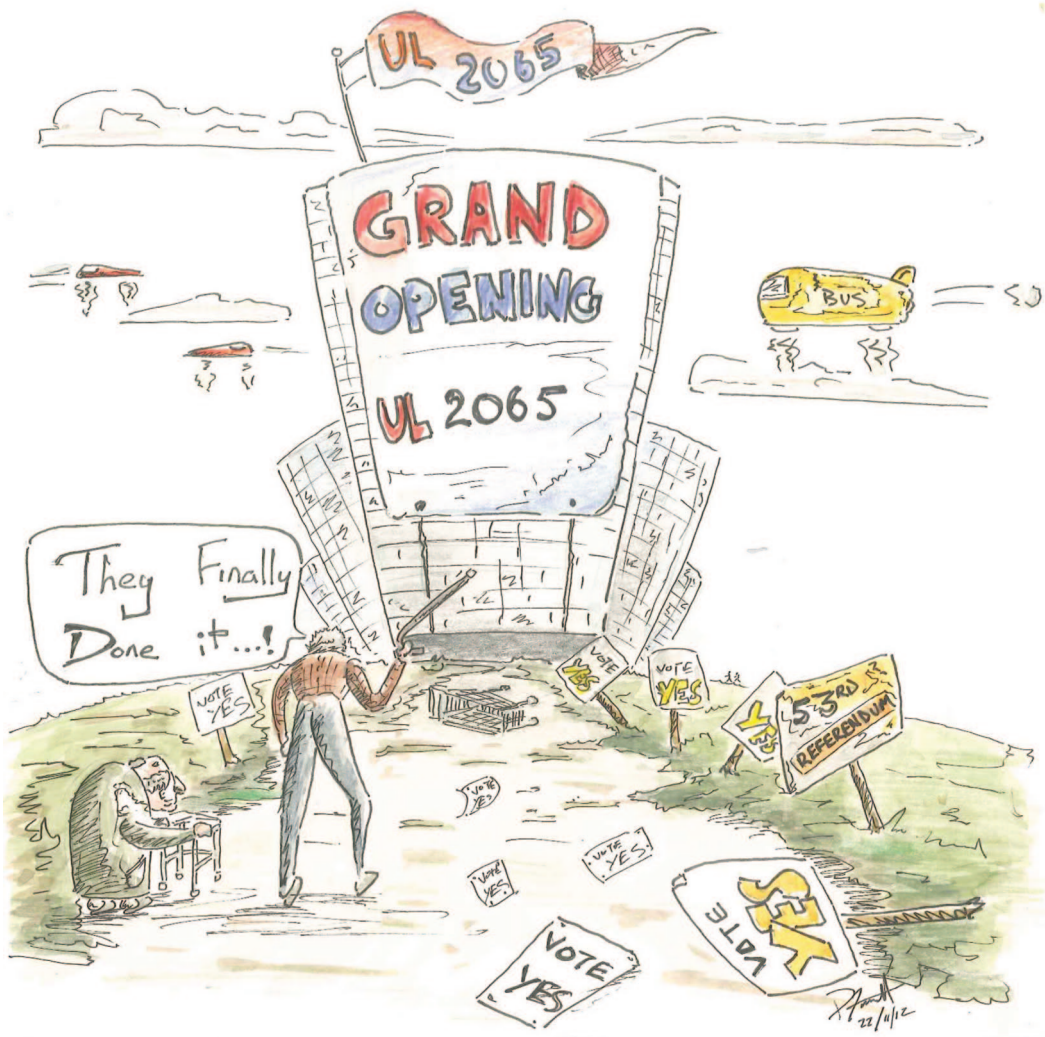
2011 saw her feature in the film *Friends with Benefits* as well as starring in the much acclaimed *The Help* as journalist, Skeeter Phelan, in 1960s America. That same year she also became the envy of all Ryan Gosling fans when she co-starred with him in the rom-com *Crazy Stupid Love*. Her quirky, innocent and lovable character Hannah Weaver won over the womanizing lothario Jacob (Gosling).

Emma has been fortunate enough to also get to work with the gorgeous Mr. Gosling on crime drama *Gangster Squad*, set in 1940s LA, due for release

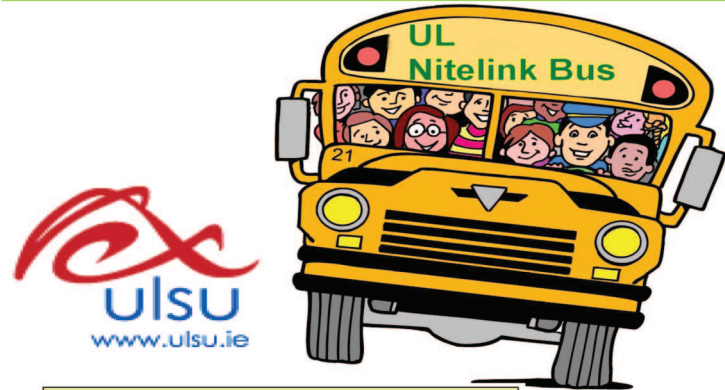
in 2013. Originally the movie was set to be released in autumn 2012 but one of its action sequences had to be re-filmed due to parallels with the shootings in Aurora earlier this year. In *Gangster Squad*, Emma’s character is in a love triangle with the Ryan Gosling and Sean Penn’s characters. She quotes Ryan when describing how she picks movie roles: “picking roles is like listening to songs on the radio: There can be a lot of really great songs in a row, but then one comes on that just makes you want to dance.”

In 2011, actor and comedian, Jim Carey uploaded a creepy video to YouTube confessing his love for the much younger actress, including statements such as we could have “chubby little freckled faced kids”. Although Emma can breathe a sigh of relief as she is happily dating British actor Andrew Garfield since they met on the set for the filming of *The Amazing Spiderman* in 2011. In the film, which was released in 2012, Emma plays Gwen Stacey, the love interest of Peter Parker, for which she returns to her natural blonde locks. The sequel is due for release in 2014.

Emma has graced the covers of numerous magazines, including, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *Marie Claire* and *Seventeen* and in 2012 the 24 year old actress became the new face and spokeswoman for Revlon cosmetics. One thing’s for sure, we are sure to be seeing much more of Emma Stone on our screens in the future.



## 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).



Mike  
**Hynan Coaches**



# Up & Coming Music: Hudson Taylor

Wynona Grant

Dublin brothers Harry and Alfie Hudson-Taylor have been uploading videos to Youtube and gigging on a small scale for a number of years now, and it seems it's paying off. From starting out busking on the streets (...or poles and bins in Harry's case!) of Dublin, and uploading videos to Youtube, to now being included in the line-up for the Cheerios Childline Concert 2012, has been some achievement.

To be fair, the last few months have been very exciting and progressive for the male duo in general. Between releasing their debut EP Battles in August, and playing to a massive crowd in Hyde Park during the Olympics, I think it's clear that the lads are shooting forward. With their music being described as essentially acoustic folk-pop, you can imagine the initial reaction of most people - "kind of like Mumford & Sons?" In fact, Hudson Taylor have such a unique sound to

their music that you simply won't get anything like it from any other artist. With Harry's ability to play pretty much any instrument on the planet, and Alfie's incredibly unique voice, along with their intense, yet quirky style, these guys will be a major deal.

Hudson Taylor are set to play in the Academy 2, Dublin, on December 21st, and it's likely that it will be the last time we see them in such an intimate venue for a good while. These guys are going places fast, and there will be no stopping them!

You can download Battles from iTunes at: <https://itunes.apple.com/ie/album/battles-ep/id547907856>

Get all the latest news on gigs and releases by following the guys on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/HudTayMusic> &

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/HudsonTaylorMusic>



# Rob Marr - Anatomy Review

Rob McNamara

Most of us go about our daily business and deal with the tiring and mundane in a detached manner, waiting for something exciting to happen. Foolishly, we don't realise that there is excitement and beauty all around us.

Rob Marr's Anatomy paints these seemingly bland landscapes in all kinds of colours with a respect and intrigue that brilliantly informs his lyrics. These are the 'everyman' pop-songs that we haven't heard since Ray Davies was in his pomp. While Davies usually used characters, Marr uses everyday experiences.

Opening shot Fencebuilding is almost as determined in its delivery as the story that's brought to life in the lyrics - a father and son mending a fence but using it to find out where their lives have gone. Marr's piano peaks and troughs with the tempo, while the female backing vocals and harmonies lilt and rise. Wonderfully constructed.

Summer In The City evokes images of the rush and push of sun-soaked London, creaking under the weight of traffic, commuters driven mad by the constant need to keep moving - while the pretty ladies all seem to come out at once. The Wurlitzer and bass line combine to create the perfect atmosphere musically.

Dirt Beneath Our Toes reminds us of the legacy Squeeze left behind while Fat and Happy is another song that has many different elements that cram a lot into 2:47 minutes, yet never makes it feel overloaded. It starts out as a lament but builds into a funky workout about health and how we are supposed to live our lives - the writer eventually succumbing to the temptation around him.

In the reverse of what mainstream



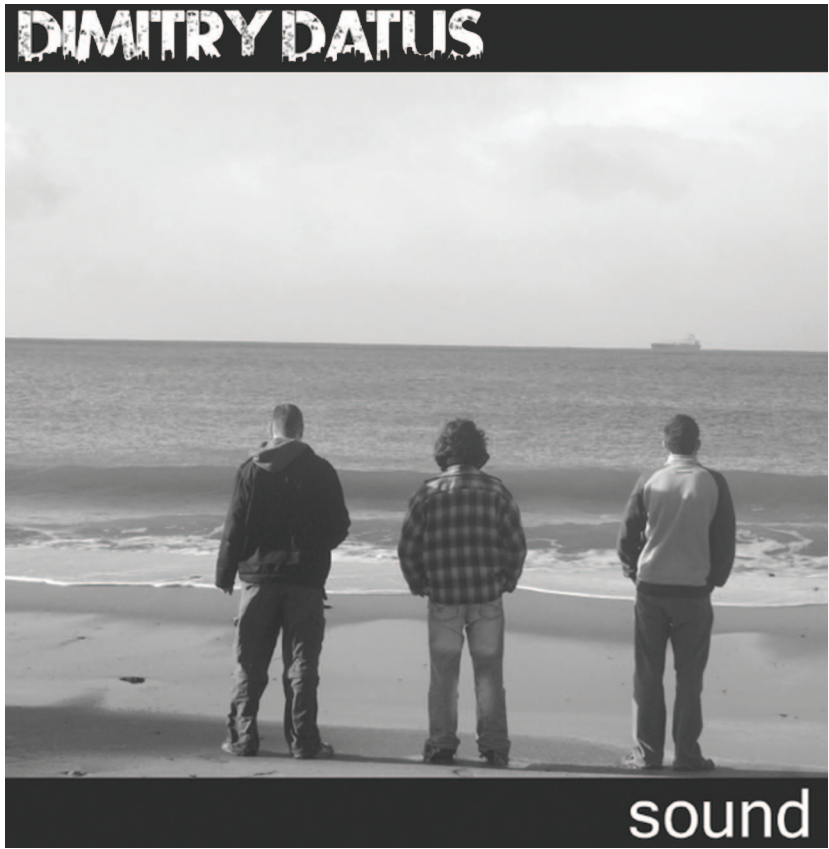
musicians have as references, Marr comments quite articulately on the struggles of getting by in Scratchcard. "You could a quiet life, make the most of what is free, find excitement where you can, because almost everything in life costs something", he sings. It's a common observation but here it's brilliantly constructed in song.

King's Cross St. Pancras on a Sunny Spring Morning is delicate and hopeful, standing on the edge of possibility but constrained by responsibility.

Rock and Roll's subject matter is a tale of caution but the music never lets the listener become too downtrodden before it offers hope.

The nine tracks that make up this record will ensure that you don't tire easily, there is not a hint of pretentious filler and Marr's ever present Wurlitzer is the perfect tool in driving this wondrous, laid-back and sometimes funky collection of stories and observations.

# EP Review - Dimitry Datus, "Sound"



Rob McNamara

The debut EP from Dimitry Datus, Sound, is an effort that promises much more from the talented Cork based three-piece.

Run is a ska influenced rocker with urgent guitar and a thumping rhythm section. A fine opener.

Grand Parade has a touch of early Radiohead in the intro, but morphs into a Britpop singalong with a great guitar lead break and a nice latino style outro.

The ace in the pack of this five-track EP is The Brave, a melodic rocker that

could be the tune that garners attention from the music industry. Lyrically it's searching and indicates a cohesive unit who can really play - like a more aggressive Snow Patrol with personality. Nervous Badger is a slow burner with great lyrics that peaks and troughs in tempo, while Wide Awake draws more from the ska side of the bands persona. All in all Sound is a diverse and raw work from a band that have plenty of potential to evolve. These tracks would sound great live so check your local listings and get out and see this band in the flesh.



The Irish Aid Father Michael Kelly World AIDS Day Event 2012

# Education, sports and music - social vaccines against AIDS

Hosted by Irish Aid in collaboration with the Irish Forum for Global Health and University of Limerick

To commemorate World AIDS Day 2012, we are delighted to invite you to attend the Irish Aid Father Michael Kelly World AIDS Day Event which will take place on:

28 November 2012

in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance Building (Theatre 2), University of Limerick at 5 – 7pm.

*Followed by Refreshments*

This year the theme of the Lecture will be **"Education, sports and music – social vaccines against AIDS"** and we will have short presentations from a number of speakers giving different perspectives and experiences.

- **Professor Sarah Moore,**  
Associate Vice President Academic, University of Limerick
- **Joe Costello, TD,**  
Minister of State for Trade and Development
- **Father Michael Kelly,** HIV and Education
- **Ann Mason,**  
Red Ribbon Project, HIV/AIDS in Limerick
- Entertainment by **Irish World Academy of Music and Dance**
- **Marcus Horan,**  
Munster Rugby Player, Sport and Health

Panel discussion chaired by Professor Tom Lodge,  
University of Limerick

rsvp to: [info@globalhealth.ie](mailto:info@globalhealth.ie)





# Interview: Orla Gartland

Wynona Grant

It's fair to say it's been a very busy year for Dublin singer/songwriter, Orla Gartland. Having played a tonne of gigs over the last few months in Ireland and the UK, Orla is set to play her second ever headline show in London at the end of the month. Before opening for Bastille, in front of a massive crowd in the Academy 2, I got the chance to catch up with Orla and ask her a few questions.

**Orla, I know you've been uploading videos to Youtube for a long time now. Tell me about the first video you uploaded. What age were you at the time?**

I was 13 or 14 I think, and it was a cover of a Nelly Furtado song, which is more than cringe! It was called 'Broken Strings'; I think it was with James Morrisson. It was THE hit of the time, and I really wanted to be cool and sing something I could hear on the radio. I've since taken the video down. It was just so bad; I had braces, I looked like a boy, but it's all a learning curve. I've kind of gotten better at not deleting old videos now, because it's kind of nice to see the journey at times, but with that one I had a weak moment.

**Where did you actually get the idea to start uploading videos? You've something around 55,000 subscribers now; that must be overwhelming?**

It's absolutely crazy when I think about it. I mean, the thing is, it's so spread out and that's the beauty of the internet in a way because it means you can have people listening to your music in a different corner of the world, and that's something that people previously never had. Like, the traditional way of getting big as such, in music, would be just gigging your way to the top- from a local level to making it bigger. But now, with the internet, I'm not even finished school and I can just stick a video up and get some nice feedback. I think the really nice thing about Youtube is that it's a nice testing ground. For example, if I wanted to put together a release - like an album, or an EP - a great way that I found to get feedback is to just upload all the songs and see which gets a positive reaction, so, it is a fantastic tool. I can't remember how I got the idea in the first place. I started making videos with a friend, and then I tried it on my own and I didn't understand that people would ask for more or subscribe. It was a bit bizarre, but yeah it's been incredible!

**You never expected the support to get this big then, no?**

Absolutely not! Sure I didn't even understand what a subscriber was a few years ago and now I do and it's terrifying, but lovely!

**You released your first single, 'Devil On My Shoulder', in June of this year. Where did the lyrics for that song come from?**

Well, that one was originally a really happy song, believe it or not - really upbeat, had all the melodies and everything in place, but for me it just wasn't really sitting right, and I was kind of ready to release that song as a single. The actual thing goes "there you are the devil on my shoulder", but the other one was "you're always one small step behind me", and it was really perky and happy. I still can't believe listening to it now, like I just sat down and was like "this isn't really sitting with me right", so I kind of rewrote all the lyrics. I watched a lot of cartoons as a kid and

I always liked that idea of a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other- like the good and bad side, trying to influence your moral decisions. I've just always found this whole metaphor really interesting and I was kind of toying with the idea that it would just be the devil and that whole 'you're your own worst enemy' thing. I suppose that was just a place I was in at the time when I wrote it.

**So, would you describe all your songs as autobiographical?**

Yeah definitely. One thing I'd say I do tend to write about, more often than not, is people. I've always been fascinated with people and their minds, how they work, and why we do the things we do. So although a lot would be about me, if I'm ever in a situation - any sort of social situation - I always find it'd useful lyric-wise to look at it from someone else's point of view, or to write lyrics as if you're writing a letter to someone that you'll never meet. For me, people would definitely be a big factor.

**Who would your main influences be? If you had to name your top 3 artists, who would they be?**

That's a good one! I really like Regina Spektor. I mean, the word quirky is banged around a lot, and maybe overused, but she is quirky, and she's pop, and she's fantastic. I also really like Laura Marling, who did some touring with Mumford & Sons. Probably Mumford & Sons as well actually. I really got swept up in that rebirth of folk. When Mumford got big, a lot of artists got big with them and it sparked that love for that whole genre, and I definitely got swept along with that. But of course, I always listen to my friends as well so, although it's not in the three: Hudson Taylor, Gabrielle Aplin and Lauren Aquilina.

**Any guilty pleasures?**

Of course, of course! 'Call Me Maybe' will always be a classic- It's a fantastic tune. All the Justin Bieber albums; I'm more than proud to say I've purchased those. The thing is; these songs are designed to be catchy. That's the purpose they fulfil at the end of the day. I don't know if I'd listen to them like, on my own at night but, on the rare occasions that I do decide to be social, I definitely just want to hear something catchy that you can pick up straight away! They're fantastic songs and you know them by the second chorus and you're boppin' along!

**You've played quite a few gigs this year, both in Ireland and the UK. Are there any in particular that stand out for you?**

Yes, absolutely! The gig tonight is in Academy 2, and I did an Academy 2 day in June, around the time of the single release. That was my first ever headline show. Before that, I kind of just thought a gig is a gig, but there's actually a whole different vibe from when you're supporting someone and when it's your own name on the ticket. I really didn't understand it but I was just so overwhelmed. I almost cried that day because, you just feel very loved, and you feel like, it's crazy that all these people would come for you. There were people there that I knew from primary school, some family, and people I'd never met. It was just so overwhelming, but I never wanted it to end. It was just so fun being up there.

**You supported Ryan O'Shaughnessy last week. Would that have been one of your favourites- one of the biggest**



**as of yet?**

Yeah, that was the main Academy. He put on an amazing show, lovely guy, and I was really lucky to be asked to play that show. Yeah I'd say it's a favourite - it's up there. The crowd there were really responsive, which is always nice, but the thing with supporting someone is, you kind of feel like you've to go out and prove yourself. It's a lot more of a challenge than something to just enjoy. Depending on the mood I'm in, I like it sometimes.

**You're, in a way, trying to get new fans?**

Sort of yeah. Like, people are there to see the headline act, and you're just someone they're going to decide on the day whether they like you or not, and that can go either way. But yeah, I did really like it; everyone was really nice.

**How are you feeling about the Bastille gig later; nervous/excited? Do you still get nervous before you go on stage?**

I do, a little bit obviously. I mean, I'm naturally quite stage shy - I'm not a stage-school kid or anything. I'm in 6th year now, but back in 4th year, when people were setting out goals for the year, I was like 'I want to get these nerves out of the way while I can; while I have time', so I just took any gig I could get. I was playing in front of like, just my mum, ten people; twenty people, just trying to gig it out, and it definitely helped. They're still there a bit, but nerves are good. I think the Bastille gig will be nice. I've met the lads before in England, and they're really nice, but it will be an older crowd as well. It's an over 18s gig, I'm used to playing the over 14s, so hopefully they won't hate me!

**Any pre-gig rituals or anything to settle the nerves?**

I sort of think I should have. I know nothing about singing, or the technical side of it. I've no warm-ups and that's awful. I just sing to warm up.

**You're in your final year of school now, so obviously the things you can do and the places you can go are quite limited. Do you have any major plans for when you finish school? Any places you'd love to go?**

Yeah absolutely! I spent a lot of time this year over in the UK; I was there for pretty much all of the summer. There's a huge music scene over there for the sort of stuff that I like to play. On one side, everyone in London, for example, wants to be a singer/songwriter, so you're thrown into the deep end, and you're a sea of faces. It's very hard to stand out, but it also means it pushes you a bit more. I don't think it's impossible to do in Ireland, but I really did like the scene over there. I think in terms of gigs on a smaller scale - like before you're playing your 2,000/5,000 people venues - there's not a lot of venues that do that, so, venue wise, London is fantastic and I'd definitely love to go there after school. That's the rough plan at the moment anyway.

**Quite a nice thing you did though, was online gigs for people anywhere in the world to watch? That's a nice way to include fans that are in places that you probably can't get to at the moment?**

Yeah, that was a cool idea. I'd never heard of it to be honest, and the thing was, it's not a very widespread idea so people were a bit like 'I don't really understand what this is', but I just think, you can't get everywhere

can you? It's just something cool that I can put time into, and I did other livestream things; there's this thing called BlogTv that I really like doing. For me, that would just be like, you can switch it on and people can watch you from your bedroom and you can just chat. It's like a one-sided skype conversation; my mum always passes and thinks I'm talking to myself and thinks I'm a little bit weird! But yeah, the thing about the online gig is that it would be a bit more formal. You'd have a setlist and you'd go through it. It was definitely an interesting experience- I enjoyed it anyway.

**So, what can we expect from you in 2013?**

Well, as you said, I'm in 6th year, but I'm hoping not to haul it altogether. I'm hoping to do a few gigs here and there, but the main thing I'm hoping to get out is a new release early next year. I think I should be recording it sometime over Christmas. I'm not exactly sure when; I think I know what songs might be involved though. Yeah, hopefully a new release anyway. I think it's always good to just keep it going really. Then we'll do exams, and then we'll do more music!

*If you want to see more of Orla, you can find her on Youtube at: [www.youtube.com/musicmaaad](http://www.youtube.com/musicmaaad)*

*To find out about gigs and new releases, you can follow her on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/orlagartland](http://www.twitter.com/orlagartland) and facebook: [www.facebook.com/orlagartland](http://www.facebook.com/orlagartland).*

*Don't forget Orla's songs are also available for download on iTunes: <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/devil-on-my-shoulder-single/id528915036>*



# Gaza Troubles Continue

Zoe Lawlor

Until a ceasefire announced on 21st November, Gaza was under sustained attack for one week when an Egyptian brokered ceasefire was broken by Israel. An examination of the timeline demonstrates the killing of a Palestinian minor on November 8 during an IDF incursion into Gaza initiated a round of escalation which was then followed by a new truce violated when Israel extra judicially assassinated Hamas’ military chief Ahmed al-Jabari on November 14. Prior to his death al-Jabari was actually involved in negotiating an extended ceasefire.

To date one hundred and thirty-nine Palestinians and five Israelis have been killed. On Sunday 18th November, Israel bombed a house, killing eleven members of one family, among them four children and five women. In two separate missile attacks the same day, two fathers and their young sons were killed, they were distributing water and maintaining the water service. The following day twin babies and their parents were killed, they had named one of the boys, Mohammed after his brother who they lost in Israel’s twenty-two day assault on Gaza in 2008/09. Today a doctor at Al Shifa hospital was called to treat an injured six year old boy, he found that the child was his son who had died. These are just some of the stories, the atrocities are too numerous to list.

Hundreds of people have also been injured and maimed and the hospitals

are under severe pressure, struggling to cope with the sheer numbers of patients. It must be noted that Gaza has been held under illegal siege by Israel since 2006 and the medical services have experienced grave difficulties due to this and the near constant power outages; collective punishment is a war crime under the Geneva conventions.

To date thousands of homes and buildings have been destroyed in the bombing and the infrastructure, which was all but ruined in 2008/09 when 1,400 Palestinians were slaughtered, is again very badly damaged.

Further to these war crimes, the Israeli military targeted two buildings in Gaza City housing local Arab and international media outlets such as Al Arabiya, Al Quds TV, Sky News, France 24, and Russia TV. The attacks left at least eight journalists injured, one of whom had to have his leg amputated. Israeli army spokesperson Avital Leibovich admitted that they knew there were journalists in the building. On 20th November three journalists were slain.

The numbers can be overwhelming and the sheer weight of the death and destruction is hard to take in. Most mainstream media outlets present a bias skewed towards the aggressor, Israel, and often misrepresent or distort the facts, particularly with regard to the timeline leading up to this latest assault.

To show our solidarity with the people of Palestine, and to protest Israel’s brutality, occupation, apartheid and



Protesters at last week’s vigil in Limerick city to show solidarity for Gaza & it’s people.

war crimes, there have been three vigils in Limerick. People have stood on the street with Palestinian flags and spelled out ‘Gaza’ in candles, to show that we think this attack is unacceptable and to demand that the Irish government call for the suspension of Israel from the Euro-Med Agreement which grants it special trading privileges with the EU.

The people of Gaza are not statistics; they have names, families, dreams. I have friends there and they are resilient, strong and inspiring - they have been resisting occupation since 1948, “to exist is to resist”.

I was chatting to a friend in Gaza online the other night and he was telling me about his day, about seeing dead people being taken from the rubble of their bombed homes. As we talked the windows of his house were blown in by a nearby explosion. He then spent ages trying to reassure me, that’s the kind of spirit the people there display, in Arabic it is sumoud – steadfastness and I guess it sustains the Palestinians. These powerful words are from a woman living in Tel al Hawa in Gaza with her husband and baby daughter who suffers from cerebral

palsy: “Let me ask those working for the protection of human rights and dignity ... has my right to life become a dream in Gaza? Has the right of children to enjoy a decent and safe life become a dream? What did we do to this world to be left under the Zionist fire with no real action?” Free Gaza, end the siege.

If interested in Palestine Solidarity in Ireland: [www.ipsc.ie](http://www.ipsc.ie) or email [zoe.lawlor@ul.ie](mailto:zoe.lawlor@ul.ie)

# “I’m Hungarian, not Spanish!” - Diary of a Girl From the Heart of Europe

Petra Gönczi

*A sentence I had to say many, many times since I’m here, in Ireland: “I’m Hungarian, not Spanish!” Not that I’m offended by the assumption, but after a while I do feel exhausted explaining that despite my appearance I am not from Spain. Or Italy. Or Portugal. On the other hand, before I came here, I had a few expectations too. First of all, I wanted to meet some leprechauns. Seriously: Where are the leprechauns?*

If anyone knows, please, let me know. I promised my family and my friends that I will take one home. Not because we want some wishes to be fulfilled - those guys just seem to be cool.

Leaving jokes aside now (but seriously, I’m not kidding about the leprechauns...), coming from Hungary, I had to face some shocking cultural differences since my arrival.

I know that Hungary is not one of the most powerful countries politically or economically, but I tell you this: the world can thank us for a lot more than you may know. I don’t want to give a lecture on how cool Hungary is, but let me just give you a list of examples so that you can feel the hint of it, with the help of a 9gag post, which appeared on the internet a year ago:

“Helicopter invented by Oszkár Asbóth, telephone exchange invented by Tivadar Puskás, C- vitamin discovered by Albert Szent-Györgyi, ballpen, invented by László Bíró; [and many other examples such as] the Ford Model-T (József Galamb), the

articulated bus (Gábor Lassú, László Rózsa, Béla Színi), the carburettor (Donát Bánki, János Csonka), the electric locomotive (Kálmán Kandó); the high - altitude engine [or jet engine] (Albert Fonó), the dynamo (Ányos Jedlik), the computer (János Neumann), Microsoft Office Word and Excel (Károly Simonyi), the Wolfram-bulb (Sándor Just, Ferenc Hanaman, Imre Bródy), and the biogas reactor (Péter Kiss).

I’m stopping here, but I could have mentioned the atomic accelerator, the binoculars, the TBK biodiesel, the glass concrete, the colour television, the transformer, the Rubik’s cube, the film recording device, the talkies, the ‘Basic’ computer language, the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, the soda water, the water turbine, and the list just goes on, and on, and on.

This is a lot to digest, I guess, you may need to relax. So take a chill-pill (invented by János Sellye) or smoke a cigarette, but be careful not to burn your fingers with the safety matches (János Irinyi)...

Look at that. It does sound like a lecture. Anyway, what I’ve been meaning to say that with all this knowledge collected in Hungary, I felt a bit disappointed when somebody I was talking to was totally sure that Hungary is somewhere in South America. I wanted to warn her that you probably shouldn’t go there with your backpack looking for the country as you will get lost pretty soon. But I didn’t want to appear to be lecturing (again), so I just

left it there.

Instead, now I’m using the power of the press to say what I mean. I know that Hungary might not be the ‘best’ country in the world (even if there is such a place), but it is one of the best, for sure. The truth is, we all have cultural stereotypes. And we carry that bag of European manners and behavioural norms we received from home everywhere we go and when we find something completely different from it, well....that brings us to a new chapter.

This is about how I was so surprised to find that I should probably forget about some things I would expect at home, during these four months I spend here.

Example 1: There’s no such thing as teatime or coffee break. It’s always Guinness.

Example 2: When this liquid is falling down from the sky, don’t bother taking precautions. It is definitely not rain. Just put on your usual clothes: shorts, T-shirts, flip-flops. Be Irish.

Example 3: If you do put on several layers of clothes, also wearing a winter jacket, a thick scarf and a hat, you will look like a walking sign: ‘I’m from abroad’. There’s no way to hide.

Example 4: The quantity of alcohol you have consumed so far must be made known to the whole neighbourhood. So put those empty bottles in the window!

Example 5: You have to be ‘grand’ all the time. If you’re not, make it so. You must have the ‘craic’. You’re in Ireland, for God’s sake.

Just to make it sure, if you would ask



**Hungary’s “counties” with none of them being even remotely linked to Spain.**

anybody in Hungary about how they feel and how their life is in general, prepare yourself for a true, therefore not so happy and most of the time, long answer: ‘I’m good, but very tired. Last night, I was up for so long because the neighbours were noisy. I knocked at least three or four times on their door until eventually they answered and I could tell them to be quiet. After all that, I got to bed at two in the morning. No, wait. It was three. Maybe, half past two. No, no. It was definitely three.’ And then if the person who just wanted to be friendly with you happened to be a foreigner, she or he would be thinking: ‘Why on earth are you telling me all this?’

Of course, I might be exaggerating slightly, but I think you understand my point. Foreigners say that Hungarians complain too much, but I like to

say that we are realistic. And let me assure you that it is always a good conversation starter to tell somebody how ‘awful’ your life is, because then they will realise that they are not the only ones with problems and, most importantly, that their life is not as bad as they thought before. Of course, later you must start complaining again, so as not to break the circle of life.

So whenever you want to have a truthful, emotional talk with a hint of sarcastic humour, find a Hungarian. If we are famous for something, it is the hospitality. Especially if you know where is Hungary in the map. That gives you extra points.

If you are willing to learn more about the country (Magyarország) and the language (magyar), than you will have a Hungarian friend for a lifetime.





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# UL Ninjas Ultimate Frisbee Travel to Trinity Tea Party

Caoimhe O’ Sullivan

The ultimate frisbee club sent a team to Trinity Tea Party, a beginner tournament in Trinity College Dublin, on the 27th and 28th of October. This was the first tournament for all our beginners and it gave them a chance to test their newly learnt skills on beginners from other colleges around Ireland. They did UL proud winning 5 games over all and losing 2 games by only 1 point. Here’s a report of the games.

Our beginner’s first game saw them come up against Trinity 2. It was an exceptionally close game that lead to UL only losing by one point to Trinity 2 with a score line of 4 – 3. Not disgruntled by their narrow defeat the Ninja’s focused their sights on the next game against ITB. In this game our beginners developed more as a team by improving their general play and throws. This resulted in a great win 9 – 4 for our beginners, the score was 9-4.

Continuing their great form from the ITB game UL’s next competitors were the secondary school team Gonzaga 2 complied of 1st and 2nd years. Chris Gorry and Liam Madden’s throws improved as each game progressed with some stand out play here which lead UL to a brilliant second victory, the final score being 10 – 3.

For our beginners final game of the day they were paired against the Belfast team, Queens. They started off in similar style to their other games with some great cutting and some lovely passes among each other which gained themselves the lead against Queens. With some great grabs from Shane Walsh in the end zone it ended in a 9 – 3 victory to the UL Ninjas! This saw our beginners progress to the quarterfinal stages which would take place on Sunday. It was now time for the party, allowing the beginners to display their attempts at fancy dress code!

The following day saw our beginners faced with their toughest game yet: The quarterfinal against UCD. Maintaining the high standards of the previous day our beginners took an early lead but UCD never gave up. This resulted in UCD orchestrating a comeback that resulted in them catching the winning point just before the buzzer sounded. The final score was 9 – 8 to UCD, who later went on to win the tournament overall.

Picking themselves up after the defeat to UCD, UL focused on their next game against Trinity 2. After a narrow defeat yesterday our beginners were anticipating another tight game. With some good movement and quick passes it saw UL take the opening points but Trinity fought back. An intense game



was had but this time UL emerged victorious with a final score of 9 – 6.

The Ninja’s final game of the day saw them up against NUIG, which would decide their final standing in the tournament. A great start was had by the Ninja’s, which only continued with some excellent offensive play by the beginners. The Ninja’s slowly built up a lead in the game and managed

to maintain it with some wonderful defense never allowing Galway to get back into it. The game finished with a 10 – 3 victory to the UL beginners seeing them finish 5th overall. This was a massive achievement for our beginner’s first ultimate tournament.

The Trinity Tea party was a huge success and we would like to thank the tournament directors and the Trinity

players who hosted us. Shane Walsh won MVP (Most Valuable Player) after a great performance and Gary Gilmartin was the winner of MSP (Most Spirited Player) for our team over the course of the tournament. Congratulations to all who played and for finishing 5th , you did the UL Ninja’s proud!

# UL Ninja Ladies Ultimate Frisbee Indoor Intervarsities

Caoimhe O’ Sullivan

The Ultimate Frisbee club entered two teams into Ladies Indoor Intervarsity’s (IVs), , in this semesters biggest tournament in the Ladies Division, which was hosted in the UL arena on the 3rd of November. A challenging day faced both teams, with games against some of the best college teams in Ireland. But the girls did us proud with UL 1 placing in 4th, achieving their best finish to date, while UL2 took home Spirit.

UL1 began the day against UCC 3, a team primarily full of beginners. The girls started well building an early lead against UCC3, beginning to develop chemistry as a team. This game ended in a comprehensive victory for UL1 9 – 1.

Meanwhile UL2 saw themselves face the top seeds Trinity in their opening game. Although apprehensive, the girls remained positive throughout the game. This saw the girls score the opening point but unfortunately Trinity’s zone saw them take the win. The final score was 12 – 1.

The next game for UL1 saw them facing off against the ineligible team from NUIG. The ladies started off well scoring the opening points but NUIG began to fight back. The girls switched to their zone defense in an effort to slow down NUIG’s attacking comeback, but in the end the game ended in a deserved draw for both sides.

Not disheartened by their defeat against Trinity, UL2 turned their

attention to their next game against NUIM, a relatively new team on the circuit of Irish Ladies Ultimate. The girls had some great movement throughout the game but unfortunately NUIM finished out the game with a victory.

The UL1 girls now focused their attention on their toughest game in their pool against eventual winners UCC1. We took the opening point but UCC began to fight back with their zone defense opening out an early lead. In many ways the final result didn’t reflect the intensity witnessed throughout the game that saw UCC1 win on a score of 12 – 2.

For the UL2 girls their next game saw them face a strong UCD side. Not dwelling on the last game, the girl’s chemistry on the pitch improved throughout this game with some skillful throws by all on the pitch. This game unfortunately ended in a defeat for the UL2 girls but their positives to take from the game.

Not focusing too much on their defeat, the UL1 girls concentrated on their most important game of the day against DCU. A win here would see the girl’s progress to the semi finals, and guarantee them a top four finish. The girls began the game by breaking out their zone defense that worked perfectly and saw the girls score the opening points of the game. Continuing with this great movement it saw the UL1 girls take the game with a convincing 12-2 victory.

The UL1 girls now progressed to



the Championship Bracket .They now faced a competitive Trinity side. With the use of their zone defense it witnessed Trinity take an early lead. But the UL1 girls were determined to fight back and through some quick passes it saw the girls score 4 points through the great grabs of Sarah Melvin. In the end Trinity won the game the final score being 12 – 4, putting them through to the final.

UL2’s final game of the day saw them play against NUIG in the 9th/10th placed game. The girls, although tired went into the game determined to finish

on a strong note. A hard fought game ended in an 11-1 victory for NUIG.

UL1’s final game saw them face off in the third place game against NUIM. The girls from UL got off to a great start scoring the first four points, through some great movement and quick passes. This changed quickly as NUIM doggedly fought their way back into contention. It was an intense game, but unfortunately for the UL1 girls, it ended in a 9-5 defeat against a highly competitive NUIM outfit.

Ladies Indoor Intervarisesites was a huge success and we would like to

thank the tournament directors and the UL Arena for a great tournament. UL2 were a deserved winner of Spirit in the overall tournament. Their MVP (Most Valuable Player) was Elayne Ahern, while their MSP (Most Spirited Player) was awarded to Eileen Courtney. UL1 received their best finish to date at an Intervarsity event with an overall finish of fourth. Their MVP was Sarah Melvin, while MSP was given to Nikki Laurence. Amazing achievements by both teams and they represented the UL Ninjas excellently!



# Kick off with UL Tae Kwon Do Club

The UL Taekwondo Club has been hard at it over the last semester. This semester's weekend away trip took place in Galway. Following on from hosting NUI Galway taekwondo club in UL for an interclub training session the previous year, NUI Galway Taekwondo aptly returned the favour.

Four cars of UL Taekwondo's club members left early on a sunny Saturday morning from UL's campus and arrived in Galway a short time later. A tough training ensued in the state of the art Kingfisher sports club located on NUI Galway's campus. Training began with quite intensive cardio followed by static and dynamic stretching. This was great for those us who travelled in the slightly smaller cars on the way to Galway. Combinations of Kicking and Hand techniques followed. After which we engaged in target kicking. This works on coordination, speed and accuracy. Kicking is a fundamental part to Taekwondo. This all lead up to many peoples highlight of the training session, free sparring. Where UL taekwondo club tested its sparring skills against NUIG Tae Kwon do members. Sparring is essentially a friendly fight between competitors. We finished the training session with self defence techniques. Which we learned can be useful to defend yourself as quickly as possible without taking unnecessary

chances.

The class was great for seniors and beginners alike. It was a great chance to gain some experience with students from another club and get a feel for the Galway style of training. After which NUI Galway Taekwondo club members dined with us in their favourite Galway restaurant. The weekend away would not be complete without some intercollegiate social networking .That evening we experienced a lot of what the city had to offer, from quaint pubs to buzzing music venues.

Sore bodies (and heads) were the norm as we left the hostel and set off on the motorway back to Limerick. It was a huge success and I hope everyone enjoyed the trip. Special thanks to NUI Galway Taekwondo club and we hope to continue to maintain a close connection with them.

For those who missed out, fear not. The club is planning other events next semester. Such as the eagerly awaited trip to South Korea. As always new members are welcome. If you're looking to get fit, or to meet people and just have a good time, come join the UL Tae Kwon Do club today. We train in the old sports (PESS) building as follows: Monday 18.00 – 21.00, Wednesday 21.00 – 22.30 and Thursday 18.45 – 20.15.



# UL Athletics National Road Relays

Kevin Moore  
UL Athletics PRO

The IUA road relays once again took place in Maynooth on the college grounds. The UL athletics team were all suited and booted in their new athletics gear with many new-comers combined with the seasoned campaigners!

The first race of the day was the ladies relay, which was broken down into a 1mile leg followed by two two mile legs and finishing with a one mile leg. We had two ladies teams take to the start line in a field of 17 teams. The first two up were Imogen Cotter and debutant Avril Hurley, finishing with splits of 6:08 and 6:18 respectively. Next up for the ladies teams were Una Britton and Meave Curley who both ran 11:34 and 13:47 respectively. The second two mile leg was run by first year Grace Lynch and Masters student Maeve Culhane both running times of 11:44 and 12:07. Both teams were brought home in style with Olwen Kennedy again on her UL debut running 5:50 and Fionnuala Mulroy finishing in a time of 5:54. The ladies A team were moving up the field the whole time and were effectively running out of ground towards the end and finished in 5th place with the second team coming 8th, great running by all.

The second and final race of the day was the men's equivalent. Here again we had two full teams, the format for this event started with a one mile leg, then two mile, three mile, two mile and finishing with a one mile leg. First up was the always vibrant Niall Tuohy and

debutant Georg Fischer both running times of 4:35 and 4:46. The second leg was handled by seasoned Colin Maher and UL athletics newcomer Brian Campion both running times of 10:48 and 11:04. The three mile legs were handled by yours truly and Donegal man John McCallion both running through in times of 15:19 and 17:35. The penultimate legs were manned by the machine that is Michael Carmody and the ever improving Aodhán Tuohy in times of 10:08 and 11:09 respectively. Both teams were brought over the line by American Pat Foley and Shawn McCormack in times of 5:02 and 5:19. Niall Leamy and Eoin Lees both competed on a combined team with DCU athlete's completing the final two legs in 11:38 and 5:30 respectively. Our A team finished 10th and B team 17th in a field of 28 teams.

Well done to all who competed, great to see such strong number representing UL athletics and a strong team ethic about. It was great to have a competition before Christmas to set a benchmark before many of our athletes go away on the clubs warm weather training camp to Gran Canaria in January. We shall look forward to the New Year with some great expectations for the Indoors, Cross Country and Track & Field that are to follow next spring. Wishing all our athletes the very best in their end of term exams and take it easy on the pudding over Christmas. Check out [ulathletics.webs.com](http://ulathletics.webs.com) and [facebook.com/ULAthletics](https://www.facebook.com/ULAthletics) for updates, reports, results and photos.

Conlans BMW – The Driving Force



behind UL Athletics

The club would like to thank Conlans BMW of Limerick for the recent sponsorship of the club. This sponsorship is much appreciated and goes a long way towards helping the club stride forward. As one knows to run a club or society is a costly venture

and any help can go a long way. Conlans BMW is Limerick's only Authorised BMW Dealer, they can cater for all your BMW and MINI motoring needs. With their state of the art premises located in Limerick City we are ideally placed to deal with all your BMW/ MINI concerns from counties, Clare,

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*Check out [www.conlansbmw.ie](http://www.conlansbmw.ie) for more information.*



# The Grass Is Greener On the Other Side

Melissa Larkin

“I’ve got to get out of this town.”

That realisation had hit me years ago. While from an innocent outsider’s perspective my home town admittedly has that charming village idyll about it, the one that subtly screams close-knit community and friendly townsfolk at you, that was not the case – at least not for me.

There were many things about picturing forever being stuck in that place that were anything but appealing. Blindly following the same routines day in and day out, having the same conversations over and over again – no word of a lie, they really do – and ending up in some dead-end job just didn’t appeal to me and the fact that by the age of 13, I was convinced this thing people call a “social life” was but a fictitious construct of society didn’t help either.

I felt tied down, out of place and out of touch with the rest of the civilised world.

And it wasn’t just that town, it was that country.

Yet, there was still hope. I’d figured out the way to not end up stacking shelves in the local supermarket and spending the rest of my days in misery, wondering if that’s all there is to life. The key to free me of those shackles? Education.

Skipping forward a couple of years, I find myself sitting at Munich airport, waiting for the plane that would take me to freedom, namely Ireland, a country I had never before visited

but the pictures had looked quite impressive and from what I’d heard the Irish were a decent bunch of people.

I know what you’re thinking, what could possibly go wrong?

My mum of course had been generous enough to share her opinion on this adventure of mine, “The grass isn’t always greener on the other side,” she’d said, “Germany can’t be as bad as you try to make it sound and a lot of people would be glad to live here, you know.”

Obviously she had a point, as I had incredulously listened to many foreigners backing that claim before and since. So, altruistic as I am, I gladly made room for one more.

On the flight over and more so the drive from Dublin down to Limerick the next morning however, I seriously started doubting myself.

What had I been thinking? Sure, I had an understanding of the English language but I was no native speaker and yet, here I was signed up for a course that would be working with language more than anything.

And then there was the flip-side to leaving everything behind. I knew no-one here. More troubling still: meeting new people was, for obvious reasons, not exactly my greatest strength. What if I didn’t get along with anyone?! What if this turned out to be just a huge mistake?

So, self-doubt and pure fear comfortably sat on my shoulders, I ventured forth into the unknown.

My first encounter with the natives turned out to be quite disappointing, they did not sound like Mrs Brown at

all. The BBC had managed to deceive me once again it seemed.

Getting started at UL was at first daunting. The place was huge and for the better part, I felt a map would’ve come in handy, especially in the labyrinth that is the main building. To this day I have no idea how I managed to be on time for anything during the first few weeks but I feel childishly enthusiastic about the fact that I was.

Punctuality however, obviously wouldn’t be worth a thing, if I ended up not understanding a word people were saying, which was frankly an idea that had from the start taken up quite a bit of real estate in my mind. Yet, that terrible, unconquerable language-barrier that I’d been so scared of, luckily was nowhere to be found.

Next, I found myself waiting in the longest queue at the C&S Recruitment Drive, planning to sign up for the International Society – and let me tell you, there’s a reason for that queue, or quite a few actually: from TGIF to Book Club, Music Club, movie screenings, numerous trips (you’ve probably at some point come across the stampede that is a trip sign-up in Red Raisins), you get the idea.

So, if you’re not a member already, go sign up immediately. Don’t worry, I’ll wait... Done? Great. Welcome aboard, I’m your First Year Rep. Nice to meet you.

As you might have noticed, things are finally going my way, I enjoy my work, I learned that that “social life” thing does exist – and can at times be draining – that when the Irish talk



A foreign perspective on what Ireland is really like, when in reality it offers so much more.

about having the craic, they are not talking about drugs and last but not least, I can finally breathe.

Now, more than halfway through my first term at UL, I think I can safely say that taking that terrifying step all the way across Europe was the best decision I could have made. Of course even here I’ve encountered my fair

share of obligatory idiots – no offence intended – but that’s fine, because I’ve also met some of the most amazing and supportive people there are, that I feel privileged to know.

Oh, and by the way, I feel obliged to mention the grass is actually literally greener here.

## UL Eagles Earn Tough Win VS DCU Saints

Sean Reidy

UL Eagles prevailed in a hard-fought dogfight against a DCU St. Vincent’s team that was celebrating their club’s 50th anniversary this weekend. The Eagles got off to a good start and carved out a sizeable lead in the first minutes, leading by 12 points to 3. They finished the quarter nine points ahead, leading 19-10. However, in the second quarter, tighter defence by DCU, combined with some poor shooting by the Eagles saw the lead whittled down to just three points at half time, leading 33-30.

After half time, DCU resumed a torrid defensive battle and went into the lead for the first time with scores from Pat Glover and Martins Provizors. The lead changed hands several times during this third quarter as the home crowd cheered DCU on. Going into the fourth quarter, the game got increasingly heated and physical and threatened to boil over at times. Technical fouls against two of the DCU players gave extra free throws and possession to the Eagles and they made them pay. The Eagles American player, Robert Taylor, really cut loose in this quarter and scored freely despite very close attention from the DCU guards. His final tally of 24 points was a big factor in the eventual Eagles’ win 72-56.



Eagles American player, Robert Taylor rises above a tough Saints defence to score.

This was a hard-earned pressure win on the road for the Eagles. “The final score does not reflect the game at all. It was exactly the same type of game as last year’s Superleague final when we met Saints previously, a real tight, defensive battle,” said Eagles head coach Mark Keenan.

“It was a dogfight but we showed our

composure at the end which was great because with the straight league run-off this year and no playoffs, you really can’t afford to drop games like this.”

Next weekend, the Eagles have a double-header, with a game against Dublin Inter in Dublin next Friday followed by UCC Demons in the UL Arena next Saturday at 7.30 p.m.

## The Basketball Club Season Review So Far

Noreen O’Connell

So another college basketball season is in full flight and what a start it has been. A vast number of talented Freshers joined our club in September and brought plenty to the squads. Many fresher’s made it onto the varsity squads after intense trials run by coaches Davy Keogh and Neil Campbell.

The women’s and men’s varsity team have got off to a fantastic start, both winning their first league games against CIT. The women won on a score of 55 -29 and the men’s game finished 79-62. Both teams traveled to the King Fisher Sports Centre, Galway to play NUIG with the Women having a successful trip and some of the Younger Men learning there is a big step up to college basketball, however they will bounce back.

The fresher’s tournament is on the 24th and 25th of November in Carlow. Training is well and truly underway even if it’s at 07:30 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This tournament as always, promises to be a fantastic

weekend for all involved. UL men are in a group with UCC & DCU. The UL Ladies are in a four team pool with IT Carlow, TCD & NUIM. We wish both teams the very best of luck.

The varsity teams are very strong again this year with first years making a huge impact. Some players are returning after their Erasmus placements, while others are just beginning theirs. There are also a number of players in their final year and are still finding time to play basketball and be fully dedicated to their teams. This is an amazing reflection of their commitment and loyalty to the game and to their team. We hope this continues throughout the season and wish these students the very best.

Overall, the season is well underway and all players are putting in a lot of work, time, and energy into the game every time they step on the court as are the coaches and managers (Nor!!) and we are confident that this pays off throughout the season !!



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# Exam Special – Essential Study Tips – PRE EXAM

Paddy Rockett  
Academic Officer

First things first – the next few weeks are going to be hectic as and difficult. Here are a few tips and some advice for getting through the exam unscathed!

- Bye bye Facebook! Get rid of it
- Eat well –learn what breakfast is
- Early rise and early to bed
- Plan your study with a timetable – hit targets you make
- Start small – work into a rhythm – its like sex! (actually start small was a bad choice)
- If you can study in groups teaching the topic to someone else is the main method of remembering and learning a topic
- Take regular breaks and come back to the topic
- Identify your learning style
- Do NOT pull all nighters – minimal retention –minimal rest
- Have concise notes that help you learn the topic – Flashcards really help.

We’ve got you covered, during exam week your VP/Academic Paddy is on hand Monday to Saturday in the exam hub (photocopy room in the SU) giving out free tea and coffee, red bull and some of the lovely exam packs we’ve created for you and he’ll be there for you to cheer about the great exams and to bitch and moan about the question the lecturer said would come up.

Make sure you drop in and most of all, look after yourselves and each other



ONE OF THESE DESKS COULD MAKE YOU FAIL AN EXAM.

HOW MANY RULES DOES THIS DESK BREAK?



CLEAN HANDS, CLEAN DESK, NO FAIL.



EMAIL [sueducation@ul.ie](mailto:sueducation@ul.ie) FOR INFORMATION ON EXAM REGULATIONS

during the exam period – this can be a difficult time of stress. Don’t be afraid to tell each other to take a break. Just make sure that break does not involve breaking open a bottle of jager and hitting town! Best of luck in the exams!

Exam Special - Rules Holy s\*\*t!  
Every single year we have students who come under the discipline process

because they are caught for academic cheating in the exams as they get stressed studying beforehand and walk in and neglect to check themselves before the wreck themselves.

- No unauthorised material –pages, calculators with writing on them no books, no dictionaries or log tables
- No writing on authorised material – dictionaries, log tables (if permitted)
- NO NOTES WHATSOEVER!

- No writing on your hands!!! –None at all even if it’s unrelated to the topic, go in there clean and washed.
- Make sure all rulers and calculators have NO WRITING on them at all even if you heart Justin Bieber –it’s cheating!
- Forget bringing your phone - it will go off and you will be kicked out of the exam hall.
- UL operates a “clean desk policy” have a look at the picture above – try

and keep your desk that way during exams.

Over the next few weeks we are publishing exam help series on facebook and we’ll send some to your emails in the lead up to exams.

What ever happens in the exams make sure you know the rules and that you follow the academic regulations.

# Erasmus Diary: Lads, Who Turned Off the Heat?

Rachel Dargan

The weather in Malta has finally taken a turn. My shorts have been resigned to the back of the wardrobe and I’m now battling through the rain on my walk to college in jeans and hoodies! I will admit though, that the first time it rained properly here, with the rain bouncing off the ground, it did remind me of home and it was actually kind of fun. Now though, it’s like September in Ireland, and I’m not a huge fan of it anymore!

Another thing that I’m not a huge fan of is the lack of a Penneys here in Malta. (It would appear that the Maltese aren’t fans of this either, as every time I get complimented on something from Penneys, they go into a massive rant about how they need one on the island!) I have withdrawal symptoms as I haven’t been inside one now for over two months, and the shops here aren’t great. They have New Look, Dorothy Perkins, Next and the like, but the clothes are even more expensive than they are at home, and nowhere but New Look have stuff for the younger crowd, and I don’t know any Maltese girls well enough to ask them where they get their clothes! (Oh well, only another month

before I can attack Penneys and their knitwear section!)

In an effort to keep me from going insane from not being able to buy new clothes, my boyfriend’s parents brought me a few bits from Penneys when they visited last weekend. Having them over here for the weekend was great because we got to show them all of our favourite things and places to go rather than just telling them about them over Skype. They were really impressed at how we’re getting on with our apartment and at how we’ve managed to make friends that are living here full time, rather than just other people who are on Erasmus and Study Abroad. During the weekend that they were here, it was like we rediscovered a lot of the island in the space of three days and paid attention to stuff that we’d stopped paying attention to a while back, like how pretty the smaller streets in Valletta are, and how beautiful Mdina is.

College wise, things are starting to feel even more different from UL than they have felt before. For one history module, I have to go to the archives in Valletta and work on a volume of notarial documents from 1835 for my assignment. Unfortunately, we still don’t know what exactly we have to

do for the assignment; our lecturer just keeps telling us to go and work on these documents and to worry about what we have to do later! Another reason that it feels very different to UL is that right now, while everyone is in a state of pre-exam panic, ours won’t kick in until the Christmas holidays, as after Christmas there is still two weeks of classes and then two weeks of exams to do before we can come home!

As this is my last Erasmus Diary for An Focal, I must say that as much as I complain about different things in Malta, it really is a wonderful place to come and study. The weather, the nightlife and the freedom that the University of Malta gives you makes it a really unique place to come for a semester and there is so much to do and see when you’re not in class that it feels like you’re getting a sort of backpacking experience as well as an Erasmus placement! If you get the opportunity to come to Malta on Erasmus, do it. It will be one of the best decisions you’ve ever made, and if you feel like doing something different, stay in an apartment rather than the University Residence, because it is not only cheaper, but it is a great way to get to know Malta and how to make your



Maltese buses and Irish levels of rain try their best to dampen spirits in Malta in the winter months.

own way around the Island. Lastly, I want to say a huge ‘Thank You’ to Malta, and to all of the new friends I’ve made because it’s been amazing,

and I’d do it all again tomorrow! (Even though I’m not going to be home until February!)



# Venice: Create A New Definition Of Yourself

Aoife Coughlan

A holiday in a holiday, how is that for inception? Well it is what I have been up to here in Italy in the last couple of weeks. With a few euros saved, a backpack loaded with clothes and some good intentions to catch up on the notes I would miss, I headed south from Venice for Naples and Rome.

Exploration of a country gives you more perspective, and I would advise any Erasmus student to try and fit in a small bit of travel in their host country. Naples, I found to be a world away from elegant, cool and chic Venice. Disembarking from the train I stepped into a crazy atmosphere of scooters, honking and a maze of street sellers and hecklers. It was unbelievably fast paced and enlivening, I loved it immediately. Touring, photos and rambling works up an appetite though and soon it was pizza time. Going to Italy is not complete without queuing at a Naples institution for the greatest pizza on earth. And no, this is not sensationalism nor exaggeration. Anywhere that can make pizza base, tomato and basil taste amazing is worth its weight in gold (and the consumer's weight after too much indulgence!). Pizza box, grungy step and some shady characters for company completed a perfect Napoli experience.

From pizza to Pompeii and Amalfi made for an unforgettable experience, meeting some amazing people, takeaway like you have never had

before (homemade pasta no less) and a rather long hitch-hiking session. However plans had to change as weather did. A wet Sunday with no bus lines running, and the possibility of being stranded in any place I walked to meant leaving a day early for Rome. But that is one thing I have learned from my Erasmus experience, adapting is a very convenient skill to hone. So I left with a whim that I could persuade the landlord in Rome to let me arrive early.

In Rome my family joined me. A great week was had with some sight-seeing and between my sister and I a lot of Peroni-drinking (having finally found a bar of Venice price standards). There is something strange about meeting people whom you have not seen in a while again. The strangeness is in the normality, time seems irrelevant.

Normality and comfort may be true but Erasmus still makes you feel miles away, if not from home or people but away from yourself. Being forced to be somewhere else is only positive, being comfortable but allowing yourself to open up to new experiences and ways of being is an experience to be had. You can say you need not travel for this but I disagree. You are removed from everything that defines you and so must create a new definition. This is the last of my Erasmus diaries and I hope to have another great few weeks. I will leave Italy in December but I will not leave the experiences and memories behind.



In Rome my family joined me. A great week was had with some sight-seeing and between my sister and I, a lot of Peroni-drinking.



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# Erasmus in Canada: Hoping for a White Christmas

Aoife Murphy

Studying in Canada is a really good experience. I can safely say I will never regret making this decision. Like most trips abroad it was filled with highs and lows. But, for anyone still deciding on where to go on Erasmus, Mount Allison and Canada have two thumbs up from me.

It's a stressful period here right now since the semester is almost at a close. Deadlines are coming up and final exams are approaching (eek!). On the plus side, it snowed here last week (yay!). While it didn't land, it means it is coming! Finally, I get a chance to use my snow boots. I am stupidly excited for the snow because it will be proper snow, not the slush we get. With the days getting darker and colder I'm waiting patiently for that first heavy snowfall. Hopefully I will have a white Christmas since I am spending it in Canada.

My biggest high of this trip was of course Thanksgiving and getting to experience it. I guess you could say I'm thankful for that experience. I'm happy that I got to see something that it important to Canadian culture and that I got to experience it with a family. Another highlight would be experiencing my first ever college football game. The atmosphere at these games is amazing. My lowest

point of the trip was trying to adjust to the small-town University; it is VERY small compared to UL. But I have really enjoyed my time here at MTA. Even though it is a tiny University it has a big community. It has a very personal feel about it, since for my classes my lecturers tried to get to know us. With my name it was difficult since I got either "how is it pronounced?" or weird adaptations of it.

I am sad that I have to leave soon. I'm pretty sure when I get back to Ireland I'm going to get the opposite of homesickness, Erasmus-sickness, maybe? I don't know, I'm sure there's a term for it. This is an experience I will never forget thanks to the welcoming people and the cosy atmosphere. As well as that, Canada itself is a lovely place to be. You might feel like you're miles away from home at some points but the friends you make abroad will always be there. Plus, being in Canada I never really suffered the infamous "Culture Shock" since it is a bit like Ireland in some ways. Do give Canada a chance because it will live up to your expectations and much more.



Dreaming of a white, albeit Canadian, Christmas

# I Owe You One, Toronto

Rob McNamara

My neck was beginning to ache as I stared up at the 50 or so floors of the BMO building. As the clouds scraped over the top I tore my eyes away to negotiate the bustling pavement and search for the facial expressions of my three companions. They were engrossed in the experience too and as the April winds blew us down Toronto's King St. en-route to our hostel, I knew we were all feeling the same: tired, but above all excited. They were the only familiar faces in this sea of strangers and this was both chilling and empowering in the same instance.

Living out of a suitcase is tough and after a week we were glad to leave the hostel and find a place to call home, even if just for a while. An Irish accent goes a long way and we were soon settled into our new house. A mix of Austrian, Australian, Italian, Dutch, Brazilian, French and locals made our three-storey house 16 strong.

Late June and summer were now in full swing. I was enjoying the big city heat wave and luckily we all managed to fall into employment at around the same time. I picked up a job in a restaurant, where I became one of many cooks at 'Lakeside Eats' on the harbour-front. I'd never so much as made toast at home but soon I was becoming a dab hand in the kitchen and on the grill.

The job was a social life in itself so I didn't mind the long hours. On rare occasions when the place was quiet I stared out across Lake Ontario to Toronto Island. The sun glistened on

the water as the boats bobbed up and down. The city stood behind me in its splendour and I knew that Toronto would always be a home from home.

Toronto is fascinating. Yonge St, the world's longest street is home to the main shopping district and just north of that on Spadina is the fascinating Chinatown that stretches for over a mile. Virtually anything can be purchased here, from clothes to cats, from fish to furniture.

On the whole Torontonians are very friendly and liberal. Every walk of life can be found in the city and identity, culture and individualism are openly expressed.

As fall edged its way in, the lease in our co-op home ended. It was time to move on and my cosmopolitan friends all went their separate ways. Some went to Vancouver, some went traveling, and some went home. I had fallen in love with the city and didn't want to leave. I decided to stay and got myself an apartment along with my friend.

I was lucky enough to find work as a security guard pretty soon after the seasonal restaurant work dried up. The snow was up to 15 centimetres thick some nights as I headed North on the 95 bus to Scarborough. It was a tedious yet steady job and I was proud of the way I scrimped and saved my money to keep the bills paid and fridge full. I made the most of my days off. I took in Raptors Basketball, Blue-Jays Baseball, embarked on day trips around Ontario and fulfilled a lifetime ambition by seeing Niagara Falls in winter. A memory that will live with me forever



is speaking to my grandfather for the last time before he died from a phone box on an autumnal, maple leaf laden Toronto Island while I was looking across the lake at the majestic sprawl of

the city.

The months rolled on and soon my year was nearly up. I survived the snowy days and freezing temperatures before returning home a changed man.

I owe you one, Toronto.



# Interview: The Stunning Frontman, Steve Wall

Aubrey O’ Connell  
Interview Editor

First taking to the stage in 1987, The Stunning released three studio albums, with two of which reaching number one, before parting ways in ’94. Now returning once more, The Stunning next month embark on their 25th Anniversary tour. An Focal chatted with legendary founder and frontman Steve Wall to hear about their big return, the Irish music scene and his new life as a thespian.

While nowadays more active in the form of The Walls, with brother Joe, Steve always relishes the chance to assume his role in The Stunning. It may now be a quarter of a century since breaking on to the scene, but things show no signs of slowing down, as a mixture of nostalgia and energy continue to draw crowds. “People come along and they really want to reconnect with a time when they were young and free and single going to gigs, maybe try to recreate some of the best times of their lives. We get people coming who were in their 20’s at the time, then their younger brothers and sisters who might have heard the songs playing at home, and even now we find their kids coming so there’s a great cross-section.”

Although popping up for several reunions in recent years, The Stunning’s last release came in the form of 1994’s Milking the Hits. With all members currently occupied with work in various other projects, time

is a scarce commodity. However, a new release is not to be ruled out of the equation, according to Steve. “I wouldn’t discount it. Our time is really spread thinly between things, though. Joe is currently working with BIMM rock school in Dublin and I’ve been doing a bit of acting so it’s tough. It’s definitely something that’s been in the back of our minds. We’ve had songs that weren’t used with The Walls and demos from The Stunning way back in ’94 so it’s something we’ll have to think about.”

Acknowledging the great differences in releasing a record in the present day, Steve admits that there’s a modern dilemma over which route to take. “It’s a strange time for the music business. You could just do a digital release but we always prefer to have physical product and the only place to sell them now is the odd shop or at gigs.”

As if to compound that sentiment, streaming service Spotify launched in Ireland this month as the internet continued its conquest of the music industry. Steve shared his thoughts on why services like this can not only be detrimental to artists but also unnecessary for listeners. “Years ago before the internet you would still hear music. If you were someone who was really interested in music you would seek it out. Your friends would be talking about bands they’d read about in the NME or HotPress and they might make you a copy of an album they had. If you were interested you would find

it. The problem with things like Spotify is how vast they are. You have millions of artists and they’re only making peanuts from online streaming. The money is just so miniscule that even people like Lady Gaga are starting to pull out.” However tough the music industry gets, Steve has another trick in the bag. Recently starring in Chris O’Dowd’s new show Moone Boy and a horror film due next year, he admits that he’s been bitten by the acting bug.

“I actually did some acting before the Stunning. That was what I originally wanted to do. I spent a couple of years in The Druids theatre in Galway doing some understudy and sound work. I even ended up moving to Dublin to pursue a career in acting because again, this was before the internet and by the time you heard about a part it was already cast. It was at a time when all these bands like Something Happens, A House and An Emotional Fish were just starting out and they would play this underground dive that I used to go to. It was always packed and I remember thinking, this whole music thing, there’s so much positive energy in it, I’ll start a band!”

It wasn’t until last year and a chance meeting with an old friend from The Druids that Steve decided to make a return to acting, turning up to audition for Moone Boy. “I thought I’d do a few auditions just for the experience, I had no view of actually getting the part, so when they called me up a few days later I was really surprised!



The Stunning frontman, Steve Wall, took some time to talk about his band, acting & the state of the music industry.

“I loved the character, Uncle Dan, just because I know so many guys like that. I guess I had a lot of experience to draw from”, he explains of his role in Moone Boy.

For those more interested in the music, Steve and Co. embark on their

tour on the 8th of December in The Set, Kilkenny, finishing up on the 29th in the Seapoint Ballroom, Galway in what is promised to be a “very special” show.

Tour details can be found @ thestunning.net

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