DIT Independent, 1st.-31st. of October, 2001

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Director appointed to tackle industrial strife

By Aoife Stokes

DIT has announced the appointment of a Human Resources Director in an effort to combat major industrial relations problems highlighted in a recent Audit and Accounts Committee (AACC) report.

The report, which was published in Autumn of this year, was brought before the AACC at the behest of the committee's Chairman Mr. Michael Finnucane TD. At the PAC meeting in May following the publication of the report, Mr Finnucane said that "It was a case of 'shocking indictment' of the college. Speaking to the DIT Independent, Mr Finnucane said that "As chairman of the PAC I used the opportunity in the context of exploring the overall difficulties that the Comptroller and Auditor General had with the DIT." The Comptroller and Auditor General, Mr John Purcell, speaking at the PAC following the publication of the report criticised a number of questionable practices in the running of the college.

These practices, which were uncovered during audits conducted in 1998 by his office included the purchase of a rare piano worth £5,500, which was not used for three years by the college.

Mr Purcell also criticised DIT in relation to the institution's preparation of accounts, saying that his office still hadn't received completed accounts for 1999. "That the accounts were way behind was a difficult at the committee meeting that £12,000 worth of cleaning fluid, £5,600 worth of light bulbs, £3,400 worth of blue pens and £3,300 worth of first aid materials by an employee in the college's school of music. This same person, who has since left that position following disciplinary action by DIT, had also ordered plastic sacks worth a total of £5,400.

The report from the LRC's advisory development and research service says the college should immediately introduce a range of reforms, including sending some of its managers on "people management" training. Afroh management has undermined morale at DIT at all levels according to the report which also identified political and motivated agendas and lack of consultation between management and the college's several hundred staff.

Commissioned by the governing body of DIT and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI), the main academic union in the college, the report was welcomed by the TUI although they were critical of its appearance in the public domain.

Some 140 staff across the college's sites were interviewed by LRC officials. Speaking at the PAC, Dr Goldsmith said that whilst some staff had aired grievances, the 140 interviewed represented only 10 per cent of the total staff members.

Continued on page 4

Rain can't halt Sportsday fun

By Dermot Keyes

If it rained and rained and rained, but DIT's Sportsday would be a usual fun-filled event, offering something for the dedicated sporting buff to the disinterested college dozer! Be it soccer, bonfire night or hurling, everyone that made the trip to Dublin Airport had an enjoyable day. Of course, the more serious side of Sportday provided DIT's coaches and selectors with a look at what the team would be faced with when the official season kicks off. There were so many sports catered for as always that it is always encouraging to see students taking part in such massive numbers.

It remains a shame that those who enjoy their sport, be it competitive or otherwise, do not have the facilities or provisions available to them that the biggest third level institution in this country really should have at its disposal.

Alas, such thoughts were far from the thoughts of the wannabe Keanos, DJs and Woodlices that strutted their stuff despite the inclement conditions that the day seems to throw up almost annually. See inside this month's edition for what lies ahead for some of our sporting outfits as well as what the rest of Freshers' Week threw up (throwing up during Freshers' Week - there's a rare occurrence!) for our new and not so new students.

The ALSAA complex was as always a superb venue for DIT Sportday and credit must be given to all that were involved in the organisation of the day. There were so many sports catered for as always that it is always encouraging to see students taking part in such massive numbers.

A LRC report damns DIT management methods

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Your AIB Student Officers On Campus in DIT

**Paula McIntyre**
Mon/Wed/Fri
AIB Campus Bank 10 am - 12 noon
Bolton Street 1 pm - 4 pm
(Telephone: 8740409) Tue/Thur
10 am - 1 pm

**Liz Moore**
10 am - 12.30 pm Daily
AIB Campus Bank
Kevin Street
(Telephone: 4759680)

AIB Campus Bank 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm Daily
Aungier Street
(Telephone: 4759654)

Students of DIT Cathal Brugha Street & Mountjoy Square may visit the Student Officer in Bolton Street Campus Bank or alternatively visit AIB Bank, 37/38 O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.

*Get the most out of college - Be with AIB.*
By Darragh Clifford

Third level fees have once again increased this year, this time by the above-inflation figure of seven percent.

The £312 that full time students of DIT paid this year represents an increase of £20 on last year's £292 charge. In 1996, college fees stood at just £150. The 1997 intake of third level students in receipt of the grant are exempt from the levy.

The non-tuition fee goes towards various student services, outlined by DITSU President, Markarette Fitzpatrick elsewhere in this month's issue. Within DIT, this year, £70 of the total has gone to exam fees, with the remaining £242 forwarded to student welfare services, clubs and societies, medical fees and to DIT'S six site offices. We look forward to seeing how DIT'S four satellite offices across the country, apart from Irish universities is that policies of Technology are not in a position to agree on the level of their non-tution contributions to the Department of Education.

Section 40 of the Universities Act, 1997 states, "A university may determine and charge fees for student registration, courses, fees, examinations, excursions or any other event, service or publication held or provided at or by the university."

The non-tuition fee is important, but the lack of proper computer facilities was of real concern for one third of this year's intake.

The Department of Employment, Mary Harney opened the three day forum. Keynote speakers included Dr. Rudy Berger, CEO Mediab.al Europe, and Dr. Walter de Breeuw, CEO Starlab, Belgium, both of which are leading players within the technology sector. The ESBI is Europe's premier forum for exchanging ideas and networking of players in the Small and Medium Enterprise sector.

The theme of this year's forum was the link between Technology, Education, and Enterprise in the new Millennium. Technology based enterprise and its development in Ireland was the main discussion. This was particularly relevant in light of the recent concerns over the continuation of the Irish economic miracle, which has largely come about based on the success of such enterprise.

"We in the DIT, as proud third level educational institution, have to 21,000 students, are profoundly aware of the changes created by the technological revolution on our economy and our society," said DIT President Dr. Michael Martin.

"However, the challenge for DIT and all other institutions is identifying our role in managing this technology to create further wealth in the future."

In addition, delegates will discuss the role of organisations, knowledge, centres, policy makers and others committed to entrepreneurial and managerial development in the decade that lies ahead.

Student/computer ratio must be addressed - Fitzpatrick

"We can put men on the moon, but people with disabilities can't get to the other side of Dublin to the university," he said. "They have the Disability Rights, but the problem is that the facilities are inaccessible in public transport."

By Ackley Casey

A DIT Independent investigation has illustrated the serious shortage of computers at the Institute, with 2,500 computers available for over 22,000 students.

This news followed the publication of a report disclosed by the Union of Students in Ireland, which indicates an appalling short¬age of computers at Irish universities, with some operating a ratio of one personal computer for every 33 students. Although DIT'S ratio is quite low by comparison, the Institute is still nowhere near meeting the target of one computer for every three students, in line with commitments made to the Department of Education five years ago.

DITSU President, Markarette Fitzpatrick stated that students must be catered for by every means possible to ensure a satisfactory standard of computer access was guaranteed for all. "We definitely should have more comput¬ers," she said. "In my six years in DIT, there has always been complaints about the lack of computer facilities for students." She added that it was very important that students have access to computer facilities. "It is not fair that students have to buy their own computers and that they should have access to college computers," she said. "If DIT is to be a quality university sta¬tus, management will have to make a range of improvement to meet Government standards. Commenting on computer shortages as a criteria for acquired university sta¬tus, Fitzpatrick said, "we are the highest third level college in Ireland and the facilities should be there for our students."

USI figures show that none of the col¬leges surveyed is even near to meeting these targets. In the five years that have passed, it apppears that there has been a national failure to meet the target. Students, who choose to study at third level, are being denied access to the facilities and equipment necessary to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to meet Government demands.

The inadequate level of computer terminals has forced several students to abandon their dream of going to college, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) claimed. The conference in Dublin city centre.

More than 150 wheelchair users, supporters staged rallies outside DIT, Student Union offices and a taxi rank, to highlight the inadequacies in public transport. President of USI, Anna Horan, simplified the importance of public transport, for students to maintain independence and quality of life.

"Students may not have their feet, the elderly, the physically impaired or those with some degree of mobility problems, can only be reached from the transport which they pay for through their tax, if they are not afforded of the services they normally would pass on their way after 8pm because there was no membership staff to give assistance. The Department has undertaken to have the issue addressed, once wheelchair-accessible buses are introduced," Dr. Michael Martin, director of the DITSU Institute of Technology to invest the extra money in projects to combat the problem of non-completion and to ensure greater equality of access."

President of DIT, Richard Jordan has called on Dr. Michael Martin, director of the DITSU Institute of Technology to invest the extra money in projects to combat the problem of non-completion and to ensure greater equality of access. Further research needs to be done, and USI figures show that none of the colleges have met the target for computer facilities.

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Vinny Dooley's Presidency of DITSU was an eventful, problematic term. Difficulties at Union HQ and a host of other problems last year ensured whoever succeeded Dooley would have a major task on their hands. New President Marguerite Fitzpatrick spoke to DIT Independent Editor Dermot Keyes about what 2001/02 holds in store.

Dermot Keyes: 
Firstly congratulations on winning the election for the Presidency of the Union. What exactly is the remit of the position of DITSU President?

Marguerite Fitzpatrick: 
As Overall President, my job is to make sure that the sabbatical officers of the Union in each site have the resources and the training that they need to perform their tasks to the best of their abilities.
I also represent the Students' Union on a national level and act as the public voice of the Union when attending the various meetings and conferences that come with the job.
I am responsible for DITSU Council and act as the principal spokesperson of that body. The Students' Union must represent the needs of the students of DIT and I am responsible for seeing that this happens.

DK: The small turnout at last year's DITSU Election seemed to be indicative of the largely apathetic attitude that prevails among a large proportion of DIT students, who look at the Union and believe that it doesn't really do anything. What would you say to such students?

MF: That's a fair point. A lot of people do seem to think that DITSU doesn't do anything and this sort of thing, which really isn't the case.
One of the main objectives of my year as President is to improve the level of communication in DIT between the Union and the students.
We've got to get the officers out more often in all of the sites and we hope that our poster campaigns during the year will also serve to bolster and publicise the profile of DITSU to a far greater extent than what has previously existed.
If students have this attitude that the officers and the Union as a whole are not doing anything, then I say to them use your vote at election time. They should get involved and change this if they feel so strongly about it and stand in elections and see the work that needs to be done and is being done.

Our officers sit in several DIT committees and are committed to doing as good a job as they can do with the various projects and campaigns that they are involved in.
You can get stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to this kind of attitude.

DK: Do you aim to raise the profile of DITSU this year and if so how?

MF: Definitely. We are going to be getting around to all the first year classes over the next few weeks through our sabbatical officers to establish the class reps system. This is very important because when we show those new to the college what we do and what we can do, then we have a greater chance of engaging with the students and showing what we can do.

DK: For want of a better expression, what possessed you to get involved in Students' Union activities?

MF: When I was in first year, I ran for language officer and I wasn't aware that this was a position on the executive of DITSU.
But since then I have been involved to greater and lesser degrees in some years before I decided to stand for the President's position in Bolton Street when I was in third year. Last year, I thought why not go for the Overall Presidency went for it and here I am today!

DK: A lot of students I expect are not aware of what happens to the capitalisation fees that they pay at the start of each academic year. What exactly is done with our money?

MF: The capitalisation is put towards the provision of student services. Clubs and societies, the chaplaincy, the sport clubs and so on all receives percentages of the money as we do.

The main part of the money would go towards the salaries for officers and the training of officers each year. For the first time ever this year we are going to have training for part-time officers, which the capitalisation is also helping to fund.
The money also goes towards the entertainments that we provide during the year and is also put towards stationary used by the Union, insurance and the other bits and pieces that need to be bought and used during the year. The capitalisation is very important in the running of the union and it is important that students realise that their money is helping us work for students as best we can.

DK: Last year's DITSU was plagued with difficulties and it really was a year to forget. What do you aim to do to avoid the problems of last year's Presidency?

MF: Having being on the Executive last year, it was clear that one of the big problems was communication between the Executive and the officers and as a result of that, between the officers and the students.
All decisions I am making as President are made following consultation with the Executive and one of the problems last year was that this two-way process just wasn't happening.
Communication is very important and hopefully this will make the running of the Union and its other functions a lot easier for everyone.

DK: Thanks for your time and good luck with everything this year.

MF: Thanks very much.
Young, Irish and drunk

By Jon Lee

DIT and the USI hope that this year's 10-kilometre walk in aid of the sick children of Chernobyl will receive even greater support than the same event last year.

The event will take place on 15 November and will be a joint effort between 40 third level institutions throughout the whole of Ireland.

Richard Hammond, President of USI, said that this year the organisations involved are "asking each student to raise as much money as they can by getting their parents, brothers, sister, relatives, work mates and friends to fill their sponsorship card.'

Joe McGrath, a marketing lecturer in DIT Mountjoy, is the executive director of DIT's involvement with USI and the Chernobyl Children's Project, told the DIT Independent that the organisations "are looking at students and every staff member to be out on November 15th."

Last year's event was attended by around 10,000 students and staff members in Dublin, but is it a figure that organisers hope to surpass this year?

Roughly twice as many women than men participated last year, and this imbalance is set to be repeated this year.

Mr McGrath said that although the message did not seem to get across to male students, the effort put into raising sponsorship for the walk was "a sign in such an event that it could not be seen as 'wussy' or 'sissy'." In the radiation zones of Belarus today, the birth rate is now just half the figure that it was before the disaster in 1986.

There have been 24 times as many cases of thyroid cancer and a 250% increase in the number of cases of children born without limbs.

If the trend of death rates exceeding birth rates continues it is feared that there will be no inhabitants of Belarus by 2030.

Perhaps most importantly all, for only £75 the project can establish the necessary funding for a trained nurse who will be needed to treat victims of thyroid cancer. An ambulance can be bought for £3,000 while £9,500 will serve to re-roof a children's home in Minsk.

Figures released from USI in conjunction with the Chernobyl Children's Project reveal that for only £1 per student there is a supply of Thyroxine, the drug that is used to treat victims of thyroid cancer.

An ambulance can be bought for £3,000 while £9,500 will serve to re-roof a children's home in Minsk.

For as little as £75 USI can establish the necessary funding for a trained nurse who will be needed to treat victims of thyroid cancer. Perhaps the most important of all, for only £75 the project can establish the necessary funding for a trained nurse who will be needed to treat victims of thyroid cancer.

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If the trend of death rates exceeding birth rates continues it is feared that there will be no inhabitants of Belarus by 2030. Treatment in the country is severely hampered by a lack of medical supplies, such as anaesthetics.

Yet for as little as £75 could be spent on a child from the region who could spend a month in Ireland, which would increase the average life expectancy of a person by two years.

DIT hopes for massive support for Chernobyl walk

Above: the students who visited the children still suffering from the effects of the world's worst environmental disaster

By Aidan Casey

In an effort to establish a political consensus on abortion among our students, a DIT internal referendum is due to be held before the turn of the year.

The internal abortion referendum is being held to establish a policy on whether DIT students should be given the freedom to choose whether to get involved this year, commenting, "given the state that Belarus is in, money goes an extraordinarily long way. People need to realise that this is an issue." These students will be making themselves available to speak in colleges, to inform other students of the situations that they witnessed to further improve support for the project.

The organisers of the project plan to distribute sponsorship cards for the walk through the students of colleges and through class representatives, as well as making cards freely available throughout colleges in communal locations such as canteens.

Information will also be available from students unions, and in the form of a poster campaign within colleges and on Ashbel bus stops throughout the city.

The DIT Independent is produced by...
Irish students drinking above EU average

By Colin McGann

A CONFERENCE, entitled 'Alcohol in Young People', has been told that the number of Irish students who get drunk regularly is well above the EU average.

Dr Bruce Ritson of the Alcohol Problem Service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital delivered the address at a conference organised by the Irish College of General Practitioners. He cited a rise in the level of alcohol intake in girls between 1995 and 1999, with beer remaining the most popular drink among students.

Dr Ritson told delegates that "there is clear evidence that the alcohol industry has two target groups, starter groups between 11-15 years and established drinkers aged 16-24. Both of these areas are large enough to provide the industry with a sustainable return on investment."

The Republic of Ireland currently sits on top of the international league of binge drinkers but is only middle of consumption. Measures to return on investment."

"And because we've been involved from the start, students' views have been taken to heart in its development."

Guinness was unaware of rumours circulating DIT's sites that drinks companies would be discontinuing their sponsorship of student events. Brewery spokesper-son, Pat Barry, said that such a decision would be left up to each individual college.

"Up until now there has been a code of practice in place to ensure that everyone dealt with in a responsible way," stated Mr Barry. "As of yet there have been no cancellations."

DITSU Aungier Street Welfare Officer, Noel Renuhan said that the time had come to develop an national third-level college alcohol policy.

"I think it is very good idea," he told the DIT Independent. "In general the alcohol consumption trends in colleges need to be reduced. It's just a question of how far it will be taken."

However Renuhan added that "alcohol companies sponsor a lot of student events and it would be a shame if they stopped supporting us."

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Just the Ticket: The should Kevin St President strikes a cheesy pose as he grasps the golden ticket

Fresher's Week musings

By Eoin Murphy

Once more a new breed of first year students has been heralded through the glass doors of our fair institute to start their college careers. In order for them to get acquainted with the long and industrious third level road ahead they are given the opportunity to partake in the great event that is Fresher's Week.

The Fresher's ball in Courtown was anything but a damp squib. It was well organised and I can honestly say that if any club in Dublin could boast such a vibrating dance floor then I would most certainly frequent.

The Beacon was able to facilitate the hundreds of DIT students that braved the almost monsoon rain and the horrid two hour journey in a dank bus to celebrate their birth into third level education.

And while many students ended up pregnant with drink after furiously downing shots, pints and cocktails, there was no sign of any aggro. It seemed a little harsh that the bouncers would cast out you out of the club for having the courtesy to get sick in the toilets and not on the miraculous vibrating floor but hey that's Courtown. I suppose credit again has to be given to our esteemed site president, Karl Bonnar and his associates.

They took an idea, which in no unoriginal and has been blogged more times that the karting clubs' one book and made a huge success of it. I am talking about the Hawaiian night in Dicey Reilly's.

The place was packed and not even the attitude of the smoky bouncer could ruin the atmosphere for hundreds of drunk and happy teenagers (and the odd twenty-something guest). Through the use of heat lamps and many load shirts, an atmosphere that Magnum would have been proud of was created. "What is your beef with Fresher's Week?" I hear our readers cry. Well I shall tell you. My beef lies in the shameless advertising and promotion of a certain city nightclub, not a million miles away from our south side sites.

I warn you, if you wish to avoid the therapy that my esteemed sportswriting colleague Miguel Delaney is going through to restore his sanity, you will steer clear of this place like Ally McBeal does a doughnut. It would be no great surprise to learn that the 'hot spot' (I jest) in Guinness was unaware of rumours circulating DIT's sites that drinks companies would be discontinuing their sponsorship of student events. Brewery spokesper-son, Pat Barry, said that such

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## Reads of Nassau Street

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America's prestigious Harvard University, (HMI), is partnering with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) to provide specialized medical training over the Internet, for medical professionals.

With high demands on the medical profession, online programmes allow medical trainers to remain in the hospital where they are posted, instead of travelling long distances to lectures. The new Dublin-based IntuMed, will develop e-learning programs online in the postgraduate medical specialties and in some allied health care professions, such as nursing and pharmacy. Together the colleges will develop interactive and fully integrated educational programs available to medical students 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

The new partnership will significantly strengthen the expertise of both colleges. RCSI's 200-strong faculty members will have the opportunity to learn from HMI's 7,500 faculty members in the States.

The RCSI e-learning based programme, BeST, the world's only on-line tutoring system for trainee surgeons, acted as the springboard for the latest development. Harvard approached the RCSI, having come across the BeST programme in the Middle East, due to the intense similarity. The new partnership is breaking new ground to enhance the understanding and exposure to advanced medical training globally, said Michael Horgan, Deputy Chief Executive of the RCSI. Our partnership with UCD and RCSI continues Harvard Medical International's tradition of pursuing excellence in medical education as one key factor in advancing health care globally, says Robert K Cron, MD, President & CEO of Harvard Medical International.

UCD wins centre in honour of Clinton

UCD will house the new £2.5 million William Jefferson Clinton Centre for American Studies, the University has announced. The centre, honouring the former US president, Mr Bill Clinton, and his work on peace process and his interests in Irish affairs in general. UCD beat off competition from four other universities, to gain the centre, a significant win in the most attractive of the third-level sector.

While the money involved is small, the centre will raise the profile of the university in the USA and among US corporate donors.

The president of UCD, Dr Art Coogoon, last week offered UCD University as a site for the centre, but the HEA argued all universities should be allowed to bid.

As such, a panel was established, headed by former US education secretary Mr Richard Riley, with assistance from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Department of Education.

The Centre will bring together scholars and students from all aspects of American life, literature, history and culture and will further strengthen the bonds between Ireland and the United States.

During the Clinton presidency, the study of Ireland and the Irish in American universities reached new levels, with over 40 major programmes currently in place.

There is however no comparable American Studies programme in this country. Previous efforts to broaden and deepen the connection between Irish Universities and our US counterparts gave rise to the Mitchell Scholarship Programme.

UCD introduces online Driver Theory Testing Programme

The Smart Media Institute at University College Dublin have come up with an innovative personalised free web-based training application that helps students study for the recently-introduced Driving Test Theory.

The main selling point of "My Driving Test" (MDTT) is that it poses different questions to each individual student, depending on his or her personal abilities and knowledge.

MDTT uses information retrieval technology to automatically determine which questions a student will find difficult. By exploiting statistical regularities in students' answers, the programme is able to predict any particular student's answer to any given question. My Driving Test Tutor then focuses the student on the challenging questions - helping them to study more effectively.

"Our skills and abilities in any given subject tend to be correlated with some of our fellow students. MDTT notices these correlations and uses them to help people more easily. Our new MDTT Designer, Clodagh Morley, explained.

When a surfer logs on, they are greeted by electricity created by their own body to create music. MUC researchers realised that they could apply the same principles to build a safety device that monitors the position and presence of a car. This information could be used to control or limit the deployment of an airbag during a collision, preventing injuries from being smothered.

Some of the other pioneering projects under development include virtual reality as rehabilitation practice for patients, and the development of technologies to help children learn.

Acknowledging the Institutes achievements to date, HEA Chairman, Dr. Don Thornhill explained that the centre provides unique opportunities for third-level education in the new frontiers in multimedia and related fields. The research laboratory is at the centre of a multi-million pound digital enterprise area centred on the capital's Digital Hub. In time, the entire area around James Street is set to develop into a digital media district - Digital Hub

Students Inventing the Future

OVER £1m is being made available by the Government for further collaborative research between Irish third-level institutions and MediaLabEurope (MLE) - the Irish-funded, well-known Media Lab in Boston. This brings the total amount provided since the programme began last year.

The innovative institute offers an interdisciplinary approaches to the way in which new technology can impact on peoples' lives and environments. Research generally brings together areas that can be tied into technology, including music, cinema, psychology, video, and linguistics.

Last year some 11 projects by six third-level institutions were funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). NEC is currently sponsoring MLE to examine the potential use of a sensor chair as a car safety device for elderly drivers.

The chair uses electricity created by a living body to create music. MUC researchers realised that they could apply the same principles to build a safety device that monitors the position and presence of a car. This information could be used to control or limit the deployment of an airbag during a collision, preventing injuries from being smothered.

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Officers happy with election despite low turnout

By Colin McGann

THE elections for part-time officers in DIT went off without a hitch on October 17, as did the count, which was held at The Vatican nightclub in Harcourt Street the following day. While the turnout was low, which seems to have become a regular occurrence come election time in this Institute, but all the candidates seem to be satisfied with their appointments.

The lack of students willing to apply for positions in DIT Mountjoy Square, namely none provided DITSU with the surprise of this year's campaign. Brian Whitney, studying in DIT Rathmines, set a new record, receiving 124 'yes' votes and 0 'no' votes. Whitney, a second year student of Social Care and Practice, was elected Entertainment Officer without official opposition. 'The inequality between Rathmines and the rest of the DIT centres provided my incentive to run for election,' he said. He believes that his election will pave the way for him to start sorting out the discrimination, injustices and lack of facilities that Rathmines has to put up with. This year I will be focused on making the students of Rathmines feel more involved in DIT, as a whole.' The Entertainment position was the only DITSU part-time office to be filled in DIT Rathmines for the forthcoming year.

DIT Kevin Street was by far the scene of the most intense electioneering across the sites on both sides of the city.

Fergal Connolly, who was elected as Equality Officer, wants to inform all the students in Kevin Street about the validity and importance of DITSU. "People are being informed of their rights if they happen to hang out around the Students Union,' Connolly told The DIT Independent. The students in the rest of the college only get the information when they really need it," he said.

Connolly, who works in a popular city night spot, said "People are being informed of their rights of law, lectures and landlords," he said. "I know I can't change people's minds but this year I can inform them," added Connolly.

Other students elected to office in DIT Kevin Street were: Geena Daly (Irish Language Officer), Mark Murphy (Participation's Officer), James Carroll (PRO) and Cathal Gallagher (Entertainments Officer). James Carroll, an Applied Science and Computers student, complimented the outgoing officers saying that all previous incumbents had done a very good job.

This year, Carroll aims to provide an even better service. 'Students still aren't aware of all of the Union facilities. Everyone knows we can organise great social events but some students don't even know they can get their USIT cards in the Students Union,' he said.

In cooperation with Mark Murphy he hopes 'to get students involved even more, get them thinking about the student union, after all they are part of it.'

DIT Cathal Brugha Street will be served this year by the elected Barry McLaughlin (Entertainment Officer), Orla Congrove (Clubs and Societies Officer), Corrie Soden (PRO) and Dawn O'Sullivan (Employment Officer).

While DIT Aungier Street appointed Steven Hickey (Entertainment Officer), Ian Murphy (Equalities Officer), Deborah Flood (PRO), Iseult Fitzgerald (Irish Language Officer), Conor McDermott (Clubs and Societies) and Marguerite Fitzpatrick (PRO) and Dawn O'Sullivan (Employment Officer) as their officers in DIT Aungier Street part-time officer election winners from left to right: Bill Casey (Participations Officer), Steven Hickey (Ents), Conor McDermott (Clubs and Societies) and Iseult Fitzgerald (Irish Language).

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Almost Famous?...Not!

As I stumbled onto the sofa in my modest abode in Dublin on a wet October evening, I unbuttoned my shoes, let my feet breathe and said to myself: sheesh, what a day.

My quest to become the next singing wannabe had ended as abruptly as it had begun. No, that's a lie. There is nothing abrupt about queuing in a hotel car park for virtually the entire ten hours of the day of rest. Having arrived at Jury's Tara Towers Hotel in Booterstown shortly after ten o'clock that morning, yours truly was immediately struck by the mini-skirted, tank-topped troupe that were already forming a massive line at the door of the hotel. The male masses were also doing their bit in the vanity fair stakes, some boasting hairstyles reminiscent of something that last saw light in the Cretaceous period. This was truly a day when, rather disturbingly, ordinary people brought naked real-life Barbies and just as many boys were fitting in. The ken should have been Napoleon in make-up, colo­maternal mascara damage was as bad as that for those who would not get the nod from Louis Walsh or Linda Martin later that day.

Popstars Irish Style held its final round of heats in Dublin on October 14. Cunninly disguised as a swinging pop-singing wannabe, Dermot Keys braved the cameras after a ten-hour wait. Mad, sad or both? Read on.

A chat about the state of the pop industry with Kian Egan of Westlife in a urinal was not something I had counted on.

Can I Live Without You was sung with more (or less depending on one's disposition) gusto than The Fields of Athenry on a green-clad Glasgow terrace, only far more annoyingly.

Slowly, but slowly but slowly we moved closer to the inwards of the hotel and the audition room where the adjudicating luminaries awaited. After a quick scribb­through the registration form, which entitles everyone, who is used in the TV footage to a payment of one pound, it was off to call nature and loosen the larynx a little. One can imagine my surprise as I listened to Denis belt out a Billy Joel number in the company of urinating men that one of these was in fact Kian Egan of Westlife. So there we were, Kian, Denis and I, dis­cussing music over the sound of nervous stomachs and flushing toilets. There was something surreal about a communal musical wee-gee with a chart topper. Ah sure it's something to tell the grandchildren about when the inevitable, hey Grandad did you ever go to the toilet with someone famous? question pops up during a game of ker-plunk fifty years from now. After a few swigs of water and registering in reception, I became contes­tant 1248 and entered the audition auditorium. If the smell of fear was all too stenchy in the gaze, then the over-perspiring of a room more made up than the cast of the Rocky Horror Picture Show was a different pun­gency sensation altogether. Imagine for a moment the room where Christy Moore, beating the life out of a gui­tar while singing Lisdoonvarna, has been cloned three hundred times? Getting the picture? For the first time in my life, I imag­ined what it had been like for the Irish soccer team during their stay in Orlando at the last World Cup we played in. This was dead heat, no doubt fuelled by nervous (gaseous emitting) tension, a veritable whirl of armpit droppings. In other words, yuk.

Sitting there, listening to the good, the bad and the just plain awful, one wondered what it must have been like to be a judge in such an event. For however long the day was for those who entered, it must have felt like the stereotypical match gone into stoppage time at Old Trafford for Louis, Linda et al. There were no 'you're wonderful' or 'you're not' to the contestants from the judges merely the passing of a slip of white paper which confirmed that one had made the next phase. Eventually, my time to sing arrived, some 10 and half hours after my day as a wannabe had begun. I sang a few bars of 'Angels' from Robbie Williams (a song written by an Irishman by the way) and did my utmost to make love to the camera. Alas it was not enough. Three down the line from my position was a female of Amazonian dimensions. While not boasting a particu­larly good voice, she provides the sort of eye candy that Louis Walsh needs to shift CD's and magazine covers off the shelves. Surprise surprise then when she was the only one from our particular quintet selected for the next heat. As Popstars' is a television pro­gramme just as it is a quest for talent, image is everything and sometimes true talent, true singing gems are overlooked at the expense of appropriate physical dimen­sions.

But life is full of such stories and good luck to those who are eventually selected. The rest can dream and flies on the walls of life like me will scribble about the famous and every now and then the almost famous.

The capital's classiest (and classless) fry-ups

Under these circumstances, the only way to escape to工艺 your left over loose change from the night before, and pay someone to cook it for you. But try not to waste more than a dodgy fry on top of an ever dodgier spinach. Purely in the name of research, the DIT Independent sel­ling hangovers upon its staff to find the best hangover fry in Dublin.

The "under no circumstances" fry.
Bewley's, Westmoreland Street.

Oh dear. Oh dear, oh dear. The term rip­off doesn't come close to describing this one. Only God knows how far in advance it's cooked, but it's long enough to be an un­solid as a rock by the time it hits the plate. And then there's the fact that by the time you get your little pot of weak coffee and queue up to pay £6.95 for this misery on a plate, whatever slim chance there was of eating hot, even warm food is gone. Leave this one for the tourists.

The 'grand, if unremarkable' fry.
Yum Yum's, Aungier Street.

Not a bad fry at all, though it can be inconsistent. Good sausages and bacon, good coffee and greasy sauce. Not sure about the beans, although the fried potato is a welcome addition. The off­ putting feature of the fry is the fact that the egg is fried in a suspiciously perfect round shape, immediately calling the horror that is McGee to mind. Otherwise, thrueu­ up. Plus, the cafe is always full of builders, and if anyone knows their fry/breakfast roll, it's the grand, unremarkable worker. The price ranges from £3.95 to £4.50.

The 'very close second' fry.
Lemon, South William Street.

Strictly speaking, this isn't really a fry. It's a pancake filled with stuff you might get in a fry. It's one of the nicest things you can possibly eat with a hangover, not to mention one of the most filling. If you're not feeling up to the challenge of pork products or egg, there's numerous sweet and savoury alterna­tives. The coffee is good, and if you think you can face daylight without dissolving, you can sit outside. As if that wasn't enough, it's a bargain, ranging between £2.65 and £2.85.

The 'hangover'? What hangover? I'm brand new' fry. Probe, Georges Street Arcade.

The kind of fry that makes you believe that there really is a God and that he's smil­ing down upon you. No less than seven differ­ent types of fry are available, including a vegetarian and vegan option, but we hearty folk recom­ mend the deluxe fry. It's £5.85 for more food on a plate than most students see in a week, but if you're feeling a little delicate, there's smaller versions, from £3.85. Featuring hash browns, Crispybaled puddings, mushrooms, sausages, and great bacon, among other things. And the staff is friendly, which is exactly what you need in the morning after the night before.

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Come rain or shine, the Dublin Simon community volunteer visits homeless people throughout the city 365 nights a year, doling out soup and sandwiches and in many cases, just having a chat. Janice Gaffey spent a night with the group to see what a night as a community volunteer entails.

I'm struck by how shy and soft-spoken he is. He's on the street for the night in the rain, and everything he owns is in a small plastic bag in his hand. After a brief chat about Galway's GAA performance, we move on.

Further along the Green, we find our next port of call. There's two lads sitting down and we go over and ask if they want something to eat. They're not too impressed with the offer of oatmeal soup, but they take it anyway. Frank asks if they want a cup of tea, which Jim refuses, but he'll "take that home". A third person joins the group, and asks for a corned beef sandwich. He's quite indifferent that we can't find out the name in the box, and decides to look here, look for himself. Eventually he settles for ham, and then he and Jim ask for a cigarette. Jim is most upset about the ration of one person, telling me that "we've never got two". He asks us to ring around for a hostel for him for the night, which Frank does to no avail. Jim then launches into the difficulties he has getting a hostel bed, primarily because he freely admits to having a drug problem, and needs a doctor's letter to say he has "clean urines" before he can get a bed. The problem is finding a doctor. Having done as much as we realistically can for Jim and company, we move on towards Dawes Street.

Driving down Dawson Street, we spot a body in a doorway on South Anne Street. It looks like the person is asleep, but when Frank calls out, a head is raised. This is Tommy*, he's not fussy about what he eats, once it's not messy. We have a chat about the weather getting colder and how the door: opens a chat about the weather getting colder and how the door: opens. We give him a sleeping bag, but Jim points out that there's nobody around, so we take him back to his spot. We then decide to take Peter to hospital, where we hand him a taxi. He leaves the car and is not co-operative. He would. We get out of the car, Frank asks if he would. We get out of the car, Frank asks if he would like a sandwich, to which he replies that he would. We get out of the car, Frank asks if he would like a sandwich, to which he replies that he would. We get out of the car, Frank asks if he would like a sandwich, to which he replies that he would.

As we realistically can for Jim and company, we move on towards Dawes Street.

Southern Hemisphere. As he says, you need a holiday, don't you? I'm just back from the South of France myself!" For a split second we're a couple of customers in a travel agents discussing our upcoming holiday plans. And then Robert laughs, and we're back on a cold step in Dublin on a rainy Wednesday night.

Back up to the Green again and we pull in to a spot near Kildare Street. The guy we've stopped for turns out to be one of Jim's friends from earlier, but he points us towards another person across the road. It's Canadian Patrick* and he ambles over to the car. All he really wants is fruit, so we give him the last of what we have, and some soup. A friend of Patrick's joins the gathering and they have a marvelous conversation, from which I gather that Patrick wants his mate to check on somebody. His friend says I don't have time to baby-sit and walks off. We ask Patrick if he knows of anybody else around. Yeah, my friend Shane*, he's up around Ely Place, I kinda carried him to bed. But I left him there, cos I didn't wanna fight that and that's what he was tryin' to do.

So off we go to Ely Place, and it's entirely deserted. There's three of the darkest alloys I've ever seen, and we drive slowly into the first one. It's pitch black and I'm scared witless. The alley opens into a car park and in the far corner there's a tiny shed, with a couple of мат­ tresses. It seems empty, then we see him. We're pretty sure that it's Shane, lying on his back at a strange angle and in bad shape. Frank calls out, and Shane lifts his head, without opening his eyes. His head drops, and we call out again. The same thing hap­ pens, and it's like watching the living dead. But he's breathing regularly, and Frank has sufficient experi­ ence to know that this is not unusual. We start driving out of the alley, and encounter Patrick's friend, who has had a rethink about babysitting. We tell him what we've seen, to which he replies, "if he lifted his head he's probably all right. It's only a mild OD."

We say that we'll wait for him to check and start reversing back down the alley, loosing a wing mirror in the process. The babysitter calls from the bottom of the alley to say that everything is ok. So we check the opposite alley, and as we drive back out onto Ely Place, we witness a Lazarus-style miracle. There's Shane and the babysitter walking past us, right as rain and hav­ ing an argument. Shane is telling the babysitter to "stop wrecking me buzz" and off they go into the night.

Our next patrol region is Camden Street, where we meet Peter*, Ciara* and Mary*. A fair amount of alley outings, and all of them are on heroin and Mary is verging on hysteria. She wants us to find her a hostel, but is very spec­ ific about where she's willing to go, and it can't be any­ where "full of prostitutes and junkies". And she seems to think that this description applies to most places. She and Ciara are a couple, and it takes very little to start a row between them. Ciara tells me she's been on the streets all his life and in and out of prison. He asks us to look after Peter, "he's an old man, take care of him". I'm really impressed until Peter pulls down and whispers that Ciara is responsible for the entire gang, and all over Peter's face. He asks me to call an ambulance, because he's fallen and hurt himself and his leg is already in a cast, and he can't walk. He tells me that he wants to get away from Ciara and Mary, and then, changing the subject entirely, recites a poem he wrote for his mother.

After a quick consultation with Frank, we decide to take Peter to hospital. It's easier said than done, since Peter needs to be carried and is not co-operat­ ing because we've dropped his cider and he's going nowhere without it. Ciara and Mary try to help with the lifting, which at first glance seems to be quite noble of them. Then I realise that they're going through Peter's pockets in search of his vodka. It all has the potential to turn nasty, but we persuade Peter to hand over the vodka. He does so grudgingly and without taking a healthy swing from the bottle.

The safest bet seems to be to head for St. James's Hospital. As we drive past the queues outside the nightclub on Camden Street, Peter tells us a little about himself. "That pair use me. Just because I've a broken leg and can't get away from them. They rob everyone. I drink, I'm an alcoholic but the one thing I don't do is insult people." As an ambulance passes the car, and Peter blesses himself. He does this every time he sees an ambu­ lance, he says. "because you don't know who's in it. It might be some­ one worse off". He claims that he paid for the vodka he gave to Mary, and I feel like I've betrayed him for asking him to hand it over. As we drive into the hospital grounds, Peter tells us that he will be 58 this year, and then starts playing air guitar, and singing Eric Clapton songs.

Checking him into the hospital is far from easy. Getting through the door is an ordeal, and there's further upset when hospital security want his i.d. His ear­ lier request to be brought to hospital seems to have been forgotten, and he's being operated by the staff. It turns out that he was here the previous night with the same injuries, but there's nowhere else to bring him. "So he's ours for the night again then", the nurse says warmly. We leave them to it and head back to town.

Our final stop is at the AIB Banklink on Dame Street, where we hand him out the last of the food. We drop the flasks back to the shelter and head back to town.

I spend a while wondering what will happen to Peter. If he's discharged from hospi­ tal, where will he go? How will he get there? The follow­ ing morning, I see Peter in the same spot we found him in the night before. Ciara and Mary are with him. They're laughing and drinking.

*Names have been changed to protect identities.
The Force is strong with this one

At last, at last long, Star Wars has been given the DVD treatment. Dermot Keyes takes a look at what the double-disc 'Episode One - The Phantom Menace' has to offer. And no, there isn't a 'delete Jar Jar' option, not that you will even care...

The biggest DVD release of recent times promises to be the most impressive movie release on the format to date, even allowing for the computer-generated jiving of the one called Jar Jar Binks. 'Star Wars: Episode One - The Phantom Menace' looks a pretty safe bet to become the DVD treatment. Dermot Keyes takes a look at what this one and only Napster.

By Bryan Collins

IF IT'S cheap or if it's free, there's a student to be found. Perhaps that explains why students made up the bulk of the users of the world's leading free music website, the one and only Napster.

For months, students everywhere were downloading mp3's from the site www.napster.com, portable mp3 players or burned CDs. For those not up to speed on tech jargon, an mp3 is a technological feature which can compress a song into a very small file hence making it attractive to download.

The music industry didn't sit idly by however. Last March the major record labels won a lengthy court battle against the site. The result was a restricted version of Napster, which was forced to filter or block copyrighted songs. The music industry is still worried and they have every reason to be. Napster's demise didn't mean the end of free downloadable music.

Within weeks of the court order, dozens of sites had sprung up, fighting to take Napster's place. These sites proved much harder to fight as they are based outside of the United States.

One of the more popular music swapping sites can be found at www.audiogalaxy.com. Once registered you have access to a wide selection of high quality, and often rare, mp3's. It also boasts an ability to resume downloads that have been interrupted from where you left off so, unlike Napster, you never need to attempt a download more than once.

Another highly proper file sharing programme can be found at www.tarwars.com first post release on the format. It's all so brilliant, I've almost forgotten about some movie that opened in cinemas next July. I'm sure the name will come back to me!

8 Just before we went to press, yours truly got a peek at what the DVD in its beautiful entirety. It is truly magnificent. The blue ribbon release on the format, is limited and is a must see for absolutely anybody that wants to get a peek at what digital technology is going to treat filmgoers to both in the cinema and at home in the years to come. The hour-long documentary is a fascinating look at the five year process that went into making 'Episode One' a reality and the slightly concerned looks on the faces of Lucas and his cohorts at the end of the first rough cut of the piece is pure theatre. The movie may not have been everyone's liking, but this edition and all its extra dressing make it a must-buy. Absolute magic!

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Napster lives on

In an effort to combat piracy, the music industry has announced it will ship CD's with software which will prevent a computer from reading the CD. However game manufacturers have used similar software for years with relatively little success. Games can be recorded with ease after a simple download from sites like www.game copypworld.com. It's not only the music industry that's worried. Hollywood looks set to go a round or two with file swappers. Currently, downloading entertainment is impractical. Today's unwilling dial-up modems mean downloading one would require the patience of Buddha. This is all set to change over the next few years. Eircom recently announced the launch of their high-speed, or ADSL, Internet connection. It is up to humbly times faster than a standard dial up modem.

At the moment the service is affordable only to those with a fat bank balance. However as prices drop and access increases, the ability to download entire movies should become a reality. Couple this with the arrival of DVD burners, and you can see why Hollywood is breaking in a new market.

One thing is clear. The battle over file swapping is far from over.
By Laurence Mackin.

SOMETIMES you feel a bit low. Things aren't going your way and you don't know who or one you can really talk to. So you start drinking. Just one or two now and again. And suddenly, your popping down the local every day.

His appeal is in his demeanour and slurring northern English accent, that of an overweight, ageing alcoholic with a body destroyed by years of misuse and abuse.

The barman doesn't even say hello anymore, he just pulls a pint and lines up a scotch on the bar and gives you a smile. And then, eight hours later, you fall off the stool, stagger over to the bathroom, hurl some chunks and then its out into the cold night. You would go home but your girlfriend kicked you out so there's nothing for it but to go hang around the hospital and try and score some surgical meths until the early house opens.

But there is help at hand. Don't fall into that trap. Who do I go to? The A.A.? The Samaritans? The Catholic Church? No, my child. Seek out the one they call Johnny Vegas.

Johnny Vegas became famous on Irish shores for all the wrong reasons. During a routine in the Temple Bar Music Centre, Vegas had a nervous breakdown on stage and started to bubble and cry. He didn't work for another six months and with his on stage, it's impossible to forget this fact.

He lumbers around, double vodka and coke in one hand, can of Guinness and fag in the other. Red-faced in a gold jacket, beige flares and little else, his stomach, well honed on years of careful boozing and abuse, doesn't so much peak out as leer ominously.

Anyone foolish enough to sit near to the stage was subjected to a public humiliation that makes going to school with no trousers on positively appealing by comparison.

I was one of those unfortunate, but it was the girl he screeched I felt sorry for. He asked her for a kiss, voice breaking with emotion. When she declined his advances, he staggered away heart broken. "I could have loved you," he said. "I'm terribly lonely."

Don't get me wrong, he is funny. Sweet divine Jesus is he funny. The crowd loved him and he was on stage for more than 90 minutes with a kind of encore.

He talked non-stop, sang, danced and fell over, but never actually told a joke, or one you could tell to your mates in the pub later.

His appeal is in his demeanour and slurring northern English accent, that of an overweight, ageing alcoholic with a body destroyed by years of misuse and abuse. Vegas is everything you don't want to become, but all this is forgotten when your stomach is hurting from laughing so hard at him falling off a stool while singing an Irish ballad.

It's when your in bed thinking about it that you start to feel a little guilty. Then again, maybe it's all an act. Maybe, he's not really a drunk, it's just a stage persona.

If so, he's the best method actor I've ever seen. And one of the best comedians to boot.

Kitt sings another love song

By Debbie Flood

With his current album The Big Romance riding high in the charts, an appearance at Witness and supporting tours with The Frames and The Tindersticks, David Kitt's star is shining brightly. The newly refurbished Ambassador proved to an interesting venue to showcase Kitt's musical talent.

David Kitt wandered out on stage shortly after nine, dressed more like a teenage fan of Wheatus than a melodic singer songwriter. He opened the night with the most well known singles from The Big Romance. It went in Kitts favour, as the crowd began bopping and hopping along to Song from the Big Romance riding high in the chart.

His dreamy music loses none of its warmth and charm for the live treatment. If anything, his voice reaches tender new levels on songs such as Step Outside in the Morning Light and Strange Light in the Evening. He uses all the typical ways of drawing in the crowd to good effect, chatting easily with the audience and taking sips from his pint of Guinness between songs.

The most consistent feature of Kitts concerts is the appearance of his younger brother Robbie, who on Friday sang with him on a moving performance of Another Love Song, adding a touch of familiarity and intimacy to the night's proceedings.

Standing for two hours proved draining for my weary limbs, so I sneaked upstairs to feel the vibe from the balcony. Unbeknownst to myself, I had stumbled into Kitt clan territory. Sitting next to me, a middle-aged couple, not quite fitting the type for the Kitt fan club, watched the singer silently. Who I later found out was their son. I looked around at his friends and relatives and realised that these people knew Kitser as he is fondly referred to a public humiliation that makes going to school with no trousers on positively appealing by comparison.

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The Watcher - don't bother

Video reviews with Eoin Murphy

The Gift
Over the past year we have been bombarded with a seance load of supernatural thrillers, ranging from the chilling to the greatly defrosted.

Stir of Echoes opened the doors of stringy anxiety and then Lost Souls slammed it shut in your face.

Sam Raimi's 'The Gift' offers another perspective on things that go bump in the night.

In the heartland of America also known as Brixiland Georgia, Cat Blanchett plays a fortuneteller who tries to keep her family alive by helping locals with all their supernatural needs.

But unlike most under-standing poltergeists, some of the towns' folk take offence towards her unusual career choice and threaten her and her children.

One such Cetus wannabe is Donnie Barksdale (Keanu Reeves) who takes personal offence to Annie (Blanchette) telling his wife to leave. He is a weapon on the loose.

The plot is more of the 'who's doing it' genre and at times lacks the surreal dialog present in the Sixth Sense, but that is probably the worst thing about this movie.

Blanchett is stunning in her role as a woman possessed and in her role as Annie, the vicious, igno-rant, wife-beating witch. Reeves is palatable.

Look out for Giovanni Ribisi who puts in an almost certain Oscar nomination worthy performance as a troubled mechanic who befriends Blanchette.

There are twists and turns all throughout the story and while you are always left guessing as to whom the real murderer is, (partly because Holmes has slept with half the town) it is almost obvious who it actually is.

So if you are looking for a night in without the demons (well drink anyway) and really want to just sit down and be entertained, the Gift is well worth a viewing.

The Watcher
The Silence of the Lambs' was destined for criticism the minute Jodie Foster refused to play the returning Clarice Starling as she felt that the script was ruining the character set up in the first movie. Thankfully Hopkins had no such problems returning as the charming yet deadly Hannibal Lector.

Johanne Moore plays FBI agent Clarice Starling, the one honest person left on the earth, befriended by the one polite cannibal roaming free on the earth.

The movie plays off the apparent love Hannibal has for Starling and the assumption that he will never let her catch him. Unfortunately for Hannibal one of his old patients, Mason Verger (Ray Liotta), is out to catch him and do horrible things to him. Why? Because he made him peel off his face and feed it to his Dog.

Cheers Doc! Despite the fact that this movie is only very loosely based on the book and several important details are left out, it is certainly entertaining.

Hopkins is always excellent in his portrayal of the macabre Lecter and Moore picks where Foster left off with a very competent performance.

Hannibal
Well he's back and this time he's even hungrier. Hollywood's most loved cannibal is back as the eponymous villain in the film version of Thomas Harris' novel 'Hannibal'.

The much-awaited sequel to The Silence of the Lambs was destined for criticism the minute Jodie Foster refused to play the returning Clarice Starling as she felt that the script was ruining the character set up in the first movie. Thankfully Hopkins had no such problems returning as the charming yet deadly Hannibal Lector.

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For me the film's soundtrack- the breathtaking glory along with the half an hour spent in Florence Italy. The fantastic architecture and statues along with haunting melodies and great acting made me forget all the psychological brilliance of the first instalment.

Apart from the two main characters watch out for an amazing performance from Oldman as Verger and also Ray Liotta, who plays Paul Krendler, a dirty Department of Justice employee who will do anything to ruin starlings career unless she sleeps with him.

While 'Hannibal' was never going to be better than The Silence of the Lambs, it is a worthy sequel and while the movie's ending was altered from that of the book, like so many other changes, it has allowed the powers that be to complete a ravenous trilogy. If Hopkins signs up, you can count me in.

The Watcher
Have you ever come out after watching a film and realise that there just went two hours of my life that I'll never see again? Well welcome to the world of The Watcher.

It is a slow paced, utterly uneventful and as much fun as eating rice cakes. Director Joe Charbanics' picture fails to capture any level of suspense or drama and always leaves you searching for a point.

Unfortunately there wasn't one to be found. It is almost like a terrible rip off of David Fincher's 'Seven', where the killer taunts the police by leaving a trail of clues to taunt them and also helps them in the hunt to save the victim.

Again it failed to capture any of the menace portrayed in 'Seven' and the dialogue dripped instead of flowing between the principle characters.

To my great shock I saw one of my favourite Brat Pack actors, James Spader, faltering around as a burned out FBI agent, hooked on painkillers and therapy. The only reason he hasn't killed himself is because he's in love with his therapist, Marisa Tomei. Keanu Reeves plays the psychic Killer whose only pleasure comes from killing young women and taunting Spader to the brink of a meltdown.

This is a terribly predictable film with little or no surprises.

Reeves is extremely pedetrian in his role as the baddie. Giving all credit gained from his sparkling performance as Neo in 'The Matrix.' Spader is bearable but just has nothing to work with in this truly awful movie.

In truth I would rather watch old re-runs of Glenroe than be made to see 'The Watcher' again. If you have the chance to do anything else rather than see this film do it, philately can be rewarding on at least one level!
By Fiachra Rocco-Goveny

Of you lucky things! Legions of the great unwashed rejoice! There is a divinity among you! Having noticed that the majority of ye poor students, although having a plethora of useless qualifications and pieces of paper, you are missing something vital: Style. Sadly, the je ne sais quoi, which I have in abundance, is not on the curriculum in college, so it is up to me to spread the love and show you how to live! Oh, the enormity of which I have in abundance. So it is up to me to spread the love and show you how to live! Oh, the enormity of which I have in abundance! Having noticed although having a plethora of useless qualifications and pieces of paper, you are missing something vital: Style. Sadly, the je ne sais quoi, which I have in abundance, is not on the curriculum in college, so it is up to me to spread the love and show you how to live! Oh, the enormity of which I have in abundance!

However, our ordeal wasn't over yet. While at the counter some pesky street urchin wanted to pay by cash. Hello, are we living in the dark ages? I didn't even know they still printed those cute little €10 notes.

The day was practically a disaster so we tried to resuscitate it with a quick dinner date at Bistro Bong. I stuck to the fillet of tofu but VBF was positively roughing it with some chips and aioli.

We just had time to finish the Chardonnay and dash across town to the menswear department, with a quick stop off at Louis V's. With Laurence Mackin could spend the first paragraph welcoming you all back for another year and greeting first years for the first time into college, etc etc, but so, I won't, that is not my job. If you want some sycophantic drivel I suggest you read the editor's column (but it's good sycophantic drivel! – Ed). That's what he is there for.

On the other hand, am here to tell you all that's good and wonderful and happening on your doorstep. But first, a little look back at what you may have missed during the summer.

This isn't an excuse for me to gloat. It's to remind you what you missed so you won't make the same mistakes next year. Alright, it's just to gloat.

Dublin was awash with international acts throughout the summer. The E.S.B Jazz Festival saw some truly legendary performances even if the main attraction, Charlie Haden, couldn't make it due to the events on September 11th. The Doclands Film Festival ended on 29th of September, a novel addition to the calendar of film festivals in the Irish Film Centre. Gig-wise there were just too many to mention, but recent highlights included Spiritualized at the Ambassador, and St. Germain in the Olympia.

You don't know who these people are? Then go forth and find out! You will not be disappointed.

But enough reminiscing and Wonder Years nostalgia (it was at that point I could feel my childhood slipping away...) The year is young, the bar is full and we've all got our hip cat threads on. So get up and get down and get out there.

The legendary Sparklehorse play the Ambassador on Friday 2nd November with Gemma Hayes. Their most recent release, It's a Wonderful Life is one of the most interesting pieces of rock you'll find at the moment, and support from the up and coming Hayes will make for a really strong combination on the night.

The awesome Mogwai play the Olympia on 7th November. Anybody who hasn't made it to a Mogwai gig is simply missing out on peril of death. Also playing the Olympia will be Ron Sexsmith on 18th November and the Cowboy Junkies on 23rd October.

The Ambassador is a welcome addition to the country's venues. Reminiscent of the Olympia in layout, the venue is split over two levels with standing on the ground floor and seating on the upper.

Although the prices at the bar are among the most expensive in the city, the Guinness is good even if it is in the dreaded plastic cup. The acoustics are excellent and the stage is impressively large but thankfully the crowd are not fenced off a huge distance from it. Although it has being just concerts so far, the Ambassador will play host to a number of late night clubs a la the Olympia and the Gaiety, the first of which is School Disco.com on 27th October.

So if boys and girls in school uniforms is your thing than report to your local Garda station you sick puppy. Oh, it's all good.
A NEW college year and a new season for DIT Gaelic Games brings with it a pool of freshmen to choose from, which compensates for the loss of last year’s graduates. After mixed performances in the past, DIT GAA Development Officer Des O’Donnell speaks to Miguel Delaney of his expectations for the coming year.

In football, this year’s All-Ireland Football Final showed that the potential is there for DIT teams. Ollie Murphy, Richie Kealy and Evan Kelly head the list of past DIT students victorious in the past. However, while DIT football has benefited from the contribution of County players before, many of them forming the backbone of teams, Des believes the problem has been that these players have never come around at the same time.

As for this year, DIT senior football manager Joe Moran has some adjustments to make, with 11 of last year’s side having graduated. Although DIT has a campus of over 15 acres, the field in question is still too small to get a squad together. "I could go around the different colleges now and get over 200 willing footballers, but this will always be whittled down as students just don’t have the time."

The fact that DIT has centres scattered all over Dublin, combined with the distance of facilities, causes further problems. While arranging a fixture and notifying every centre is troublesome enough, potential players can be put off as the pitches are out in Terenure. "The facilities we have are adequate, but they are not central enough. If the pitches were in Islandbridge, only a mile away from most centres, more players might be attracted as they could arrive straight from work."

The senior football team has been forced to draw from the fresher’s team, an idea that Des dislikes but is forced to accept. "There is a big difference between coming up against an 18-year-old fresher and a 22-year-old senior. It would be nice to protect fresher’s for a year, but sometimes that’s impossible."

However this year it might not be such a bad thing, with the emergence of some promising talent. On Wednesday October 10th two freshers’ teams were sent out to Belfield to take on two UCD teams. For the first time ever both DIT teams won, showing that progress is being made. It could be an interesting year for the First Year Side.

In hurling, the senior side has also been weakened by the loss of graduates, with many of them having formed the core of previous years’ teams. However, the squad in a dedicated bunch and is boosted by the fact that Colm Crowe, whom plays for Galway’s senior side, is still available for selection. Senior hurling manager Damien McDonald will be hoping to improve on last year’s performance, as the side were beaten in the first round of the Fitzgibbon Cup by NUI Maynooth. This year however got off to a bad start with DIT hurlers losing two matches to the Galway and Mayo IT teams.

As for the ladies, Des believes those playing for the football and hurling sides are just as enthusiastic, as everyone however like always, the numbers just aren’t there. In camogie it’s the same problem, as there wasn’t enough available players to get a team together. This time around, DIT will participate in the Leinster Higher Education Colleges ‘Blitz in DCU on Monday 22nd October. Des expects to send out two teams, hoping that a good turn out at the event will put DIT into the road this season.

Finally, as well as wishing all teams good luck, Des has one final request: Could all players please bring back last year’s jerseys?

DIT looks to progress on Gaelic front

By Claran McKeon

After being crowned the Best New / Most Improved Club of the Year, the DIT Badminton Club is back with a far busier schedule of events for the year ahead.

Along with the HESF Tournament and the Intervarsities, we will now be competing in the BUI Dublin & District Leagues over the coming months. With the mixed league drawing having just been made, DIT will face the challenge of CIE, Celbridge, Epsworth, An Caislean Nua and Dundrum during the new campaign. This is certainly a great challenge for all involved but if last year’s effort is anything to go by, then our players should be more than capable of rising to the occasion.

The mixed cup competition will get underway before the Christmas holidays. After the festive break, we will also be entering into the Men’s and Ladies Leagues. Inter DIT Competitions are also being planned for the foreseeable future which is an integral part and logical progression in the development of badminton in DIT. Competitive players aside, beginners are always welcome to try out and enjoy the evening sessions. All equipment is supplied and we have an excellent walk to teach all levels, so no one should feel too inadequate or out of place. Badminton is a great sport, provides a superb way of keeping fit or indeed getting fit, and the club is a great place to meet friends and to have fun.

We will also be holding many mad social nights out. Watch out for posters, or check out our website for more information in the coming weeks. You can log into our activities at http://findings.47emichrome.com.page.htm. Pay us a visit and see what we are all about!

Our Training Times for the year ahead are as follows: Street YMCA 12:30-2:00pm Mondays Belvedere Gym 7-10pm Tuesdays

* Claran McKeon is the Treasurer of the DIT Badminton Club

Volley good show: Students indulge in appropriate spiking during DIT Sportsway

BADMINTON

By Miguel Delaney

Game for a www. gaffes!

SPORTS commentators mourning the retirement of Murray “Look up there! That’s the sky!” Walker for his unerring ability to make sport sound perfect, may stop worrying for there is a website guaranteed to make even the most eager of fans tune out. Danger, Here (www.danger-here.com) is a celebration of the sport’s finest commentating gaffes.

Updated every Monday, leading with the week’s most memorable pieces of football analysis, the website takes an alternative look at the football world. Speak Ron Atkinson’s own language. Tongue, through an easy to follow step by step guide, eventually leading to text book sentences such as “Spottery’s badge to Beckham who’s spotted the little eye-brows and sent it over early doesn’t.” Learn how Glenn Hoddle’s goalline gaffes, such as his ‘definitely pre-ordained’ and simply laugh at Keegan’s comments like “despite his white t-shirt he’s quite fast.”

The centrepiece though is undoubtedly the tribute to Ireland’s finest, George Hamilton. The Madness of Commentator George includes all his classes from “the baggage brothers of course, are not related” to his more recent “nonbody within an ass roar of him.” Danger Here also calculates that George was the first to use the phrase ‘sun greening’ when he reported on England’s defeat during his time as commentator through some of his vintage invinations for opposing teams.

The site analyses the football world each week by asking essential questions such as “Barry version, why?”, musings on Dunphy’s latest antics or peering into ideas of a world withoutcolour. A ‘ payment included, with a new centre and columns on the latest football topics. Though not a completely professional site, Danger Here is an attempt to provide interested students with a site of its kind at the moment and a hilarious way to waste half an hour. 

* And Bonner has gone 160 miles of these championships without conceding a goal. On danger here...-

Whistle Blowers

GAA: Beneficiaries or Mercenaries?

With another successful season of Championship action behind us, attention will once again return to the thorny issue of professionalism in the GAA. It’s now been 10 years since the O’Donnell report was published by the Dail. Many feel that if footballers and hurlers were paid, the spirit of the games would suffer. Players would be more concerned about getting a big pay cheque than performing to the best of their ability for their club and county.

It is an understandable concern. The GAA is a part of our tradition, therefore it is difficult to just slap a price tag on it, without appearing to devalue its cultural significance. But it is clear from the emergence of the Gaelic Players Association that not all players are happy with the current situation.

And why should they be? Every summer the GAA replenish their money mountain with gate receipts and TV rights, while the players that attract the huge audiences are overlooked.

Playing at the highest level in GAA requires extreme dedication. Night after night players become the living embodiment of a student train regardless of the temperamental Irish weather, and they still get to have for work the following morning.

Of course a system to allow players would not swap their lifestyle for anything, but surely their sacrifice deserves some financial reward. The argument that professionalism will ruin our players, stars, and the archetypal mercenary with an eye for cash rather than goal, is over simplistic. Roy Keane earns in excess of £50,000 a week, yet no one could ever suggest that he is not a hundred per cent committed to every game he plays in. Therefore why would a GAA player be any different? If anything professionalism may improve our players by making them feel more accountable for the clubs that pay their wages.

Bri Healy

Beckham in the hunt for Golden Ball

The status of Mr Posh in the global football context has often been a contentious point for those of us who have queried why our own Roy Keane has yet to be mentioned as a serious contender for European Footballer of the Year.

But following his majestic ninety minutes against the Greeks, David Beckham is certainly to be among the favourites for the award come Christmas time. This year’s top player prize on the continent is really up for grabs. As a player, he is on a roll of players who have delivered both for club and country during the past year. David’s performance in Manchester United’s successful campaign in the Premier League, as well as the emergence of the new look squad under new manager Alex Ferguson, has set the Red Devils on course for yet another title. Beckham himself has scored a huge number of goals and has continued to pull off the passes which are a hallmark of his game. It’s no wonder that Roy Keane is being quoted at odds of 1/4 to 1/3 to win the award. David Beckham is certainly worth a punt.

There are many who would argue that the players who win the golden ball are in much better shape and would certainly have an edge if the Year award were to be a fair reflection of the players who win the award. Here is a list of some of the players who have been at the top of their game during the past year. They have been shortlisted for the award.

- Michael Owen
- David Beckham
- Ruud Van Nistelrooy
- Zinedine Zidane
- Ronaldo
- Francesco Totti
- Ivan Zamorano
- Patrick Vieira
- Cristiano Ronaldo
- Roberto Carlos

The list is far from exhaustive and it would be a brave man who would put off his bets against any of the above players. But one thing is certain: the Golden Ball award winner will have had a very successful year and will have played a big part in leading his team to success. Becky in the hunt for Golden Ball
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