USI - €300k in debt

EXCLUSIVE

By Fergal D’Arcy & Jim McGrath

THE UNION of Students in Ireland has hit a financial crisis with debts of €300,000 which will lead to redundancies within the organisation.

In an effort to secure the future of the union, major changes will be discussed at the next national council in Athlone on the 14th February. These include eight out of the ten officers could not be paid due to a €300,000 debt of USI's current debt. This is over half student capitation fee from 1,250 colleges to pay affiliation fees. With roughly 200,000, USI's current debt was reduced by €180,000. This is over half of USI's current debt.

On Friday, January 23rd, following the meeting of USI Finance Committee, it was decided that the eight officers could not be paid from 1st April onwards. The positions of President and Vice-President will be the only two elected at USI Annual Congress in March. All other Officers will not be paid after congress but may remain as volunteers. Amongst the more controversial measures being proposed is one whereby the union will get its affiliation fees from student capitation directly from the Department of Education.

If successful, this will get around USI's perennial problem of getting money from individual students' unions. USI is also seeking an increase in each student's capitation fee from €2.85 to €5 for each student. USI has not increased its fees since 1998.

That year they reduced their affiliation fees. With roughly 20,000 students in DIT, this would give USI €100,000 to work with from one institute alone. Will Priestley, President of USI, partially blames the debt on the failure of certain colleges to pay affiliation fees. The Union President said, "In the current situation, where colleges to pay affiliation fees. The Union President said, "In the current situation, where colleges to pay affiliation fees, this isn't account for a colossal €180,000. This is over half of USI's current debt. Meanwhile, former President of USI, Colm Jordan told the DIT Independent that last year's officers were not fully informed of the financial situation in USI. He denies knowing of the debt while in office. Other sources close to the organisation have told the DIT Independent that USI's financial committee were not informed of the organisation's financial situation. According to one source, members were not given an opening balance on accounts at the beginning of their term of office.

According to a former member of USI's financial committee, at the end of last year they believed the debt was only €40,000.

The same source said, "The impression I got last year was that this was not the real financial committee and basically a talking shop. Every financial decision was made based on the idea that they had $5m coming to them from USIT, despite the delay in paying wages and bills." Current President Will Priestley said, "We'll be looking at our channels of communication between national council and the finance committee"

Both Priestley and Colm Jordan had no further comment to make prior to an investigation on the matter.

Former General Manager, Hugh Doogan, denies that any information was ever withheld from officers. Doogan resigned from his post within the union several months ago.

Lyndsey Jones, former Equality Officer with USI, told the DIT Independent that full-time positions in the organisation received a pay increase from €18,500 to €20,000 in the summer of last year. The organisation's structural review was released last February but sources indicate this review was not fully implemented. Currently the bulk of the national union's spending goes on wages.

USI are now facing major cut-backs and radical reform in order to save the organisation.

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New Chair for Governing Body

Sean Dorgan has been appointed as the new Chairperson of DIT's Governing Body.

Mr. Dorgan is Chief Executive of IDA Ireland and succeeds Professor Pat Fottrell. The Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Noel Dempsey, said that Mr. Dorgan will bring his vast experience and expertise to bear in guiding and supporting the continued development of DIT "as one of the most important institutions in the future of higher education in Ireland."

Professor Brian Norton, President of DIT, said "Mr. Dorgan's standing, both nationally and internationally, will serve to further enhance the Institute's reputation and he will be a tremendous force in DIT's exciting future development."

New look for website

DIT's all-new homepage is up and running.

The homepage aims to show as many DIT activities as possible as soon as you log on, and then allow you to navigate to the area that is most relevant to you.

Also new is a feedback option allowing you to submit your views and suggestions.

DIT Open Day 2004

Potential students visited DIT's campus on January 19th for the annual open day.

Students were on site to answer queries from leaving cert students while the Office of Lifelong Learning was also onsite encouraging people over the age of 23 to return to college.

Spin FM broadcast live from DIT on the day.

'Early Music week' in DIT

Friday January 30th marks the beginning of 'Early Music Week' in DIT Rathmines.

Students will be coached by five internationally renowned tutors to present open rehearsals.

They will then hold concerts in TCD on Thursday February 5th at Ireland and also on Friday February 6th in the Theatre in DIT Rathmines at lunchtime, all are welcome and admission is free.

DIT Fashion Show

DIT is set to host their very own fashion show on Tuesday, 23rd of March, in the Excise Bar which is located in the L.F.S.C. The show is going to be the biggest and brightest fashion show that DIT staff and students have ever witnessed.

The night is the Renaissance and this theme will be incorporated through imaginative styling, the venue, art work and music. The word 'Renaissance' also stands for rebirth which is apt because the last DIT fashion show took place over eight years ago.

This Fashion show is a great opportunity for every student in DIT; it gives one the chance to get involved in a creative event and also to be proud that all the DIT sites can put their wealth of talents together in creating the Fashion show.

It is in aid of Telethon which will in turn distribute the money raised on the night to charities. Louise Conlon, one of the co-coordinators appeared on TV3's Ireland AM programme on the 16th of January alongside three designers: Jenny Xu, Caoimhe Keane and Chupi Sweetman, and Assets model Sarah Mc Govern who is an ex DITSU president.

Model week took place between the 19th and 22nd of January and the response was phenomenal. The fashion committee scouted the major DIT sites for potential models and DIT's finest queued up to be photographed. The chance of a year long contract with Access Model Management enticed many budding models.

Model week also proved to be an excellent way of promoting the event (Dedicated helpers and suggestions are still required contact: Ciara O Donovan 087 2906333 or Louise Conlon 085 7353353).

College on screen

DIT Aungier ST has been cast as a police station for the last few weeks on RTE.

The last four Monday nights has seen the campus standing in for Garda Headquarters in Suboticas' production 'Proof'. Filming took place over the summer and the portering staff in particular lent a hand.

Another DIT connection is Finbarr Lynch who stars as a crooked journalist investigating corruption and human trafficking in modern day Dublin.

Lynch graduated from DIT in Marketing in 1981 and is one of the lead actors in the Royal Shakespeare Company. Sean Mahon a Marketing graduate from 1988 made an appearance in ER last Sunday as a bumbling community doctor. He has carved successful acting career in the US, appearing in Hulk last year.

DIT make the ShortScreen

RTÉ has launched a new series of short films called 'ShortScreen'. The producers have chosen to include 5 productions from the DIT School of Media as part of the series. Featured will be: 'The Greenhorn', produced as part of the MA in Film Production and 'Moving Day', 'Play nation x', 'Screwed' and 'The Foam on Top' produced for the BSc Communications: Film & Broadcasting. The broadcast dates are as yet unconfirmed.
Student numbers set to increase

By Aoife Malton

The number of students could be set to rise, rather than fall, according to figures released by the Department of Education.

It was believed that third-level applications were set to fall over the next decade but this is being challenged by new statistics. It is estimated that in 20 years some 100,000 students could be studying at third level.

The Department of Education would like to be contacted with any projections the Department comes up with. The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has called on the Department to come clean about the figures.

USI says that the minister and his department are "hiding projected figures of student numbers in the future in order for cutbacks to justify what he claims to be necessary cutbacks in the third-level sector."

USI president Will Priestley says "the number of undergraduates is to increase over the next decade proves doubt that there is a vital need for increased investment."

Television Trauma in Mountjoy DIT

By Ceri Teggin.

Students of Mountjoy Square were surprised and dismayed on their return to college in September to discover that the televisions in the Students Union and canteen had mysteriously disappeared.

On investigation it transpired that the televisions had been removed by order of the college authorities apparently because the noise they generated "interfered with the social interaction of students."

The decision to dictate to students on their leisure facilities has left a campus full of disgruntled young people. Requests for the reinstatement of the televisions have so far been turned down.

This raises a question as to why televisions have not been removed from the other DIT colleges.

If it is strictly a case of loud noise, are we to assume that the Applied Arts students are incapable of social interaction in a noisy environment, somethings their business, science, engineering and catering colleagues are managing quite easily?

In fact Aungier St Students Union has recently acquired two new digital televisions, with no objection from the authorities. It appears that maintaining equal standards across all DIT faculties is not high on the list of priorities for those in power.

So what do the students of Mount Joy think about the absence of their televisions? According to Students Union president, Shane Treacy, most felt the televisions were an asset which "provided company in the evenings." He believes it is unfair to remove a service which was never responsible for excessive noise in the first place.

This seems to be the general consensus and unhappy students have expressed their views by signing a petition in favour of the reinstatement of the televisions.

"We are currently awaiting a consultation with the faculty on whether they can come back or not," says Treacy. "It was only meant to be on a trial basis anyway."

One good thing has arisen from Mount Joy's television trauma. A new jukebox has been installed in the Student Union, which ironically generates more noise than the televisions ever did.

It seems that the trial period should have ended by now, having been considered a failure by most. Student feeling is that it must now be time to return the televisions to their rightful position (that is, their rightful position next to the jukebox, the radio and The Playstation in Mount Joy Sq. Student Union).
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

He believes there must have been a "snag" with the venue or getting the correct documentation in place. Balls promoted by Quak and the Business and Economic Society (B & E) put up their posters 2 weeks prior to their events. Shane Treacy does recall there was a problem with Aungier St. with tickets not being available in the student shop. He says that all the posters/tickets were sent out at the same time and a mix-up may have been due to a "breakdown in communication with Aungier St. to the same effect as one ever one else". Joe Savage has statements from students saying he put the posters up the night he received them. He also says the venue had still not been decided on the 20th October and that he had contact with Shane Treacy by telephone regarding which venue to use the week prior to the ball. Shane Treacy was on leave for 2 weeks before the 20th October.

Shane Treacy says it was a "strange thing" that the posters/tickets only arrived the night before but this was due to posters and tickets not being discovered in time. When DIT Independent contacted him a few days after seeing the courier records he denied saying this. Hugh O'Reilly, DITSU President, admits that organisation has been poor for DITSU balls. He believes that part-time officers don't have the time for the promotional work and that organisations like Quak promotions, the organisation that ran the Fresher's Ball for Aungier St. and Bolton Street, have the time. The strategic review outlines recommends a review should be carried out as to whether part-time officers should continue running Ents, but until then the balls will continue to be organised on "an ad hoc basis". Bolton Street and Aungier Street used Quak promotions for the Fresher's Ball. Other sites ran a ball through DITSU.

Joe Savage felt pressurised ever since going with Quak and decided to go with DITSU for the Halloween and Christmas Balls. "Ever since we went overall my site have done nothing but lose money. My site doesn't need money from events. I am better off not doing events. This is it - no further money from events. I have been pressurised my entire time there to make large sums. Quak are professionals and run events effectively. They made enough money from their events to satisfy students. This site, because of the eight pool-tables and arcades makes 25-30 thousand a year. It doesn't need money from events. I would rather make two thousand than lose completely." According to Joe Savage, an Ents officer said in a frank open discussion about figures and going with Quak: "Is it not unfair for you to go out on your own as you have the most people who go out", Joe Savage believes that Balls are run more effectively with an outside group like Quak Promotions and that this would free up time for more important student issues like exam appeals.

With Quak they do all the work, take all the risk, freeing up time for me to see to the serious side of the Union. However since I stopped using Quak promotions every waking moment of my life the weeks before a ball was nothing but promotion. This takes away the ability to deal with the serious needs of the students." Joe Savage has an unprecedented 100% exam appeals record.

Dear Sir/Madam.

I wish to call into question the position of DIT Independent's Events Editor, Alan MacStiofain. As Events Officer for Rathmines there is an obvious conflict of interest in him reporting and reviewing events that he has played a part in organising.

Also his piece in the first issue of this year's DIT Indo concerning Quak Promotions was one-sided and lacked objectivity for which only someone not involved in DITSU Ents could possess.

Have a look at his favourable review of the DITSU Halloween Ball, referred to in my piece "DITSU Balls Up" if not convinced.

Yours etc

Kieran Dineen
Strategic Review - what the students think

With a referendum in the offing Collette Devlin spoke to students in DIT about their opinions on the new student structures. This is just a small sample of student opinion and should not be taken as a comprehensive survey.

The Strategic Review of DITSU was due to be presented to the Student Council on the 27th January (after the DIT Independent went to press).

Council will be given a week to digest the information and then on the 3rd of February reconvene with their recommendations and overall decision. During the week in between, Hugh O'Reilly intends to make presentations to all the SRA's. This is needed as there are many questions that require answering and to clear up confusion amongst students. When asked at a recent SRA meeting how many of the students knew what this new proposal meant, not one hand went up.

When asked if any of them knew how DITSU currently operated they shook their heads. It is difficult time for students to be making such a huge decision. Many students have exams, are stressed with assignments and may not have the time nor inclination to ponder these changes.

DITSU does need change and professionalism, and what is proposed is radical. Hugh says that the biggest fault of DITSU is that it has done nothing to modernise itself in ten years.

The proposed changes are seen by some as sudden, and lacking progressive steps. According to a past DITSU sabbatical this review will be "the official death knell of the students' union." One Union who went through a similar review are DCU Students' Union.

According to one of their past presidents this type of structure is problematic: "When you have only three people who think they are in charge and a large number of staff you end up with a clash of personalities, corruption and resentment, which weighs down the process of getting work done".

Compared to other unions DCUSU has currently the highest staffing levels, which this past sabbatical claims has caused many problems.

Another past DITSU sabbatical said that every facet of this proposal indicates a faceless corporation. Opinion among students and former sabbaticals is split down the middle on the review whilst others said they don’t understand and have never heard about it. Further confusion exists regarding the selection process for the new professional positions. Hugh O'Reilly says that all the positions will be advertised fairly, internally and externally.

But he also says that none of the current staff would lose their jobs. If Council decides to implement the review there will be a referendum for all the DIT students.

According to Hugh O'Reilly it "won't cost more than a couple of thousand euros" that would come from a central campaigns and elections budget.

Last year in a survey of all students in DIT stated that they wanted more representation and campaigns as a priority for DITSU.

According to Hugh O'Reilly, Overall President of DITSU, it has cost somewhere between 30 and 40 thousand euros that was taken from last years budget. 9% of students capitation fees are paid to DITSU.

Students are asking: could this money for a referendum have been used to organise by-elections or be used for more campaigns such as lobbying National Government and the college for better facilities?

And if this proposal is implemented can this be achieved with only three sabbaticals? If the referendum passes, will it make DITSU more effective in the long run?

According to Hugh O'Reilly it will, but that's up to you as the student body to decide.

Second-class students’ angry

By James McGrath

Apprentices have hit out at what they perceive as unequal treatment in DIT. Speaking to the DIT Independent, 61 electrical apprentices outlined some of their grievances.

"We can’t get a student card, we can’t get a travel card and we can’t get books out of the library. We’re not being treated fairly and being treated as second-class students," said one apprentice.

James Carroll, DITSU representative for apprentices, said, "I agree that they are being treated as second-class students and I feel it is unfair. In the past they have been unable to avail of college facilities because they don’t receive their student card until halfway through their programme." The dissatisfaction comes in the wake of the new capitation fee of €233 for apprentices to complete their training in Institutes of Technology.

"We’re being used by the Government. We pay high taxes all year and then we come in here and have to pay another tax. Some of us are single parents and have mortgages to pay," commented another apprentice. Many are refusing to pay the charge on the advice of their union, the TEEU. "We’re not going to walk across the picket line it’s the worst thing we could do. Some of the big companies have paid the fee for their apprentices. But if you are with a small company they can’t afford to pay the fee:"

DIT agrees with the fee “on the grounds of ensuring the equitable treatment of all students.” A spokesman from the college told the DIT Independent: "While we understand that any additional charge is a burden for any student, the experience in DIT is that students on apprenticeships avail of many facilities provided and would like to see them as fully integrated into campus life as possible."

The €233 fee is a third of the fee for whole-time students. Apprentices attend DIT for a third of the time full-time students would. DIT will apply the same punishment for non-payment of capitation fee to apprentices as presently applied to full-time students.

According to a senior source within DIT it is understood that the crunch time will not come until the exams begin. Another well-placed source said "The College have taken the decision to wait and see”.

What do you think of having one Overall President and two vice Presidents?

The DIT Independent asks students for their personal opinion on the reformation of DITSU

"I know little about it. I’d imagine it will very hard to communicate.”

-Dominic Cullen - 2nd Year Business and Management

"It’s not as personalised, there will be no hand to help you around. It won’t help the place.”

-Will McNamara - 2nd Year Business and Management

"I think students prefer on-site presidents. With the current set up more students show their anticipation and run for positions. I don’t think part-time responsibility will work on site!"

-Katie Donoghue - 3rd Year BSC Management

"It’s a very big step with no progress. They could think it out more and move slowly. The roles themselves aren’t attractive. I think it’s great that the union are looking to the future as student environment has changed, they’ve changed with it.”

-Anita Conway - Societies Officer
By Collette Devlin

I HAVE JUST recently completed my sabbatical year at the University of Ulster Students' Union so I have a fair idea of what will work in a students' union and what will not.

If the structural review passes next week at council then DITSU will essentially be run by professionals. The plan is to reduce the number of sabbaticals from eleven down to three; President, Vice President - Academic and Student Affairs and a Vice President - Services and Trading.

It has been suggested by sabbaticals that these will be permanent three year contracts, although Hugh O'Reilly, President of DITSU, has denied this. This is ridiculous, I know for a fact and you can ask any sabbatical in the country, you could not survive in the union for that long.

It's such a stressful job you would be pulling your hair out and probably resign before you finish! We all know that DITSU presently doesn't have all its sabbaticals and are finding it tough to do their jobs. Just how do they propose that three officers will cope and manage to get around the fifty-something buildings in DIT? They say that they won't need to because they will have professionals.

It's proposed that each professional will be based on a certain site. Surely this will limit the availability of these professionals? For example, it would be a hassle for you to contact the DITSU entertainments if they were situated in Aungier Street and you were in Bolton Street. Losing the on site presidents will inevitably lead to the loss of personal contact on site.

Oh don't worry, say DITSU, "we have made provisions, we have set up a 24hr hotline and e-mail and we will have a professional in place to deal with student affairs." As a past Education and Welfare Officer this is deeply concerning. Put this way, if you had a problem would you rather leave a message on a 24hr hot-line or speak to someone you know and trust?

One person to deal with student affairs for all six sites is not enough and who is to decide if this so called professional is qualified enough to deal with student problems. At least with a sabbatical you have the security of knowing that he or she was recently a student and has probably gone through the same experiences as yourself.

Apparently this proposal will get the class representative system off the ground and running properly and give our SRA more power. The six Site SRA Chairpersons will have an "enhanced paid part-time position".

Think about it, you're a class rep with a mountain of assignments; would you be able to take on a role like site president, attending lots of meetings on different sites? of course not! As a class rep. myself I sincerely doubt you will have time and you may even forget the reason you came to college in the first place!

Do you really want to replace the sabbaticals in your union with a huge number of professionals? Just remember that the Students' Union is run for students, by students!

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Summer of Sam

IT'S THAT time of year again folks, when we start to wonder what the hell are we going to do for the Summer. Well the DIT Independent is here to help, with the first in a series which looks at the different options available for the Irish student.

G OING TO America on a J1 visa has been a popular attraction for many Irish students every Summer. Working and living in the States was and still is considered one of the best ways to spend your Summer, while you took a break from the rigours of college life. But the freedom once associated with this expedition changed somewhat after September 11th.

American authorities became a lot stricter in dealing with immigrants, for fear that terrorist organisations would use the student work scheme as a way of entering the country. Last year saw the US impose its most stringent measures yet. One of the measures imposed on those travelling was that you must have a job before going to America or else you wouldn’t be allowed in.

USIT, the largest vendor of J1 visas, then explained that the US State Department wanted fifty per cent of those travelling from Ireland to have jobs. Once fifty per cent of those holding visas had secured jobs USIT closed up shop and didn’t sell anymore visas.

This left many people caught unawares as there was no definite deadline when the visas would be taken off the market. If you didn’t buy one early you risked not getting one at all. One of the issues being the cancelled last year was whether final year students would be allowed to travel on a J1 visa.

The reason for this was that there was no assurance that once the visa had expired the applicant would still be allowed in. Last year it was fifty per cent of all applicants, this year it’s one hundred.

Last year they conducted random interview with students, this year everyone must attend an interview at the US Embassy. You even undergo an interrogation filling out the application form as one of the questions asks ‘are you or have you ever been a member of a terrorist organisation’.

You have to wonder how many terrorists they’ve caught with that particular strategy.

So what exactly so you need to go on a J1 this year. Well to qualify you must be over 18 by 24 May 2004. Then you need to get your work permit known as a DS 2019, then your visa. That’s the J1. You’ll also need a CIEE sponsor, a passport, return flights and a US job offer. Some of the vendors help with the job offers by setting up links between employers and students.

If you look at the glossy brochures handed out by student travel reps in the campuses you’ll notice it says in small print; “these options are not available to final year students.” USIT itself admits “it’s simply not as easy or as speedy as it used to be.” The US government have tightened up on regulations, red tape and security in the past year. One area where they’ve tightened up is on job offers.

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The problem arose because of the allocation of social security numbers. To work legally in the US you need a social security number. Previous years students would apply for their numbers and show the receipts from the Department of Social Security to prospective employers who would take it as proof that they’d applied. They would then be able to work and when their numbers arrived they would give them to their employers. But last year employers were more reluctant to take the receipts as proof. What made matters worse was a new stipulation from the Department of Homeland Security that employment must be registered within 20 days of arriving in the US, or else face losing their ‘work status.’

There was a huge delay in issuing social security numbers so many people had to come home without work after only a few weeks, while also being hugely out of pocket. At the time agencies co-ordinating J1s were heavily criticised for not warning students of the dangers.

Seona Mac Reamoinn, spokeswoman for USIT said at the time that students had been told about possible delays in getting social security numbers. However, it was not stressed and “it was assumed employers would continue taking on students with just a receipt of application for social security number, as they have in the past. It is totally legal for them to take on people with just a receipt.”

As USIT makes sure to stress this year, the US government does reserve the right to change the rules, and in the end there is very little that can be done about it. If you are going on a J1 this year enjoy yourself, but expect the unexpected.
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If you’re not part of the resolution you’re part of the problem

By Tony Derry

It’s THAT TIME of the year again folks. By now many of you will already have abandoned that New Year’s resolution that you so earnestly made a couple of weeks ago. I could be wrong but I very much doubt it.

It’s an annual ritual. Each New Year’s Eve the question is asked, “What’s your resolution?” We all make them, and when we do we sincerely hope that we will stand by them because in the end we will be better off for it. Won’t we? But what is the real reason for putting ourselves through it? Everyone has bad habits. The New Year just seems like a good place to get rid of a few.

We imagine that we are making a fresh start and from here on in we will strive to be a better person. It’s sort of a start-over exercise, when we evaluate the year that’s gone by and hope to improve it in the next round. There is also the over indulgence enjoyed at Christmas time.

The holiday season gives us the perfect excuse to go overboard on the turkey, drink, biscuits, chocolate, crap TV, everything. It’s a ready made one-liner. “Ah sure it’s Christmas, you have to enjoy yourself.” The immediate hangover from it all is that as soon as they stop playing Superman on TV, (how many bloody times did they show that this year?) you know the Yuletide has come to an end.

It’s then you realise, uh-oh, payback time. Some cut back on the luxuries and in an attempt to compensate we offer up a sacrifice. But do we ever stick by them? There are of course the self help advocates who will stand by every little pledge they make, whether it’s to give up turkish delight or to end world hunger. We are not talking about those here.

The harsh reality is that most people don’t stick by them. The first few weeks are great. We bask in the glow of having a strong will as we give positive replies to questions like the following. “Are you still off the cigarettes? That’s brilliant!” “You’re still on that diet? Well done!” “You’ve stopped hanging around public toilets? Fair play to you. To be honest I didn’t think you could do it.”

Conversations of this sort give us a lift and make us feel good about ourselves. We can stop smoking, we can lose weight, and we can stamp out the loitering. But alas, this joy is short lived. We can’t keep it up. People grow weak. It’s like having the “One Ring” around your neck. Eventually we cave. I mean, even Frodo slipped, and he was a hobbit.

Most people make the same resolutions every year, and what’s more there are a few resolutions which are made by everybody. Quitting cigarettes is one of the most common. It is particularly topical now because of the incoming smoking ban, which is forcing a lot of smokers to rethink things.

However, they could succeed this year with the help of Michael Martin and his ban. Anyone who has watched television over Christmas will have noticed that nicotine-sponsored a lot of the Christmas movies on RTE. Also on the radio stations there are now ads for a text message service which will help you quit smoking. For a princely sum the service will send you a message every day giving you a reason why you shouldn’t smoke. Stuff like smoking causes heart disease, or smoking changes the colour of your fingers so they clash with your nail varnish.

“I’d love to cut back on the drink this year. Not that I drink too much, it’s just it would be nice to spend my money on something else ya know. And I hate hangovers,” said Anne in Aungier Street.

Alcohol. Some people say that alcoholics are the bravest of all the addicts. If you smoke or take drugs you’ll probably pay for it in later life. But with alcohol you pay for it for first thing the next morning, therefore facing the inevitable. Of course you also pay for it in later life but having to take a kicking every morning after and doing so willingly takes bravery of the highest calibre. It would be great if we could give up hangovers as a New Years Resolution wouldn’t it? It’s funny how we decide to quit smoking but only cut down on drink. Giving up is hard to do, as the song goes. I tried to do it last year. I managed it for a while, going out a few nights and drinking water. It’s easier to drink than coke, doesn’t make you sick. But soon the temptation grew and like many a resolution before it was thrown on the scrapheap of regret.

John, a Kevin Street student said he was going to try harder in college this year. Put in more study hours than last year. It’s not easy though. I sort of make the same resolution every year.” Only too true John. It’s not easy keeping any resolution, especially one as ambitious as that.

Trying harder and putting in more effort are probably near the top of the list when it comes to most common resolutions. We all want to do better in our studies and our careers. But, as I’m sure John knows, that’s easier said than done.

But what’s it really about? Why is it that at the end of every year we look back and try to come up with a pledge that will make things better?

In the end we spend a few weeks trying to hold ourselves to a promise because we feel we should do something, and then when we fail in our task we get pissed off. Resolutions are all well and good but by attaching some clichéd label on it because it’s the New Year does not mean we are going to succeed.

It’s not a magical wish upon a star. We only succeed in such endeavours because we want to. Not because we made the promise on New Years Eve. Someone asked me on the night in question what my resolution was. When I replied I hadn’t made any they said I had to have one. “Everyone makes a New Years Resolution,” they said.

Despite my protests they wouldn’t relent, so in the end I gave them one. “For the year of 2004 my New Year’s Resolution will be this. To make no more New Years Resolutions.” They weren’t amused!
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GUIDE TO

The Raise-And-Give festivities are nearly upon us again, so we at the DIT Independent have decided to compile a sneak preview of what’s coming up. With our comprehensive time-table of what’s-on-where you can begin to plan your daze of mayhem. At the time of going to print, not all the activities had been confirmed and many more we haven’t mentioned are still on the cards.

Aungier Street

Tuesday 10th of February:
Antics galore in the SU: Inflatbles, clowns, balloon men, pizza-eating competition, mystery treasure hunt, ‘Kill those Tuesday Blues’ film fest featuring a variety of comedy films.

Wednesday 11th of February:
Slave Auction, venue TBC

Thursday 12th February:
More antics in the SU: mystery treasure hunt final, chance of winning meal for two for the slave auction winners and finally its chick-flicks all day on the SU screens.

Friday 13th February:
Chill out with horror movies playing all day.

Monday 16th February:
Inflatable fun in the Student’s Union, as well as water-bomb attacks and wet t-shirt competitions – weather permitting.

Tuesday 17th February:
DIT Carnival.

Wednesday 18th ’04:
Rag Trip

Thursday 19th February:
It’s a hangover-day with kung-fu films playing all day and a competition for the best hangover cure.

DISTU Over-all Events:

Tuesday February 10th: Tradfest
Thursday February 12th: RAG Ball
Tuesday February 17th: RAG Carnival
Wednesday February 18th: RAG Trip

Bolton Street

Tuesday February 10th:
Head to the Bolton Street common area for the first place of the Rag Daze. The iron-stomach competition is set to take place as is the all day jousting challenge (rumour has it that the entrance fee is only a €1 and there will be a top prize for the survivor).

Wednesday February 11th:
Midland-supertars big generator will play in the Big Tree. Admission is €2, there are plans for a free cloakroom and there will be a disco until 2 o’clock.

Thursday February 12th:
The common area will once again host a range of RAG games including the cream cracker challenge, the pizza-eating competition, a duck hunt and live band ‘Scamp’ featuring the talented Erica Jennings.

Monday February 16th:
There’s chance to take the two-slices-of-bread-in-a-minute challenge (not as easy as it sounds), there will be another live band playing and in anticipation of the RAG Trip ‘Road Trip’ will be playing in the cinema.

All information was correct at time of going to print and are subject to change at DITSU’s discretion.
**Rathmines:**

**Monday 9th February:**
An open mic will be held in Rathmines showcasing all its wavuabe talent.

**Tuesday 10th February:**
A Killer Pool competition will be held in the Students Union.

**Wednesday 11th February:**
A DVD featuring the antics of last year's RAG TRIP will be shown.

**Thursday 12th February:**
Head to Rathmines for the bouncey castle and pizza party

**Friday 13th February:**
It's time for ‘Nightmare in Rathmines’

**Monday 16th February:**
A DJ will play in the common area.

**Thursday 19th February:**
Lazy Daze

**Friday 20th February:**
TBC

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**Mountjoy Sq:**

**Monday 9th February:**
It's ‘musical Monday’ in Canteen to kick-start the RAG festivities.

**Tuesday 10th February:**
Mountjoy will be hosting their official pool competition.

**Thursday 12th February:**
A Pizza-Eating showdown will be held in the canteen.

**Monday 16th February:**
Continues the Music Monday theme, with something for everyone in the canteen.

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**Kevin Street**

**Tuesday, February 10th:**
Kevin Street has provisional plans to host a pizza-eating contest. There will be a variety of party games, all in an attempt to raise money for the Rag charity.

**Wednesday, February 11th:**
It's video day in Kevin Street with the snackery and Gleeson Hall planned to showcase films for every taste.

**Thursday, February 12th:**
More party games, a treasure hunt and an iron-stomach competition are planned for the snackery.

**Thursday, February 19th:**
Chill out day after the RAG TRIP.

_DITSU Site-President James Carroll says its to be: “the biggest and best Rag Daze yet. Not all events have been confirmed and other plans include a King/Queen of Kevin Street contest_

---

**Cathal Brugha Street:**

**Monday 9th February:**
Cathal Brugha Street will be hosting its RAG acoustic session in the Common Room

**Wednesday 11th February:**
The open rounds of the Pool Comp will be held in the common room.

**Thursday 12th February:**
The second part of the Pool Comp will be continued and the final will be played.

**Friday 13th February:**
It's a lazy day, so chill-out after your hard partying.

**Monday 16th February:**
Monday will see the Brugha's pizza-eating competition take place. A DJ will also be playing on the day.

**Friday 20th February:**
It's lazy day.
THANK THE heavens that DIT Students Union has had the good sense to cut out the traditional annual RAG Week and replace it with a much more palatable RAG Day. Shame they didn’t go the whole way and eradicate this senseless event altogether. I suppose that the reason for this unloved blight on the academic calendar is to bring DIT students together; to help us bond.

If this is the purpose, then it has failed miserably in the past. The student population of DIT is not a cohesive unit, and as long as it remains carved up among the various campuses around the city, it never will be. This is not the fault of the Students Union. Trying to events to cater for a disparate group of colleges with their own identities borders on the impossible. A long catalogue of union-organised disasters proves this to be the case.

Until the DIT obsession of Grangegonnan becomes a reality (probably around the same time a national stadium is built), a RAG Week comparable with the more polished efforts of our University rivals is impossible. Even at that, the merits of a better-organised rag week are questionable. Maybe it is time to leave the dated concept of the traditional RAG week behind. Boiled down to their essence, they are an excuse to skip lectures and binge drink for a week. Due to this, they are really an occasion for first year students. For most of the rest of us, they mean little more than having our canteen taken over by idiots with microphones and depressingly predictable larking around featuring beer guzzling, wet t-shirts, and big gladiator sticks. Only having to put up with this for one day rather than one week is a good thing; hopefully the downsizing of the event is a stepping stone to its eventual eradication. The main purpose of RAG week is to raise money for charity. DIT RAG weeks, however, have traditionally been money-losers. How can they be giving money to charity if they are running at a loss?

The abandonment of RAG weeks in the calendar by DIT Students Union was a fatal error in my opinion. Every year the student body would enjoy a week of no lectures, no responsibilities and no worries. The most arduous task we had to perform would be getting up the next day and doing it all over again. But there was never much student spirit in DIT. This is one of the reasons that the Students Union got rid of the concept.

Most students would go out during RAG week but they wouldn’t take part in any of the events organised by their union. Why is this? Other colleges are able to organise huge events in places like the Point and they can fill them. By and large, they are usually a great success. When our students union organises an event and it fails, the usual response is to say that there is no student spirit in DIT. Well who is responsible for creating ‘student spirit”? But there is more to it than that.

When Trinity College organise their ball each year they will have at least one relatively well known name headlining. The biggest name ever to play a DIT event was probably an Elvis impersonator. If the events themselves were of sufficient calibre then there would be no problem filling venues. The reality is that they haven’t been up to scratch.

Getting rid of rag week has only succeeded in doing one thing; fading the RAG concept into the background. How many students will realise that a rag day is going on? It’ll be over before they know it. It’s merely taken the spotlight away from the student’s union so that they can avoid criticism. There is also the notion that DIT students don’t think of themselves as belonging to the largest student body in the country. Everyone has the impression that they belong to a small college and don’t really feel part of a huge institution. This, however, is not the reason big events fail, but rather a result of it. If the events were worthy, more students would go along and hence they would identify more with being part of DIT than Aungier St or Cathal Brugha St. What the student’s union needs to do is bring back RAG week and put a lot of work into organising events the students want.

In the past, all they have done is show how out of touch they are with the students. If it’s what the students want they will take part, it will be a success. It’s as simple as that, there’s no big mystery. What the student’s union need to do is find out what the people they claim to represent want.
THE WEIRD AND WACKY WORLD OF COLLEGE

Screwing for a living

German students are making a porn movie as a protest against under-funding. The money raised by the film will be used to help subsidise the fees of those who can't otherwise finance a university education.

It comes after Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder recently challenged students to "use their initiative" to pay their education fees. Ethics student Mara Schneider, 22 from Leipzig, plays Chantal in the film she made with her 27-year-old boyfriend Rene.

She says it is a "passionate demonstration" against education reforms and will go on sale in Leipzig next week.

Students have led month-long protests, including naked demonstrations and office sit-ins, against the Chancellor's new reforms which include the introduction of tuition fees, the creation of elite universities and budget cutbacks.

Coke is it...

Federal and provincial governments have contributed close to $700,000 for a series of studies at McGill University, Montreal in which a psychiatry professor is offering people $500 to use cocaine.

Marco Leyton placed ads in student and community newspapers, and chose 10 men who are all in their 20s and are regular cocaine users. Leyton said they are given a mirror, a razor blade, a straw and a bag of pharmaceutical-grade cocaine to snort on four different occasions.

Each time they visit, the men are given a different protein shake, which he believes may reduce certain cravings for the drug. Once they've drunk the shakes, subjects are asked to fill out a questionnaire to monitor their cravings.

Leyton doesn't believe his study will turn people into cocaine addicts. He received customs clearance to ship the drug from Scotland to Montreal.

Virgin' on the ridiculous

A university student is planning to pay for her degree course by selling her virginity on the internet.

Rosie Reid, 18, from London, decided to auction her virginity on the site eBay, in order to avoid graduating with huge debts.

The Bristol University social policy student says she would rather sleep with a stranger than face years of comparative poverty.

College launches flat-pack fight-back

A college has launched a do-it-yourself course which aims to take the frustration out of flat-pack furniture. The three-hour course will guide students through Ikea instructions and give some method to MFI madness. DIYers will be shown the finer points of joining bracket A to shelf B and will even be able to use the expert advice of teacher John Tilley on their own pieces of furniture.

The free course is one of Northampton College's Bite Size range, one of a range of ideas aimed at getting adults back into education by demonstrating that learning can be fun.

Helene Parker, the college's marketing manager, said she came up with the "quirky course" idea after being told about Reverse Parking for Women which proved popular at another college. She said: "We wanted something a bit quirky, a bit weird and wonderful that people won't perceive as learning."

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Course Case - Student Say
FORENSIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
FT213 - Four Year Degree Course (Kevin Street)

By Ruth Rowntree

A GREAT SELECTION of detective programmes have spanned our screens for decades. The 70’s belonged to Columbo with the likes of Cagney and Lacey, Jessica Fletcher and Inspector Morse following his trail. Recently there has been an influx of forensic and crime scene investigation programs with the identically named, CSI, Midsomer Murders, Touch of Frost and Rosemany and Thyme set to alarm and amuse on all levels.

“I’m addicted to those programs,” says Stephen O’Connor, a 1st Year Forensic and Environmental science student in Kevin Street. Do these science students hope to merge into this existence associated with such programmes?

Each course has its peculiarities and unique elements - Forensic and Environmental Science epitomizes the quirkiness of such ‘unusual’ courses. This is the second year of the four year degree science course. Most students say that they are attracted to the course as it is ‘interesting, different and new’. There are the routine science subjects such as Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Biology, IT and Professional Development, but apart from the usual arithmetical elements, the labs and gory applications also dealt with.

“You get to see some really gory things,” says Stephen, “it can be gruesome,” he adds while describing slides shown of murder and rape victims. In first year, brief introductions to the designated areas of forensic and environmental chemistry are included with presentations by the experts employed in these areas. Guest speakers include individuals from the Garda Forensic and Homicide Departments, such as John Mc Coulagh from the State Forensics Lab, and Inspector Brendan Mc Ardle from the Ballistics Department at Garda Headquarters in Phoenix Park. “I picked this course as it involved Chemistry and all the science subjects and I also wanted to do environmental science” said Eva McKieran.

There seems to be a strong emphasis on the various Chemistry streams (Physical, Organic, Inorganic and Analytical) with more advanced aspects of forensic and environmental chemistry being introduced in the following years. Eva describes the maths element as being ‘very detailed’; “Sometimes you often wonder why you’re doing some of it.” she adds. Have you ever wondered what those Kevin street students actually get up to in their starch white lab-coats and google-eyed goggles?

Coursework includes Lab Reports, Tutorial Sheets and various assignments and projects as endured on virtually every other 3rd level degree course. So do you have to be a total ‘brainiac’ or an avid Morse fan to enter this course?

The requirements, as stated on the DIT website, include Leaving Certificate in six subjects with grades C3 or higher in two science subjects on higher level papers as well as a minimum grade of B3 at ordinary level in Mathematics and a minimum grade of D3 at ordinary level in Irish or English.

Graduates can expect job opportunities in Pharmaceuticals, the Department of Justice (Forensic Scientist) or Department for the Environment. So will qualified graduates become the Irish equivalents to CSI’s Miami bunch? “The downside is that we probably won’t become Forensic Scientists,” said Stephen. Graduates cannot get a job in Crime Scene investigations in Ireland without joining the Garda Slochana first. Graduates will have to travel to the US or the UK before they can get down to business. “I hope to go and work abroad in crime scene investigation - maybe Scotland,” said first year Eva. Many career opportunities exist in the application of Environmental Science which deal with ‘water tests and sewerage systems’ for the purposes of a profession in the investigation of Industrial and National pollutants.

Environmental laboratories, State laboratories, pharmaceutical companies and forensic laboratories cater for such careers. So what’s the verdict for this course? Well it may help many crimes to be solved in the future but if it teaches you how to get away with murder maybe it should be reconsidered!

Trouble with fees?

If you’re having trouble making ends meet in College, maybe one of these scholarships is for you...

1. If you’ve got the height of a basketball player but don’t have game, you’re still not out of the running for a scholarship. Males 6’2” or taller, and females 5’10” or higher, qualify for the Tull Chubs International Scholarship. Write an essay on “What Being Tall Means to Me,” and vie for $1,000 at http://www.tall.org.

2. Try entering the Duck Brand Duct Tape Stuck on Prom Contest. You and a date must attend your prom (American equivalent to the Debs) wearing complete attire or accessories made from duct tape.

First place winners get a $2,500 scholarship and a $2,500 cash prize goes to the school who hosted the prom. Go to http://www.ducktapelab.com.

3. If you’re left-handed, you have lots of trouble with tin-openers, scissors and the like. Well all your suffering has finally paid off. Juniata College in Pennsylvania offers up to $1,000 to two left-handed students each year. Call 00 1 814-641-3142 for details.

4. Calling all...duck callers? Yes, the Chick and Sophie Major Memorial Duck Calling Contest awards a $1,500 scholarship to the winner. First runner-up gets $500, second runner-up gets $300, and third runner-up gets $200. Call 001 870-673-1692.

5. This scholarships as easy as pie. Apple, that is. First-prize winners of the Culinary Institute of America’s (Hyde Park, NY) All-American Apple Pie Recipe Contest get a $25,000 scholarship to the school. Second and third prizes are $15,000 and $10,000 scholarships. Call 00 1 800-CULINARY.

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By Ruth Rowntree
*Sounds of the Month*

Franz Ferdinand - ‘Take Me Out’

(By Clif Forde)

This Glasgow four-piece is easily the most exciting outfit in the charts at the moment. Franz Ferdinand’s debut single ‘Take Me Out’ has entered the UK charts at number three, and deservedly so.

The song begins very much in a similar tone to The Strokes, but turns out to be much more than that. The chomping beat, walking bass line and confident vocals of ‘Take Me Out’ leaves the listener in no doubt that Franz Ferdinand are heading in the right direction.

As a single it is ideal. ‘Take Me Out’ grabs you from the opening distorted chord, and in four minutes manages to pack a considerable punch. If 2003 was the year of The Darkness, 2004 could very well belong to Franz Ferdinand.

Woodstar - Suicide Way

(By Debbie Flood)

Is it Blur? Is it Mercury Rev? Is it Neil Young? No, it’s a band from Limerick called Woodstar. With so many musical influences vying for attention on this single, Woodstar’s own sound gets lost and sidelined.

But hey, if you’re going to sound uncannily reminiscent of another band at least be professional. Not since The Cranberries, has Limerick produced such a promising group. Woodstar have been gaining popularity through their engaging live shows, supporting established acts such as The Frames and Bealtx.

They have also been nominated for best new Irish band at this year’s Meteor Awards. ‘Suicide way’ is the opening track on the single and although energetic with strong vocals, it is essentially a tribute to Blur. Surprisingly the accompanying track delineately titled ‘Life spark’ would have been my first choice for single.

The tinkering instrumentals and the seductive whisper of singer Fin Chambers makes this a superb melancholic tune. We are also treated to an acoustic version of ‘Love than hate’, a luscious, if unapologetic sentimental melody. What lacking somewhat in originality, Woodstar can substitute with quality. This single displays the quartet’s talent for layering intricate guitar riffs with a haunting vocal sound. I have no doubt Woodstar will soon find their distinctive sound and produce something that will really make life spark. Dreamy stuff.

Simple Kid - ‘Truck On’

(By Leslie Ann Horgan)

Simple Kid is the one-Corkman-band Ciaran Mc Feely, who has already been tipped as one to watch in 2004. ‘Truck On’ is the third single from his debut album also called ‘Simple Kid’ (is that some sort of a first album rule?)

The song is an interesting mix of techno and bluegrass music with a pop-tastic chorus. Like it or not it is virtually impossible not to tap your foot along with the upbeat tune. The sound lies somewhere between Moby, Beck, and Johnny Cash, and there’s no doubt that he’s really working the ‘quirky’ factor.

I particularly liked the B side tracks Loves An Enigma (despite the funny pronunciation) and the funky If. While I can’t see Truck On being the song that makes Simple Kid I reckon we will hear more of him in the future.

The Blueskins - Change my Mind/I wanna know

(By Edel Meade)

THE BLUESKINS latest release is fast, furious and alive. ‘Change my Mind’ is a thumping, garage rock tune, complemented by recurring bluegrass riffs on guitar and chromatic chord progressions.

Ryan Spendlove’s vox is coloured with frequent falsetto harmonies and though succinct, the track takes up in quality what it lacks in length. A distinctive intro, catchy melody and resulting foot-tapping should guarantee the Wakefield band the radio airplay they deserve.

‘I wanna know’ reveals the Axl Rose in Ryan and the whole Guns n’ Roses vibe they’ve got. They’ve swapped the acoustic for electric guitar and introduced killer riffs rightfully retaining their fast-paced, energy-driven style. A tad repetitive still, can’t wait to hear them live!

Competition Zone

Compliments of Universal Music, we at the DIT Independent are offering you the Chance to win one of ten copies of D-Side’s new album

All you need to do is answer this simple question: What country do the band D-Side hail from?

Is it A-Denmark, is it B-Ireland, or C-Mongolia.

Simply e-mail the correct answer to ditents@yahoo.co.uk and the prize could be yours.

Winners of the Simon Casey albums were:

Shamus McHugh
Chris Mcdonald
Tommy Lethane
Alison Keogh
Aine Waterhouse
Tony Cooper
David Morris
Gareth Wogan
Ross Bradshaw
Alison Alley.

Once again the DIT Independent is offering you a chance to take your poor self and your poor partner to a movie of your choice in UGC Cinema compliments of your benevolent Students Union.

All you have to do is answer this simple question: What ex-shoplifter stars in Lost in Translation?

E-mail your answer to winner ditents@yahoo.co.uk and this great prize could be yours.

Winner of the cinema comp was

Mick Banks
No translation needed

By Eóin Ó Murchú

OST IN translation is the new film from Bill Murray and stamps his comeback onto the silver screen of world cinema. The 80's star who has been doing lesser to least rolls in films like, The Royal Tenembaums and Rushmore has finally signaled his return in this quirky and complex piece of cinema.

The Director is none other than Sofia Coppolla, daughter of Francis-Ford, of The Godfather fame, who directed the Virgin Suicides. Bill Murray plays a former TV star who's in Japan filming Suntory whiskey commercials. He's jaded, his career is fading, and he's unaccustomed to the whole Tokyo scene.

Jetlagged and unable to sleep, he retires to the hotel bar where he meets another bored American, a young woman (Scarlett Johansson).

She has lots of free time on her hands while her photographer husband is off shooting rock bands, actresses, and the like. The two find they get along famously and wind up making the most of their time in a foreign land, drinking, dining, talking, and singing karaoke together.

That's right. Murray's character, Bob (What about Bob, you ask? We'll get to him), and Johansson's character Charlotte, spend an evening out getting boozed and then belting out songs in a cool karaoke room with glass windows and a view of Tokyo.

The highlights? Writer-director Sofia Coppolla's real-life friend Fumihiro Hayashi singing "God Save the Queen" and Murray warbling Elvis Costello's "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding". I spoke to one individual who came out of the film who exclaimed " it was alright, Bill Murray was hilarious, for about twenty minutes, but then it was just boring. It's a lot of people staring at backdrops and amazing scenery, but doing nothing. Then they go into a perfectly good strip club and no one takes their clothes off. If I hadn't been sitting near the back I would have left."

While this is one persons view, much of the gossip purporting the web about this movie is excellent and is destined for Oscar gold. The main crux of the film is the relationship between Bob and Charlotte and hangs on whether or not the pair get it on.

I won't ruin it for you though although I do recommend you go and see it.

---

Directed by Nancy Meyers
Starring Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, Keanu Reeves, Frances McDormand.

JACK NICHOLSON does his best Hugh Hefner impression in Nancy Meyers' "Something's Gotta Give", starring as wealthy bachelor Harry Sanborn. Record producer Harry preys on younger women, filling his contacts book with the names of impressionable twenty-somethings.

However, his reputation as perennial playboy is set to take a knock. Following an untimely heart attack, Harry finds himself in the care of playwright Erica Barry (Diane Keaton), the mother of his latest flame. Despite a rocky start to their relationship (including a couple of anything-but-gratuitous snatches of nudity), the pair forge a bond.

In spite of his former playboy ways, Harry's feelings for Erica grow steadily as he recovers from his heart scare. Matters are complicated by interest in Erica from Harry's young doctor, Julian Mercer (played with uncharacteristic competence by Keanu Reeves). "Something's Gotta Give" rarely strays from the beaten path of romantic comedy. The jokes are all harmless fun, and the usual light tugs at the viewers' heartstrings are freely traded upon.

As you might expect, it's all horribly predictable feel good fare, but Nicholson's on-screen presence elevates the film above mediocrity. The man is charisma personified; maintaining that trade mark devilish grin through the various travails his character endures. He rarely gives a duff performance, and is perfectly cast as the lecherous-but-lovable Harry.

Diane Keaton gives a strong performance as the fiercely independent Erica, and the charming interplay between herself and Nicholson is testament to the quality of both actors. So, "Something's Gotta Give" isn't going to set the screen alight, but it's a perfectly passable evening's entertainment that won't surprise or let anyone down.

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Après Match is up to scratch again

By Eoin Murphy

Après Match has released a best of ten years DVD in conjunction with their new show that is conjunction with their new show. The show is on its second run in Vicar Street after a sell out run before Christmas.

The trio have broadened their range from specifically doing soccer to rugby, GAA and even current affairs programs broadcast by RTÉ. Parodies of Miriam O’Callaghan and Katie’s long running show ‘Prime Time’ are one of many sketches that make up the new show.

Other additions include the three Irish Tenors, George Hooke and Tom McInerney and the now famous three Joe Duffy’s. The show itself is incredible. The humour is clever, sharp and constant. To be able to keep an audience in hysterics for almost two hours is not an easy thing to do but they did it.

It’s to keep the audience in ticking over while they weren’t on stage the après match crew had pre recorded advertisements that they played on the big screen. These included a take off of the David Beckham/Johnny Wilkinson Adidas advertisement.

Versions included a Robbie Keane and Brian O’Driscoll advertisement with a cameo from the guy off the Lucozade add, and Roy Keane and Shane Byrne. Another new addition to the live show was the you’re on sky sports bit, that is a take on the acclaimed sky sports show. Richard Jobson is joined by the always entertaining Frank.

Frank then concludes by calling the real show live on sky and mumble through some silly insults. The live show also boasts all the old favourites including Ramone, Bill and John, Marian Finucane, Gerry Ryan and Mark Laurenson.

At a mere €22 a seat this show is a must see, not only for sports fans but simply for those who love to laugh.

The New DVD is the best of ten years of the show and goes right back to the shows origins back in 1994 as they defeated during the World Cup in America.

Again it is comical but concentrates heavily on the football side of things. This is understandable but it limits the audience to those with a comprehensive knowledge of football. One big plus is the concentration on Brian Kerr as he took over the Irish job. He is an extremely funny character and when he is interviewed by the mercurial Gerry Ryan.

The one thing I learned from attending the live show and then from watching the DVD is that, like most performers, they are much better live. They ad-lib and create a great rapport with the audience. They also are getting much fitter as the longer they go on and the greater they expand their list of characters. To not see them live is a crime against humour and will deny you the laugh of a lifetime. The Après Match crew are Richard Cooper, Barry Murphy and Gary Cooke.

Enter Spirit Nightclub on Middle-Abbey St. feeling well chuffed with myself - having just found out I will be spending the evening in the company of the Revs - the Donegal trio accused of bringing upbeat indie-rock back to Ireland.

Tonight, they would go on to do just that. Rocketing through their more familiar fare (Death of a DJ, Wired to the Moon) with particular gusto, they ease up into new slower material.

To put it mildly - the dance floor is heaving. A huge fan base and an arsenal of emission and Blink 182 style steel good tracks have elevated these guys from nothing to something in the last three years and on the basis of tonight I can see exactly why.

With a tour of Australia and a new album coming out, the Revs have something to prove. A shelf full of awards and a gold Irish album is not enough and so they’re back on the road. Next stop Europe.

I’m ushered in to one of the clubs VVIP rooms and slouch down beside the band – Rory Gallagher (Bass/Vox), John McIntyre (Guitar/Vox) and Micky O’Donnell (Drums).

Q: Well lads - first off - did you enjoy the gig?

RG: Yeah, completely - We really had fun tonight. I mean sometimes at college gigs you get tough crowds who don’t get into it but this lot had a good time.

JM: Maybe a too much of a good time!

RG: Absolutely crazy - we were in a garage packing away the gear when we heard - it was a great feeling.

Q: Has stardom changed you much as individuals? Do you find you have many new friends as a result of it?

RG: I wouldn’t say we’re big stars - I don’t think success has changed us. We still go to the pub with the same mates whenever I can. We try to stay grounded.

Q: What’s next for the Revs - any more college gigs?

JM: We have a tour of Australia coming up so we’re busy preparing for that and we hope to get out to Cuba to record next year. As for college gigs we have around nine scheduled for next year, hopefully including another DIT gig in September.

RG: We’ll look forward to that!

And so will we. I give the band a hand out with their gear and they’re off into the night leaving a thoroughly satisfied crowd behind.

The Revs play the Soundhouse, Naas Co.Kildare on Friday the 12th of December 2003. Tickets are £15 from Ticketmaster.
In the absence of much activities over the Christmas period, this month the events pages are dominated by the Societies of DIT. If your not involved in one of these societies yet, its not too late to sign up for the crazy events they get up to. Can't find a society you like? Why not see your Students Union about setting up your own!! Anyway, enjoy your monthly update from your societies...

An Cumann Gaelach

Last Thursday saw us return to ‘Salut’, the Irish language nightclub, for more caint, ceol agus craic. As membership has been steadily increasing, it was great to see so many new faces. There was live trad music and a belly dancer Yasmina, which kept us entertained in between Irish banter. No doubt, we'll return to ‘Salut’ soon. Some of the society members were on TV on Saturday night! We were invited to be in the studio audience for “Ardoin” which was aired live on RTÉ.

We were spoiled with drinks and refreshments while listening to live music, celebrating the life of Johnny Cash. Plans are being made for our trip to the Gaeliccaid at the moment. We will venture to the back of beyond on Friday, 24th February for a weekend of madness as usual!

New members are very welcome: Please e-mail cumanngae@campus.ie to receive for further info.

Christian Union

We had a brilliant year in 2003 and will be hoping to continue this success into 2004. We have lots of events planned with weekend's away, praise nights, speakers, with loads of food and games.

We will be heading down to Avoca Manor, in Co. Wicklow in February to meet with other Christian unions from Dublin, Cork, Waterford, and Galway. The weekend will be packed with speakers and a lot of fun is guaranteed.

We meet on Monday nights at 7 o'clock till 9 in Bolton Street. The term will fly by so if you would like to come see what we are all about don't leave it for another week. Our members are from all DIT campus's and from all different backgrounds.

Contact us on ditca@hotmail.com or Joanne on 0863811567.

What is B&E and what have we done?

September saw the start of a new society B&E (Business & Engineering) which became DIT's biggest society ever with over 2000 members. Our aim was to bring students the ideal college experience for little or no money.

To entice memberships we had B&E membership cards and welcome packs, which included free admission and concessions to common student nightclub in Dublin, discounts, and other coupons you would probably never use.

In Freshers Week we brought you a Wet T-shirt competition and Iron Stomach Show and free candy floss. Since then we've brought some of the best and cheapest nights out in Dublin; The Playboy Pyjama Party; The Lollipop Ball, Scream (1 cent admission); Christmas Ball for charity and our latest event Kiss Chasing.

Thus far this year we’ve given €2000 to the 10K Walk, Chernobyl Fund, €1500 in sponsorship to DIT Hockey Clubs, over €300 for free t-shirts and over 100 caps, 2000 bars of chocolate, over €400 in sweets and 2000 bottles of BPM.

The year isn’t over yet so keep your eye out for our B&E bunnies, who could be handing out free stuff in your site anytime soon!

Stephen Cullerton
Vice President of DIT Business & Engineering Society
ste@besociety.com 087-9916565 www.besociety.com

Electronic Music Society

Event Review

Umek the wizard! The Electronic Music Socs last event, brought us once again to the RedBox where we saw Umek. He cast a spell with his wizardry on the decks that had the crowd in awe!

After a superb and fitting warm-up by Jay Cisco, he gained control at the helm and sent his techno-beats pumping out to the complete delight of the crowd.

Before we could catch a breath Umek had gone through records at a lightning pace and was using the effects machine to full worth; it was an incredible show of dedication to the job which will see his fan base here grow rapidly.

Bugged out and RedBox have proved that bringing these quality nights to Dublin clubs a complete success, and will see the legendary Carl Cox on the 20th February!

The E.M society works closely with the DJ society, and is currently organizing a night for later in the year where local young aspiring DJs will get a chance to shine.

Graham O'Reilly

Property Economics Students' Society

Set up in Sept '03, PESS got off to a flying start when a convoy of 25 seasoned drinkers headed for Barcelona last November! What a bowl - 75cent for a tin of beer, and a BOOMIN' nightlife!!!

A very... un... educational trip! Several guest speakers came to Bolton St in '03 also, and this is planned to continue into '04. Well done to the organizers of the Real Estate 'Musicooo Ball' - fantastic night. Watch out for PESS over Rapi Days - we will rotate off a DVD player in Bodkins, and there'll be crates of boozie on offer also.

A website will soon be in operation for chat, news, events, photos and more. Watch this space... But in the mean time, you can contact Simon Mc Gough, kardiganboy@yahoo.com
If you missed out on DIT's 'Best Event! last year, then you'll want to change all that for 2004. This year's DIT Drama Festival is being held from the 22nd February to 5th March.

Once again the venue is the Project Theatre in Temple Bar. The good news is that we have doubled our run, so this year there should be a seat for everyone! The post-Christmas months are always our busiest, preparing for our own festival as well as the Irish Student Drama Association Festival.

In anticipation of our trip to ISDA (this year, it takes place in Galway), the overall DIT Drama Society held a fund-raisting Table Quiz on Tuesday January 27th in The Picturehouse (The Palace) Camden St. There was a good turn-out and a great time was had by all! Read on to find out what has been happening in your college (and remember, if you think you would like to get involved - on or off stage - now is the time to do it! - info@diddrama.ie)

Aungier St. Drama Society

As societies in DIT go, the drama society could nearly be considered an established society this year. We began the year this year where we left off last year with the electing of our site committee.

We opted to have the new committee in place before we began recruiting new members in order to have sufficient activities organised to attract new members and also to have people to man the table during societies week. Traditionally we at Aungier St. run drama workshops for the first semester.

We find that this helps the group to get to know each other better while also teaching them the basic skills of drama. The workshops have been running every Tuesday night from 5-7 in the Students Union Pool Room (much to the amusement of passers-by)!

Still, it's an improvement on last year when we were forced to hold our workshops in a corridor on the 4th floor!

This year the Aungier St. drama society also competed successfully in the "Stupid One Act Festival in St. Pats. Drumcondra. It is the first year that we have put on a show before Christmas and hope that the society will be able to compete next year too. The play, "Commercial Breakdown" was written, produced, directed and cast from within the society, and won a judges' award for ambition and innovation. More importantly those present made contact with members of the DCU and St. Pats drama societies which we hope to build on in the future.

We all went to see the show "Proof" at the start of December and hope to organise more trips after Christmas. Our principal focus for the first few weeks after Christmas will be on getting our main production for the year organised. The play, 'Kilmeasce' was (as is tradition in Aungier St) written by two members of the society and will also be produced and directed by us. The roles have been cast, but we are casting for another production very soon, so make yourself known should you want to get involved!

By Niall Campion - President of Aungier St. Drama Society

Bolton St. and Cathal Brugha St. Drama Society

On the 13th of January 2004, the Bolton St. and Cathal Brugha St. Drama Society resumed workshops, recovered (well mostly) from the Christmas shenanigans. So, we returned, to a new year, a new college term and of course, a new drama term.

We had decided before we left that we'd need to jump straight back into the workshops in order to prepare for the DIT Drama Festival. It was lucky anyway, I think the withdrawal symptoms were starting to kick in! Of course we had thought of this before we left for Christmas (how much the members would miss the group that is!) and so we decided on the plays we were to carry out; "The Producers" by Mel Brook and "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler.

We then cast many of the roles and distributed the scripts to the members. A little Christmas present - well, homework assignment. Incase they had nothing to do, they could always learn their lines... Since our return to the group on the 13th, the Drama activities have been running quite smoothly. The members are pulling together to prepare for the plays, rehearsing together and learning more about each individual play.

Aside from preparing the scripts for the plays, we still carry out our warm-up exercises or Drama games at the beginning of the workshop. One of our newest and most enjoyable editions to our Drama games is "The Human Knot". The plan, believe it or not, originated from a photograph of a cluster of mushrooms.

This sparked off the idea of human contact; what if the mushrooms were replaced by, let's say, our members? So, we did what any sane group of students would do... We gathered in a circle, randomly grabbed hands and soon found ourselves to be a little tied up... The exercise however, brought to life more than just a human knot.

Getting back to the original perfect circle of people involved a lot of time - climbing over, under and between each other, and of course listening. It mainly involved communication within the group and working together to achieve a goal - however mad it might be. Well, you can see the photo for yourself. Don't knock it until you've tried it.

Our plays - "The Vagina Monologues" and "The Producers" are running on three nights, Tuesday the 24th of February, Monday & Tuesday, the 1st and 2nd of March.

"The Producers" is a comedy with a predominantly male cast and seems to be quite an enjoyable, witty and promising piece. The play portrays a down-and-out producer attempting to make one last comeback by producing the worst play in the world. As if we'd have any trouble doing that... "The Vagina Monologues" is a powerful and moving play with solely a female cast for some reason (we couldn't figure it out either...).

This play appears to be on more of a serious note than "The Producers". However, it does have its funny moments and doesn't fall short on the shock factor. Following the Drama Festival we are off to the ISDA Festival which will be held in Galway from the 6th to the 13th of March.

So, for the moment, Bolton St. and Cathal Brugha St. Drama Society will continue to prepare for this years DIT Drama Festival. This Festival is important to our society and these nights which we are to perform will be the fruits of our hard work (blood, sweat and tears). We are there to entertain you, the DIT students and so, we hope to have your support on these nights.

And please, autographs will just have to wait until after the show... by Deirdre Maguire - President of Cathal Brugha St. Drama Society
2004 at a glance

By Keith Reilly

A BALMY SUMMER in Lisbon and the lush greens at the Augusta National might seem all too much like a fanciful daydream in the final throes of a frigid Irish winter. However, these exotic locales (and many more besides) await the keen sports fan in what promises to be a spectacular 2004.

The Olympic Games in Athens take striking precedence on a packed sporting calendar of major events. The games have found their way back home after a 108-year absence, and as ever promise to be an unforgettable spectacle. Just don’t expect the Irish entourage to return home with a sackful of medals.

The lion’s share of the glory will be left to the usual suspects (e.g. the Americans, who practically double the amount of gold in the Federal Reserve after every Olympics). There’s plenty to keep us occupied until the games begin in the autumn.

Euro 2004 kicks off in Portugal on June 12, bringing together the superpowers of European international football. Oh, and Latvia. Brian Kerr’s boys will of course be absent after our shambolic qualifying campaign, but there’s nothing like the presence of the English to stoke Irish interest.

The other fancied nations include Holland, Italy and the Czech Republic. The Czechs are particular dark horses, led by Juventus’ midfield schemer Pavel Nedved, the recently-crowned European Footballer of the Year. Expect the Dutch to press self-destruct as soon as internal bickering rears its ugly head, while the Italians’ dour style will see them steadily progress to the knockout stages.

The hosts may also challenge, but could fall foul of the expectations of the home support. Across the water, the FA Premiership is ticking over nicely as Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea prepare for a three-way battle to decide the title. All three clubs are also still involved in the UEFA Champions’ League, which resumes in mid-February at the knockout stages.

They should all progress to the quarter-finals, accompanied by the likes of Real Madrid, AC Milan and Juventus. The rugby season is emerging from its post-World Cup hibernation, and all three Irish representatives in the Heineken Cup will be hoping to progress to the knockout stages.

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Expect a national holiday to be declared when England book their flights home while bemoaning their customary "penalty shoot-out heartbreak". Of further interest to Irish football fans will be the performances of the French, who will soon be paying a trip to Lansdowne Road (well, maybe).

Les Bleus start as clear favourites to retain the trophy, having obliterated all opposition placed before them since their embarrassing World Cup in 2002. Few could argue with the credentials of a team overflowing with world-class quality.

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Dublin-born Arnold Palmer will take part in the US Masters at the Augusta National Golf Club in April for the 50th time. It’s his final chance to retain the green jacket, which he won three-in-a-row in the 1960s. He will be aiming for an unprecedented 50th victory in front of the American home crowd.

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They should all progress to the quarter-finals, accompanied by the likes of Real Madrid, AC Milan and Juventus. The rugby season is emerging from its post-World Cup hibernation, and all three Irish representatives in the Heineken Cup will be hoping to progress to the knockout stages.

Expect a national holiday to be declared when England book their flights home while bemoaning their customary "penalty shoot-out heartbreak". Of further interest to Irish football fans will be the performances of the French, who will soon be paying a trip to Lansdowne Road (well, maybe).

Les Bleus start as clear favourites to retain the trophy, having obliterated all opposition placed before them since their embarrassing World Cup in 2002. Few could argue with the credentials of a team overflowing with world-class quality.

The Olympic Games in Athens take striking precedence on a packed sporting calendar of major events. The games have found their way back home after a 108-year absence, and as ever promise to be an unforget
Handing it to DIT’s World Champion

By Paul Fitzpatrick

Dessie Keegan is another sportsman with the same inherent gift, that elusive and priceless “X factor”. Keegan has been one of the mainstays of the hugely successful DIT handball club over the past four years.

Twice voted club of the year at the annual DIT sports awards, the club has emerged under the stewardship of Keegan’s erstwhile doubles partner Padraig Gaffney to dominate not only the local Dublin competitions but also the Irish Intervarsities and the World Collegiates held in the USA every February. Last year was the most successful to date on the international scene.

DIT were crowned the second best handballing college in the world at the Collegiates in Portland, Oregon and for good measure Keegan strolled away with the Open Singles event for the second year in succession. But it hasn’t always been thus. Keegan can remember when, at under 14 level, he was merely an average club player.

He tasted the heartbreak of semi final defeat in the US Nationals at Christmas 1996 and reverted to a diet of countless lonely hours on the practice courts and sacrificed nights-out to reach the top of the game. A dramatic improvement saw the Ballaghadeeene native storm to World under 15 triumph the following year in Canada and, in his own words, he’s “never looked back”.

On the court Dessie is one of the rare few who can ignite a match with one moment of brilliance. Renowned for his blistering serves and thundering “killshots” (the American magazine Handball described Keegan as an explosive powerhouse last year), there is much more to the Aungier St man’s game than sheer power.

His subtle touches at the front of the court belie his large physical frame as Gaffney is at pains to point out.

“People look at Dessie and think just because he’s a big fella, ‘oh he’s slow’, well I can tell you when Des is on his game he’s like lightning around the court” stated the club coach. Having arrived at DIT a raw 18 year old, “all hundred mile an hour serves and little thought” as one onlooker put it, Keegan has worked hard under Gaffney’s tutelage and has improved tenfold while he’s been in Dublin.

“I knew DIT was the best college for handball in Ireland and that was a huge factor in my decision to come here. Some of the best players are based in Dublin and DIT itself had players of the calibre of Paul Brady (World Open champion) at the time so I knew that would make them winners. DIT’s star man knows all about the importance of believing in himself.

When you’ve stared down the barrel of heart-breaking world championship defeat, like Keegan, and rallied to snatch victory, then you know you have something special.

“That was a nice victory alright. I was playing Billy Mehilos from California in the World 19 and under final in Chicago and I had lost the first game 21-16 and was 20-15 down in the second. Even with Mehilos serving for the match, I knew if I kept my nerve I was still alive. I managed to come back and stole the game 21-20 and I went on to take the tiebreaker 11-8.

“He was my greatest rival so to beat him in those circumstances was something else.” Keegan is fulsome in his praise for the college club and its professional outlook. “I think we have the best organised system in Ireland and one of the best in the world when it comes to college handball. Padraig has brought the club into a professional level which has seen players improve massively over their years in college.

Most of these lads will remain handball players for the rest of their lives, which is a great boost for the game in general.”

If Dessie Keegan played any other sport he’d be a household name. Some commentators have suggested that, in his own field, Dessie Keegan is the most accomplished sports star in college anywhere in the country right now. It is true that no other Irish student has been crowned the main man in the world in successive years, in any code.

Keegan isn’t the type to concern himself with plaques and medals, admitting that his glittering haul of 28 All-Ireland souvenirs are “lying in a cardboard box somewhere in my bedroom at home”. This says it all about the man.

In February Keegan travels to Seattle to the precociously named Ultimate Handball Showdown. After that he’s off to Missouri to defend his World Collegiates Crown and then he’s hoping to have a “real good go” at the Senior All-Ireland.

Talking to Des Keegan, it is instantly clear that he is not the type to live off old glories. He knows that if his guard is dropped for a second at the dog-eat-dog top level, he could be back at the bottom of the pile again and one senses that this driven performer hasn’t worked this hard to let it all slip away so easily.

Name: Des Keegan
Age: 21
Club: Ballaghadeeen, Co.Rosecommon
Honours: World under 15 singles
World under 19 singles
World Collegiates Open Singles
European One Wall Singles
28 All-Ireland titles
Limerick humble DIT to take title

By Jim McGrath

LIT 4-14 : DIT 2-8

TIFFERARY SENIOR, Eoin Kelly, was too hot to handle for DIT's backs as Limerick IT outclassed their Dublin counterparts to capture the Higher Education Hurling League Division 2 title. The game opened with tense, physical exchanges where LIT made the early running, racing into a three point lead. However DIT responded, inspired by the leadership of Richie Hayes, and began to compete in the physical encounters, holding back nothing. Wing forward, Rob Reid, latched onto a breaking ball sending it high over the bar to open DIT's account. This was followed up by a Tom Frisby point from a 70 yard free and a Willie Comerford point leaving the score five points to three.

LIT's game plan of isolating Eoin Kelly was working successfully, the former all-star benefiting from excellent ball-service and threatening the DIT goal on a number of occasions.

The inevitable Limerick goal came on 23 minutes. A mix up in the DIT full-back line, with a number of failed clearance attempts, saw LIT's Shane Tierney pouncing on the ball and sending it past Liam Burke in the DIT goal. LIT followed up with another goal chance, Eoin Kelly was through but was bravely hooked by Willie Lyons to keep DIT in the game. DIT fought their way back into the game. Just before half-time half-forward Martin Phelan embarked on a solo-run with three LIT backs giving chase.

After running to the end-line he sent a dangerous ball into the square which was whipped on in the air and sent into the back of the net by Paddy Teehen. DIT went in at half-time three points down, 1-7 to 1-4. LIT upped the tempo after half-time and hammered the nail in DIT's coffin.

DIT's cause was not helped by giving away cheap goals to a lively LIT forward-line, with a second goal from Shane McGrath and two more from Eoin Kelly.

DIT were reliant on the ever accurate free-taking of Martin Phelan for scores. The game turned into a scrappy affair. With five minutes left DIT were trailing 4-14 to 1-7. However the Dublin students kept battling.

With two minutes left on the clock and the game over as a contest, DIT corner forward Paddy Teehen got the score of the game. Jinking inside the Limerick defence, he rifled a shot from twenty-five yards almost bursting the net. It was one of the few bright moments of what was a poor second-half from a spectator's point of view. Speaking after the game, LIT coach and controversial Clare manager, Davy Fitzgerald said "DIT are a tough outfit but we got one or two lucky goals that made the score-line look worse than it was."

LIT: Sean Hayes, Mickey Cahill, Cian Moloney, Shane McGrath, Clive Earley

DIT Scorers: P. Teehen 2-0, Rob Reid 0-1, Tom Frisby 0-1, Martin Comerford 0-1, Martin Phelan 0-5.

Impressive performance from DIT

JANUARY HAS been a busy month for DIT's men's GAA team as they geared up for their opening Sigerson Cup clash next week. The team prepared for their Sigerson Cup tie with some spirited performances against county sides in the O'Byrne Cup.

Impressive displays by Damien Munnelly and Conal McGinley helped DIT to ease past Kilkenny by 2-12 to 1-8. McGinley scored 1-2 in the game, while Munnelly added six points to his first half penalty.

However, in the quarter final on Sunday, January 11th, Offaly proved too strong for the students in Tullamore. Damien Munnelly's 30 metre free briefly brought DIT level in the second half, but Offaly clocked up five points without reply in the final quarter to secure victory by 1-10 to 1-5.

Munnelly was again DIT's top scorer with one goal and two points but it was not enough for DIT to reach the semi-finals. DIT will now face University of Ulster, Coleraine at home on January 28th in the Sigerson Cup Preliminary Round.

DIT beat the same team last year by one point before bowing out to UCD in the next round. The Sigerson Cup is third level Gaelic football's premier event. Present day stars Peter Canavan (Tyrone), Seamus Moynihan (Kerry), Padraic Joyce (Galway) and Trevor Giles (Meath) are just some of the players who appeared in the competition before becoming the well-established county players they are today.

Galway county star Michael Meehan helped NUI Galway to victory in last year's final over a UCD side that included Dublin players Alan Brogan and Liam Og O'Hineachan. The winner of next Wednesday's clash could face DCU in the next round in February.

The semi-finals of this year's event will be held in St. Mary's College, Belfast on Friday, February 27th and Saturday, February 28th.