the compact
Log onto www.oxygen.ie for the best and worst pics of Irish students.
Welcome to the last edition of The Compact 2005-2006. There is plenty to enjoy here including an update on the new Grangegorman campus; a full round-up of the DIT Societies and Sports Awards; a number of entertainment reviews; a comprehensive 'Year in Review' section and a 'Best of' the Wall of Shame all of which should not be missed.

This magazine acts as a great opportunity to look back at the last year and all the events, exams, stress, assignments and good and bad memories that students/staff attach to it.

I have felt involved in all that has happened since I took up this role last September and it's been an experience that I won't forget.

But this 'editor' lark has been a lonely task at times but the belief that someone somewhere in the college was reading the magazine and enjoying its content kept me going when I felt I was ready to pack it in. So thank you the invisible readers that I never got the chance to meet - you kept me going.

I must also take this time to mention those who helped me put the magazine together and especially all the contributors who, despite numerous other deadlines they had to meet, took time to write a report or feature for me when my deadline was approaching. You made what could have been an impossible job a great deal easier.

So enjoy the last Compact and spend your time wisely over the summer and I'm sure our paths will cross again very soon.

Good luck in the exams to all the students and don't forget to come back in September for more!

Over and out.

Cormac Cahill, Editor compact@ditsu.ie (01) 4024654

Hi and Welcome to the final Compact of what has been a compact year!

I have a review of the year piece inside, and we also have the best of the wall of shame, as well as the latest update on Grangegorman and your exam info. The last few weeks have been hectic, with the week before Easter playing host to the excellent Societies and Sports awards nights, which were unmissable nights as usual. I'll never forget George Hook's story about Tom McGurk's baton change accident in the Nudist 4X100 metres relay... you get the picture!

We are facing into exams again, it feels like it's only been a few weeks since the results of the last exams were out, oh wait, it was... If you are feeling the pressure or have an exam related issue to sort out, get on www.ditsu.ie and get in contact with the Academic or Student Affairs Departments in our Students' Union, that's what we are here for. And if you are heading abroad for the summer, keep an eye on the website for regular updates as to what's going on at home, college wise. If not, I'll see you at Oxegen and Ill explain it all there!

We hope to have the Graduation ball tickets on sale before the end of the year, so if you are graduating at any level, make sure to get your hands on some before they are all gone. We will hopefully have them for sale on Ticketmaster. Well, all I can do now is wish you the best in the exams, if you have any hassle, drop down to us, and have a great (and safe) summer.

Slan go foil.

Bob.
Campus Will Bring Much Needed Regeneration

The €750 million Grangegorman Campus is well under way. The Grangegorman Development Agency has emerged from its infancy, making major strides towards completing the 72-acre site in the north inner city by 2011.

The new Grangegorman site, located just north of Smithfield and west of Phibsborough, will make great strides to try to become part of the local community and the concerns of the locals will be incorporated in the long planning process ahead. Many will be wondering what exactly the new campus will provide for the DIT students of the future in terms of recreational environment, student accommodation, services and sports amenities.

Last January, when I spoke to Paul Horan from the Campus Planning Office for Grangegorman again, I first asked him how they planned to forge links with the local community around the new proposed campus. ‘DIT already has a very active community links programme with a range of programmes, many active in the area, and some like Grangegorman on-line targeted directly at the area,’ he said.

‘These include Pathways Through Education Targeted Intervention to 12-15 year olds to St Josephs’ Wind Band in Ballymun which provides instruments and tuition to a 40 member youth band.’

Mr Horan also revealed details of a scheme that will be used to support disadvantaged students in the Grangegorman area: ‘Lifelong Educational Access Programme (LEAP) whereby 250 disadvantaged students receive on-going support while at DIT.’

The Community LINKS Programme is headed by Tommy Cooke and his colleagues here in DIT, and in the new proposed campus, will ensure that the community will again be at the heart of the Institute as locals will allowed access to the grounds and the indoor facilities of the new Grangegorman campus. Paul Horan: ‘In addition we have guaranteed to maintain access to the sports pitches and to allow public access to the indoor sports facilities. Also, the planning zoning will ensure that there is public access to the grounds in general.’

The initiative is a joint venture in education and health development by the Grangegorman Development Agency, for Dublin Institute of Technology and the Health Service Executive. The project will undoubtedly regenerate an underdeveloped area of the North Inner city.

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Last January, when I spoke to Paul Horan of the Campus Planning Office for Grangegorman, he explained the main motive behind the new campus. ‘The main reason is to give a better educational experience,’ he said. ‘What we really lack now in DIT is a lot of the infrastructure, social and sporting spaces. They’re split all over the place like the gym in Bolton Street and in Kevin Street - if they were combined together it would actually make a good facility.’

The new campus will provide just that: an improved social and sporting infrastructure in which students can truly prosper. The Grangegorman Development Agency firmly believe they can complete a development that is both effective as an academic stronghold and can take its place at the heart of north inner city Dublin.

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The new Grangegorman campus will include an accommodation block, new sports grounds and facilities: ‘In terms of accommodation - in line with provision at other Dublin colleges - we are planning to provide accommodation for twenty per cent of full time students which will equal two-thousand beds. These will be built on a phased basis as students move to the new campus,’ said Horan.

The provision of adequate sports grounds will also be included at Grangegorman with a wide range of sporting activities being catered for by the new campus.

‘The college has developed a brief for sport,’ enthused Paul Horan.

‘This includes a significant indoor sports centre with a swimming pool, a gym and large sports hall, two other smaller halls, squash and handball alleys and a climbing wall. This will be accessible to the public on a membership basis.’ In addition over twenty per cent of the lands must be kept open, which is in keeping with our needs for playing pitches, including one all weather pitch. A separate Students’ Union facility will provide recreation and amenity space and it is also planned to cluster the accommodation and indoor sports and recreation facilities: ‘In terms of accommodation - in line with provision at other Dublin colleges - we are planning to provide accommodation for twenty per cent of full time students which will equal two-thousand beds. These will be built on a phased basis as students move to the new campus,’ said Horan.

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facilities together to create a ‘student village’ area.’

The Grangegorman area will change rapidly over the next five to six years as the new campus takes shape at the heart of the local community. I asked Paul Howran what the reaction of the local community had been to all the changes that are being proposed. ‘The reaction of local people is generally very positive and we have had a number of public meetings with local residents associations,’ he said.

‘Currently the site is closed off and derelict in parts so the locals are particularly interested in sporting facilities and amenity space - just somewhere to walk the dog.’ ‘However, there are major concerns regarding traffic and parking, but the planned LUAS stop at Broadstone, along with the existing one at Smithfield, should ensure most staff and students can arrive by public transport as they do now.’

The area of the north inner city has good amenities for students to take advantage of once the campus is finally put in place. These include Smithfield which contains the Public Square with its notable landmarks including the Old Jameson Whiskey Distillery and the Chief O’Neill’s Chimney Viewing Tower of 70ft offering views of the city of Dublin and out to the Irish Sea. Smithfield will also go under major redevelopment in its own right by Dublin City Council who are planning to build a Covent Garden type refurbishment initiative in the next couple of years.

Smithfield is in close proximity to the area of Phibsboro which is in turn adjacent to Glasnevin and the Royal Canal and close to Drumcondra. Phibsboro has experienced massive regeneration in its own right over the past few years. This includes the proposed development to upgrade the Phibsboro Shopping Centre with a £75 million refurbishment and other housing developments. Situated just behind the Shopping Centre is Dalymount Park the home of Eircom Premier League side Bohemians.

These are certainly areas in North Dublin that are experiencing regeneration like the Grangegorman site will in the near future. These are areas that will be happy to rent accommodation, to socialise and to perhaps gain employment when they have finished their studies in the nearby Grangegorman Campus.

The Grangegorman campus initiative has also come in for strong praise from the government including Mary Hanafin TD, Minister for Education and Science.

‘The move of the Dublin Institute of Technology to the Grangegorman site will allow the Institute to maximise its potential not only as a top class educational facility, but also as a valuable community resource,’ said Ms. Hanafin in the Dáil last November.

‘The relocation of DIT, which is currently spread over 30 different sites in Dublin, to a 65-acre campus in Grangegorman will enable the Institute to provide better academic and support services for its nearly 20,000 students,’ she continued.

The future looks bright for DIT as staff and future students await the move to their new home on the Northside.
Irish Language Comes Home to DIT

Here in DIT something very exciting is happening with the newly established Oifig na Gaeilge that hopes to promote the Irish language with a few clear objectives: to create awareness, to promote learning and to provide a platform for those who are interested in the Irish language.

They will be providing Irish language classes to DIT staff and students in conjunction with The School of Languages which will be taking place in September and just last week I caught up with the two people who are now responsible for Oifig na Gaeilge Siobhán Nic Gaoithín, Irish language Officer and Clare Spáinneach, Administrator, for a chat about their plans for Oifig na Gaeilge, their plea for student participation in DIT and the revival of our national language.

I first asked Siobhán what they want to achieve here in DIT. ‘We want to address peoples’ needs with the language and to do this, we want people to get involved in setting the agenda for Oifig na Gaeilge. At the end of the day the office is to provide a service to the staff and students of DIT and we need to find out what their needs and ideas are with regard to the language.

“We want to cater to peoples’ needs as much as we can as I think confidence is the main thing that keeps people back and it’s the main thing that people lack. A lot of people have a lot more Irish than they think but it’s just a matter of making practical use of it. People are much more willing to use their cúpla focal if they know that they’ll get a positive reception and encouragement, and that their grammar won’t be corrected!”

It is hoped that Oifig na Gaeilge will be able to provide a scholarship programme to DIT students in the not so distant future. ‘We hope to have at some stage a scholarship programme for students with Irish whether it’s to fund them to do postgraduate academic courses to develop links with other institutions etc. and facilitate opportunities for study through Irish outside DIT’, added Clare, who is a former part-time lecturer in media studies in DIT.

Oifig na Gaeilge are eager to add that there are a great number of activities through Irish out there that people may not know exist and Clare is eager to open peoples’ minds to these: ‘We want to also turn people onto other things that are going on in the city like there are yoga classes through Irish for example and plenty of social events that don’t revolve around traditional music or dancing, just to let them know that there is a whole world of stuff out there that are being run through Irish which don’t necessarily have anything to do with the learning of the language.’

One of the main objectives of Oifig na Gaeilge is to make people more aware and open to the language and to forget the bad experiences that students may have had in secondary school perhaps where the emphasis is more so on grammar rather than any practical use such as conversation.’Some people have had negative experiences of the language from secondary school and we would like to provide a more positive experience of the language’, added Siobhán.

‘There are benefits to speaking/using another language. We want to incorporate Irish language events through the various societies that already exist such as the Irish Society and the Drama Society - there’s lots of other aspects to the language.’

A number of events will be lined up next year to help people break down the old prejudices towards the national language. ‘People sometimes have a narrow view of Irish language events (maybe based on their experiences as teenagers in the Gaeltacht) so we’d like to bring something different into the mix. For example, we’re hosting a student night on the 26th of April in Club Conradh na Gaeilge on 6 Harcourt St, where we have one of the O’J’s from Raidió na Life coming in to play and set dancing optional,’ said Clare.

Students should not be reluctant or anxious about coming forward to join in the new DIT venture. ‘We are very keen that students get involved in the events and the work that Oifig na Gaeilge will be doing, irrespective of whether they speak Irish or not,’ added Clare.

‘We have a very strong base – we think – to work with from the responses that we have gotten from students so far; most of whom aren’t actually studying the language but are just interested in the language and are keen to get involved.’

We are all familiar with Gráinne Seoighe and Hector Ó hÉo-
chagán on our TV screens and this has coincided with a renewed interest in our national language that has led to a new popularisation within Ireland which many people thought they would simply never see. I put this to the girls and asked them what has caused this? 'There's a lot of different things like the popularity of TG4 and Gaelscoilanna,' said Siobháin.

'I think Hector and Gráinne, people can see that the language is practical and can be successful outside the classroom and yes certainly the role that Hector and Gráinne play is very important in popularising the language.'

'The Irish language is also more tangible than it used to be and there are more people learning the language, there are more courses and it is definitely I think growing in popularity at the moment. Also I think that people have more money to be doing things and want to be doing something more in a social/cultural element.'

Clare was also of the same opinion and stressed that the Irish language has more to do with a youth culture rather than the more traditional view: 'The stereotypical 'gaelgeoir' has changed a lot over the past few years.'

However, can the popularity that the Irish language has enjoyed over the past few years be sustained and how long can it last? To answer your question, the language has seen a big growth in popularity in the past few years and yes it can be sustained. A lot of investment has been made in the language—a lot of new jobs have been created, a lot of new opportunities to learn and experience the language have developed in the past 10 years which have added hugely to the popularity of the language,' said Siobhán.

'What is something is invested in, it's sure to grow! However to ensure the languages sustainability, investment in the language needs to be continued, more opportunities to speak and work through the language are required, political, organisational and social good will towards the language are required and it needs to be sustained as a living language in the home.'

'Re the Rock music in Irish, it has come on a lot especially with the recent release of CEOL '06, with 26 artists such as Mundy, Lisa Hannigan, The Waterboys, Autamata, The Frank & Walters, The Rev's etc. all singing songs in Irish and all the proceeds from the collection going to Concern. It is also an area which has huge potential to grow like Welsh or Breton, which have a huge music scene.'

However, Clare was eager to point out that she hopes it will never come to the stage where people feel they are excluded on the basis that they do not know the Irish language as that would defeat the inclusive purpose of Oifig na Gaeilge: 'I hope it doesn't get to the point that people are alienated because they don't speak Irish—nobody ever wants to see that. We want it to be inclusive rather than exclusive which it has been perceived as for a while now.'

'Siobhán hopes that in the future Irish people will be able to go into the workplace and be able to use Irish: 'We certainly want to work on it, promote it and to develop further courses through the medium of Irish and we want to really have students input into the Irish language plan in DIT. We really want people's participation and yes, it would be great to hear Irish spoken in the canteen and that it would be more visible around the DIT so in any way shape or form that the Irish language is promoted visually or in social events we would be delighted.'

'Everything our office does is very deliberately bilingual and it's all in the spirit of inclusiveness rather than having people intimidated or left out because they don't have fluent Irish. There is a lot of demand at the moment for Irish classes for people who have come here from other countries, which is great to see. It's no more difficult to learn from scratch than any other language you'd study at a night class, and it's a lot easier to find an Irish language night out in Dublin than it is to find one in French/German/etc.'

Oifig na Gaeilge are hoping that students will get involved and will be eager to have an input into how the new initiative takes shape and this may be the barometer of success. 'We want to try and influence people's way of thinking in a positive way when it comes to the Irish language,' said Clare.

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Student Return Fares From DUBLIN

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Fares correct at time of print.
Oifig na Gaeilge ar an bhfód:

Cuireadh tus le hOifig na Gaeilge i mi Feabhra na bliana seo agus tá bhreit againn fostaithe chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i ngach slí ar fud na hInstitiúide.

Mar thúis tá Oifig na Gaeilge lon­naithe i dTeach Mhic Liam thall i 30 Sráid Pheambrog Uachtarach ach bionn muid ag dul timpeall ar na hionaid éagsúla go minic ag buailleadh le mic léinn.

An Ghaeilge a bheith larnach i saol na hInstitiúide an fhís agus an dushtan ata romhain amach.

Ba mhaith linn go mor an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i saol mac leinn na hInstitiúide.

BA mhaith linn go mor an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i saol mac leinn na hInstitiúide.

Mar thúis tá oíche shóisialta a reachtaithe againn i gClub Choronad na Gaeilge, 6 Sráid Fhearchair ar gCéadaoin 26 Aibreán ag tosnú ag a 8.30i. n. Tá muid ag cur 'Gleo' ar an oíche agus súil againn go mbéidh go leor deoch ag leor gleo ann nuair a bheas DJ ag casadh meascán de cheoil eclectic agus ceol domhanda, beidh deoch agus deis againn uilig buailleadh lena chuid agus aithne a chur ar a chéile.

Ba mhaith linn imeachtaí shóisialta a chur ar bun go rialta, turais agus cáil spraiúil, sceim scolairescacht Gaeilge a fhóraí agus ranganna Gaeilge a chur ar fáil do mhic léinn. Má tá aon smaoineointe nó moltaí agat duinn, na b'fhéidir leat teagmháil lena cheile.

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Extra Info:

There are a number of courses that you can be doing in your own time, we would recommend ‘Gaeilge agus Fáilte’, t's a workbook and CD pack that is available from most bookshops or from Gla Linn on 33 Dame St. at 01 6751200.

www.gaelge.ie - 'The Irish Language Super highway' one stop shop regarding Irish language classes, events, services etc.

www.clubcelt.com - Súl is an Irish club held every second Thursday upstairs in the Castle Inn, beside Jury’s Inn Christchurch, and features first-rate musicians and artists from around the world.

CEOL ’06: 26 artists such as Mundy, Lisa Hannigan, The Waterboys, Autamata, The Frank & Walters, The Rev’s etc. all singing songs in Irish in aid of Concern E19.99 available from all good record stores nationwide.

Dé Céadaoin, 26 Aibreán, 8.30i.n.

Club Conradh na Gaeilge,

6 Sráid Fhearchair, BÁC 2
Ticéid saor in aisce ar fáil ó Oifig na Gaeilge, D.I.T gaelge@dit.ie / 01 4027504

Slán taimill
Siobhán & Clare
Students Claim DIT Enterprise Award

Five DIT Product Design students have won the 2006 Student Enterprise Award, sponsored by Enterprise Ireland, Ulster Bank and Invest Northern Ireland.

The students, who competed under their company name of EIRMED, presented their product and business plan at the final of this prestigious all-Ireland competition, which was held in Queens University Belfast on 05/06 April. The winners will share in the prize fund of €44,000.

The EIRMED team comprised five young women - Aisling Conroy, Audrey Maher, Jennifer Kent, Siobhan Groark and Honora Egan. The team members designed the prototype for an assistive diagnostic device for bacterial and viral infections in paediatric and geriatric care - with the possibility of going into further markets including veterinary and astronautics! They also developed a business plan for the manufacture and distribution of the product in Ireland and internationally.

The team are all in the third year of their Product Design degree - an innovative programme located in the School of Manufacturing and Design Engineering, with links into the School of Art Design and Printing and the School of Marketing. Their tutors for the competition were Barry Plunkett and Arthur Henry.

DIT also had a second winning team in the final of the competition. Rory Fox and Mark Noonan both third year Marketing students in the Faculty of Business competed under their company name, BlackHawk. Recently this team won first prize in the DIT Student Enterprise Award for their plan to manufacture and market a new saddle specially designed for professional horse riders. In the all-Ireland competition they were named joint runner-up. Their tutor for the competition was Dr. Tom Cooney.

The all-Ireland Student Enterprise Awards competition is now in its 23rd year. It was conceived to encourage innovation, promote enterprise and foster a spirit of entrepreneurship among third level students.

The DIT Student Enterprise Competition is an initiative of the Bolton Trust - an organisation set up by staff members of DIT to promote entrepreneurship - and is co-sponsored by the Trust, DIT and the Dublin-based technology risk management company, Steorn.

First prize is €5,000, second prize is €2,000 and a joint third prize is €1,000 each. This was the 12th year of the competition.
Another Year Over: Socs Awards Mania!

The 6th Annual DIT Societies Awards 2006 were held on Tuesday April 4 in the Laughter Lounge on Dublin’s Eden Quay. The night was a cold one but inside there was a warm feeling of another year to look back on as the those involved in socieites in DIT give themselves a well deserved clap on the back.
The 6th annual DIT Societies Awards were held on Tuesday April 4 at the newly improved Laughter Lounge on Dublin's Eden Quay. The students, staff and friends of DIT had put this date in their diary for some time now and tonight was the night that they could congratulate all those who had put in hard work over the course of the year to make societies what it is in DIT: an integral part of the students' life in college.

It was Anita Conway's job as Master of Ceremony to keep a tight reign on the night's proceedings and despite repeated efforts from the members of the Cilla Black Society to put her off her cue, Anita did a splendid job throughout.

The guest speaker/host for the night was no other than stand-up comic Paddy Courtney who is a well respected stand-up for over three years now and is the resident MC in the Laughter Lounge and the Comedy Cellar. Paddy is actually a former accountant in EMI and he first sprang to notoriety at the Edinburgh Comedy festival in 1998 where he spent four weeks starring in 'Just For Craic' and hasn't looked back since. He did a good job with a difficult audience (drunk students!) but just didn't live up to his 'Controversial Courtney' reputation on this particular night.

The crowd were first shown a DVD of the year's society events including the legendary Trad Fest and the equally well-organised Fashion Show, for my money the two best events held this academic year. There were also snippets from other events including the Reject Muzakel, DJ Soc, Dance Soc, LGBT, Chess, Artichoke and Rec Soc among others.

The actual award giving seemed to pass extremely quickly with Paddy Courtney as he exchanged a few witticisms in between handing out the gongs to the delirious students.

However, it was the biggest award of the night that got the biggest cheer of the night with the award going to the Drama Society. A stage invasion by about fifty students to collect the prestigious award ensued but no one, I can report, was injured, and it was a warm-hearted gesture that received a round of applause from the audience.

So that as it for another year and it was left to the impressive Bog the Donkey band to play out the night until the early hours.

However the night belonged to the students and the societies they worked so hard for all year long and also to the actual organisers of the show and the society officers: Anita Conway, Terry Boyle and Brian Whitney.
Socs Awards

Most Improved – DJ Soc
Best Poster – Artichoke
Best New Society – Reject Muzakel
Best Website – LGBT
Best Photograph – Chess
Best Fresher – Split Decision: Ian Mullin & Rachel Mahon
Best Event – Fashion Burlesque Fashion Show
Best Society

Aungier Street – Red Soc
Bolton Street – Paintball
Cathal Brugha – Environmental Health
Kevin Street – Islamic Society
Mountjoy Square – Reject Muzakel
Rathmines – Arts Appreciation
Best Overall Society – Drama Society

Best Individual/Special Contribution
Split Decision:
1. Dathi Rua (LGBT Soc)
2. Louise Conlon (Fashion Soc)
3. Na Keenan (DJ Soc)

Special Presentation – Gabrielle Dalton & Vivienne Byrne

Time to Say Goodbye to Two SU Stalwarts

There was also a special presentation at the Societies Awards night to two Students’ Union stalwarts who will both be leaving next month. Vivienne Byrne and Gabrielle Dalton have been involved in the Students’ Union in DIT for over twenty years. They were both presented with flowers and shown a ‘Reeling in the Years’ style DVD of their times in DIT serving the Students’ Union. A warm round of applause resonated around the new Laughter Lounge for the pair as they looked on in shock at the surprise gesture which was greatly appreciated.

Gabrielle began working for the Union in October 1987 and was based in Cathal Brugha Street for many years where she was popular with both students and staff. In 2005 she moved to Rathmines and then served in the Communication Department in Kevin Street from May 2005.

Vivienne began working October 1986 in Mountjoy Square and has spent many years building up the reputation of the Union. She has also spent a good part of her time in the Union in Aungier Street where she has of late spent time in the Entertainment & Marketing Department.

Both put an element of pride into their work and managed to build up an excellent rapport with the students and staff down the years.

Above: Gay & Viv pose with SU General Manager, Maureen Cunningham (far right).
The Dept. works very closely with the support services i.e. counsellors, the chaplains, medical, careers and the Students' Union representatives around the multi-sited DIT to provide the most effective service for the students says Ms. Corcoran. 'We also have a DIT Students’ Assistance Fund Committee of which Students’ Union Vice-President for Student & Academic Affairs, Bernadette Farrell would be a member. We have policies/procedures for the funding which is approved by DIT’s Student Sports, Recreation & Support Council.'

DIT has three main schemes: medical, childcare and the general student assistance scheme. The main qualifying criteria is that the student must be a fulltime attending student, on an undergraduate/postgraduate course in DIT and be in severe financial difficulties or disadvantaged in some manner. 'It’s only for the basic necessities of life - it’s not for socialising. It's for general day-to-day student expenses like food, rent, class materials and books,’ says Ms. Corcoran. ‘Rent would be the big one. Even if they are on the maximum maintenance grant they are only receiving €84 per week and they can pay anything up to €120 for rent or €70 to €80 per week if they are sharing.'

The Student Assistance Schemes are part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department of Education & Science the monies being distributed by the HEA (Higher Education Authority). The funds are split between the different Institutes and Universities around the country based on student numbers. It is then Ms. Corcoran’s responsibility to divide the money between the various schemes which includes medical, childcare and the general student assistance funds which covers travel and emergency funding.

For those students who are attending courses that include a compulsory year or trip abroad the DIT Students’ Sports Recreation & Support Department might be able to assist you with the 'Travel/Subsistence Assistance for Compulsory Study Abroad' once you meet the criteria of the scheme. ‘It is a new scheme that I introduced for compulsory travel abroad that must be a compulsory part of their academic programme.’ says Ms. Corcoran.

The ‘Child Care Support Fund’ is also available to students whose parents are experiencing difficulty. It is again only open to full-time registered students with funding provided for child care services such as nursery, childminders, creche and other minding services.

For those students who are finding that they are in severe financial difficulty and feel they would be able to avail of one of the schemes, Ms. Corcoran’s message is simple: please come forward: ‘I would try and help them as much as I can within the set guidelines. Obviously we have limited resources so it is a requirement of the scheme that students work part-time where possible; we wouldn’t have the resources to fully fund them.’

The governments maintenance grant system has improved with more students qualifying and top-up grants being provided where parents are social welfare recipients on low income.

The students who do find themselves faced with problems are urged to come forward before the problem escalates into a crisis.

‘Students are urged to contact DIT’s support services or the students union representatives to seek help early and not get themselves into a crisis situation urges,’ Ms. Corcoran.

Information about DIT’s Student Assistance schemes is available on DIT’s website, from DIT’s support services and DITSU offices.

Contact Details
DIT Student Sports Recreation & Support Department, DIT ITW, William House, 30 Upper Pembroke St., Dublin 2
Administrator
Deirdre Corcoran - deirdre.corcoran@dit.ie
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People with eating disorders are often diagnosed with depression and prescribed antidepressants despite the lack of evidence to support this treatment. Admittedly, all sufferers of ED experience depression but does medication inhibit their recovery?

Marie Campion, founder of the Marino Therapy Centre in Clontarf, believes that antidepressants are one of the biggest barriers to recovery. ED affects the whole person, physically, emotionally and spiritually. MTC takes a holistic view of their clients and every programme is specially tailored for each client's needs.

Linda's eating disorder went undiagnosed for 45 years. From the age of four, she can remember obsessing about her weight, even wrapping bandages around her body to make herself appear skinnier. She went from eating the bare minimum to stay alive to eating her way up to 25 stone. No one suspected ED.

A psychiatrist diagnosed her with depression and put her on antidepressants, sleeping tablets and sedatives, gradually upping her dosage over the phone. He never suggested talk-therapy. She became completely disorientated and gained a lot of weight. She lost all interest in life, stopped dieting, gave up her job and became a recluse. Her creativity withered. 'I was almost dead. It felt like half my brain was gone. When I was in control of my weight, I felt okay but I was worn out and wasn't able to diet anymore. I thought I was a fat, over-eating pig and I hit rock-bottom.'

Linda was on antidepressants for 14 years. It seems that the medical profession know very little about ED. Linda says: 'The main thing for sufferers is to be diagnosed. Doctors need to be more thoroughly informed on the issue.'

The first insight Linda had into her problem was when she attended an Overeaters Anonymous meeting. 'A weight was lifted off my mind. I now knew I had an illness and there were people like me.' However, she hated the name 'Overeaters' and disliked the way its members had to hand bandages around their body to make themselves appear skinnier. She went from eating the bare minimum to stay alive to eating her way up to 25 stone. No one suspected ED.

Linda contacted the centre immediately but the therapists wouldn't work on her if she stayed on antidepressants. 'I fought with Marie for a long time over this. I had done my research and thought I needed antidepressants but she proved me wrong. You can't teach skills for coping with life to a zombie.'

Coming off antidepressants is like coming off any drug. The withdrawal symptoms make it extremely difficult. People who wish to come off antidepressants should do so gradually and with advice and support. 'It was the hardest time of my life but MTC made sure I was safe. They didn't wait until I was off antidepressants to start work on me. I became aggressive and agitated. I was told to get rid of these destructive feelings by writing, talking, breaking cups, whatever. My friends had to sit with me every hour of the day.

'I had to trust that I would recover and the therapists at MTC helped me believe that I would because most of them had been through the same experience.'

People with ED are super-sensitive and absorb everything around them. I ask Linda if the media's fascination with super-skinny celebrities and dieting exacerbates the condition. 'All the photos in the magazines say: the thinner the better. It's hard to compete with airbrushed images. Everyone is striving for perfection. Parents are weighing themselves and their children. Overweight kids are being bullied.'

The obesity task force in Ireland has also had a negative impact on people with ED. 'I had to turn off the radios and televisions. I was afraid I'd die, listening to the harmful effects of over-eating. I became depressed and disheartened. I started to have panic attacks. I was afraid my heart would stop.'

Most people have no sympathy for over-eaters. They wonder why someone who is unhappy with their weight does not 'just do something about it'. However, anorexia and over-eating are two sides of the same coin. All ED suffers have the same mindset and often, someone with anorexia will later become bulimic. Linda explains that she starved herself for long periods of time. Eventually, the control lapsed and her eating spiralled out of control.

The obesity task force never mentions the emotional side to over-eating. Linda uses the analogy of an iceberg to explain the condition: an iceberg is 9/10 below water with only 1/10 above. The smaller proportion represents the mind and the behaviour around food which is the most visible part. The other 9/10 represents the mind and the distorted thinking. Until the emotions are dealt with, what is above the water cannot come right and one cannot do that when numbed by antidepressants.

Since attending MTC and coming off antidepressants, Linda's life has changed completely. She is more confident and creative and enjoys life. For the first time, she puts her needs ahead of others. 'I don't hate myself anymore and I'm not ashamed to be with people. Being positive comes naturally to me now. I'm happy.'

Linda stresses that everyone can fully recover from this debilitating disease and one is never too old to start the painful but wonderfully rewarding road to recovery.

The medical profession has a lot to learn about the emotional side to eating disorders. GPs need to listen rather than simply filling out prescriptions. Otherwise, antidepressants will continue to drown the creativity ED sufferers need to outwit this complex illness.

If you, or someone close to you suffers from eating distress, or if you would like more information, visit the MTC website: www.marinotherapycentre.com or telephone: 01-8333126.

* To protect her anonymity, Linda's real name has not been given.
Think Twice Before Dropping Out

At this time of the year all freshers are thought to be looking forward to the summer break before returning to their chosen course. However, the more sensitive may notice an absence of perhaps just one in their class.

LIFE COMMENT
By Niamh Ingoldsby

The story of the said student may or may not be known. In effect this doesn’t matter because it just amounts to the same thing. Someone is not where they should be. But if you’re thinking of dropping out—what exactly are your reasons?

Many people claim in retrospect that they didn’t like their original choice of course. In fact, I think this is the most socially acceptable response for the more nosey amongst us. Whilst the academic material covered is undoubtedly important come the exams, for the rest of the year it really provides the backbone to everything else that is going on. In short, the best way to start the week is to actually be seated in the right room at the right time and the correct choice of campus will also prove helpful.

A better idea would be to approach someone in the class. It may turn out that you will not marry this person. It may also be true to say that at any stage of the year most are surviving in a crowd of strangers. If you are seated alone at lectures this actually puts you in the majority of the class. In short, the best way to start the week is to actually be seated in the right room at the right time and the correct choice of campus will also prove helpful.

He also has some notion about not having friends and there am I sitting opposite him. From personal experience I think that to feel like you don’t have any friends is hurtful but it’s not an excuse because people are allowed to be annoying. The only way to make friends is to tolerate people that are annoying. Some days they won’t like you either.

Jack’s plans for the future are fantastic. They were dreamt up four days ago. There was something about a better course, travel, earning money, a €12k loan and a moped! I preferred plan B which was to come back. In his eyes that would be next year.

He’s good-looking, he’s charming, he’s lovely, he has more friends than he knows, he’s intelligent and he’s sociable. He’s a drop-out. Is that you next week or me two years ago?

Right now I wonder what the story is. There’s nothing like a bit of excitement. Chatting about dropping out is good. It gets a reaction. You have made an impact. Then you go home. It’s lonely and it’s quiet. Do you have a job? Are you switching directly to another course? Are your travel plans secured? Where exactly will you be living? What’s the set-up there? How are your finances?

But most importantly do you really know your reasons yourself? Did you embarrass yourself in Dublin and its good to be home where no-one will know? They may well be laughing at you because they’re surprised to know you care so much for their opinion. Was there some aspect to college like that was a recurring horrible situation? Was someone picking on you? Why? Doesn’t matter, you can pick on anyone for any reason. However if you don’t think too highly of anyone then they cannot put you down.

Life is for living whatever way you like so long as you want to own it. This is most evident in the bodies of old people. The weathered face is tough, lined and essentially damaged. It doesn’t matter from what part of the world, the sun shone on that face.

College is the world compressed. Except that it looks after those going against the tide; it actually has the funds, the time and the optimism to give you another chance. If you have decided on leaving then there’s just one thing to do. Stay another day. Go to all your lectures, take notes, blend in with what’s happening and sit in the canteen wherever you want. Talk to the people. Go home that evening. Consider everything that happened. Just how much of it could you have known would happen as it did? During the college day there is every reason to drop-out and every reason to stay.

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Sarah McGovern is one of Ireland’s top models and former DIT Student’s Union Welfare Officer and President. Here, in an exclusive interview, she reveals all her industry tips, how the modelling industry is doing in Ireland, the good and the bad aspects of her job and also what her plans are for the future.

FASHION
BY LILLI FORBERG

You were DIT Student’s Union president. What did you do when you finished college and how did you start modelling?

I was DIT Students Union President in 1999/2000 academic year. But initially I was Welfare Officer in Kevin St, then President of Kevin St and then was overall DIT president. So all in all three years sabbatical. I went straight into modelling after the union. How I started was in my year as president of Kevin Street, I helped the photography students - we campaigned to get them into Temple Bar. The place was built but there had been a lot of red tape involved in the opening. After we did the campaign (which was successful), some of the photography students asked me to do some shots for their final year projects. I did, and when they brought them into me they made me call Assets and literally sent me marching down with the photos. I was very lucky, they took me on straight away! I worked at it part-time for the next year while I was President and then went full time afterwards.

At lot of people see it as an easy job, just sitting around- can you explain how tough a job it really is?

The hardest part is probably the long hours. You could be up to do a press call in the morning. We have to do our own full makeup and hair and generally have to provide our own outfits for press calls. You could spend an hour doing that, then have to get on a bus to go down the country somewhere to do a fashion show. You could spend up to four hours travelling. When you get there, you would have to try all your outfits on, perhaps redo your makeup and hair unless they are something Kevin St. Then you do it for you. Then hang around for a few hours, do the show and hop back on the bus. Then you can be up to do a job in the day and can be finished within an hour or two and are free to do whatever you want afterwards. But we are always on call, we might not know of a job until the day before. A lot of the work that comes in is very last minute and so you always have to end up cancelling plans as you never know when your next job will come.

A lot of people/media slag Irish models, does this annoy you?

On the whole, not really. If I was to read something in a magazine, I would most likely get annoyed but would just rather forget about it. It’s not worth it! I know why people say us, they don’t think of us as ‘real models’ as they are comparing us to the international ones you see everywhere. And yes I would love to work in Milan and Paris, but the reality is that I’m not stick thin, aged 14, so I stick to the Irish market, which may be small compared with the ‘international scene’ but it pays my mortgage and I’m here with my friends and family, doing a job I’m very grateful for and not stuck living out of a suitcase and being pressurised into not eating. No thank you!!

How rock and roll/ drug fuelled/ sleazy/ fast living is it?

I can safely say it is none of those. The models in Ireland do their job and go home. If that’s what they want to do at weekends with their friends, then that’s what they do, just like anyone in any profession does, if they choose to. I try to stay away from the socialising till the wee hours of the morning with clients. I don’t think it looks professional.

If you weren’t modelling, what would you be doing?

Well I studied German, Italian and Business Studies, so I most likely would have ended up doing some sort of business through German, which is what I loved but as soon as I went into the Students’ Union I got a love for organising events. So I could have ended up in an event management company perhaps. I currently work on evenings and part time. I have a few clients and when modelling ends I hope to have built up a small business for myself.

Do you think a few high profiled names have monopolised Irish Modelling (Glenda Gilson and Andrea Roche etc)?

Not really. They have done a great job of making a high profile for themselves and hence get work for being themselves and not just another model. Fair play to them I say! But on the other side of that, they can do many other jobs like commercials etc as they are too well known. Sometimes you can make more money not being so high profile. Their work is varied and sometimes it’s behind the scenes and people don’t see it. Just because they are always in the papers doesn’t mean they are the only models working. There is plenty of other work out there too.

What tips and warnings would you give to someone who was thinking of entering the industry?

If you want to make a career out of it, then you have to be aware that it will only last till you’re about 35 and not everyone is so lucky to be doing it till then. Therefore you have to have a backup plan, go to college and model as a part time job, get your qualifications so that when you finish you have something to fall back on. When you do start modelling, the first few years can be tough going. Clients need to get to know you, the agency needs to see you are professional, hardworking and reliable. It takes a while for money to start coming in and its not all glamorous with champagne flowing and freebie clothes!

What type of future do you see for yourself?

Well I hope I have a few more years left in modelling but I would like to start having children at about 31/32 which most likely could be the end of my career so as I said previously, I’m trying to build up a business of event management so that ideally I could work from home and look after them!!

Who is your favourite designer/shop?

There are so many great Irish designers but I have to say my favourite designer is Peter O Brien. He worked for the Paris fashion house ‘House of Rochas’ and creates the most amazing gowns, that make you feel so feminine and classy. My favourite shop is probably somewhere like... Zara.

What has been your best and worst days on a job?

The best have probably been when I did the Supermodel shows in the Point Depot. Getting to meet and work along side the supermodels was great fun!

The worst days: Nothing specific but standing at the top of Grafton Street in a bikini when its January, freezing cold and raining, isn’t a whole lot of fun!!
Summer Getaways Don’t Come Cheap

Sun, sea and sand... that’s the image that comes to mind when we think of the summer holidays. Unless you fancy a break away with your parents (again!), holidays don’t come cheap. For students, it’s an endless rollercoaster of working, socialising (and the odd bit of study) and spending your meagre wages before you have it in your account.

TRAVEL FEATURE
BY MICHELLE LAHERTY

If you’re thinking going away this summer but haven’t got the money, check out the AIB student loan offers. Whether we like it or not, they’re on our doorstep, accessible and offer a range of incentives to students. They offer loans at a rate of 8.46% APR and they also have travel insurance for both short and longer breaks. If you need to buy foreign currency you can do so at AIB but with no charges. Anyone interested can contact the Student Centre at 1850 STUDENT or check out the website. www.aib.ie

Instead of going away foreign and doing the same activities again, try an adventure holiday. If you enjoy the great outdoors, then this is definitely for you. There is a huge amount to choose from with places like Australia/New Zealand, Asia and Africa on offer. For example one of the packages on the USIT website is ‘Unforgettable India’ which costs 1,622 euro approx. This is fifteen days and the price includes return flights, a fifteen day tour of India, a Tour Guide, 8 nights in a Hotel/Guesthouse, 3 nights basic hotels and 2 nights camping, transport (train, bicycle and riverboat) and a sunrise boat ride and sunset candle flower ceremony.

Obviously, spending money and travel insurance is not included but it’s good value for money. There are various trips like this so check out www.usit.ie for more info.

If an around the world trip sounds more appealing then there are a variety of packages. The World Discovery Trip is an around the world ticket and for 1,287 euro you can travel from Dublin via Frankfurt to Singapore, Hong Kong, Sydney, Hawaii (via L.A), London and home again. If you want something a bit cheaper, then try Dreamtime. Prices start at 884 euro and you can fly Dublin to Frankfurt-Singapore-Bangkok-Sydney-Bali-Singapore-Frankfurt-Dublin.

It’s never been a better time to be a student and although the packages may sound pricey, they are definitely good value for money. So what are you waiting for? Get out there and enjoy the summer holidays.
A lot has happened in the last eight months: Hurricane Rita beat a path of destruction across the Gulf of Mexico.

One of the more pleasant developments was the emergence of irish soccer team, which kicked off their campaign with a 3-0 victory over Northern Ireland. The team has since gone on to win three out of their four group stage matches, with wins against Romania, France, and the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, in the DIT cocoon, green tea, student discounts, caffeine and Harvard references always on my mind. I have learned how to spit out assignments, sleep standing up, and paste my body into miniscule spaces on the Luas.

I have been growing and developing so that in another three years, I will be released into Irish society, no longer a student but a butterfly. That is, if the Joe Bloggers haven’t completely eliminated the need for journalists by then.

The college year is almost over and the irritating whimper of the exams is drowned out by the louder, feistier call of the summer holidays. I have survived the Rag, Shag and Freshers’ Weeks, and enrolled in too many clubs and societies so that I now attend a grand total of 50 girl guides in 3 weeks. Meanwhile, in the DIT cocoon, green tea, student discounts, caffeine and Harvard references are always on my mind.
Don’t forget to breath! The quickest and most effective way of eliminating feelings of stress and panic is to close your eyes and take several long, slow deep breaths.

Hi Molly,

I just finished an exam and I got caught with some notes in my pencil case. I know it was completely stupid to bring in notes but in all fairness there was hardly anything on them. I mean you can’t actually fit that much on a small piece of paper. And the notes would only really spark my memory they wouldn’t answer a question. I know I did technically cheat but I was under an awful lot of pressure. I work a part-time to try and keep myself in college. My parents have sacrificed a lot to help me get this far. I just felt like if I didn’t do this I’d fail. My parents would be so disappointed in me and I can’t afford to repeat a year. I panicked. I’m really sorry I did what I did. What’s going to happen to me now? Will I get kicked out of college?

Yes, you could be kicked out of college.

This is a very serious breach of the exam regulations. For the list of possible penalties read the DIT General Assessment Regulations (G.A.R.) which can be downloaded from the internet at www.dit.ie. As a student here you agreed to abide by these rules. It always amazes me how very few students bother to read the rules – ignorance is no defence! A lot of the rules are common sense but many are not so straightforward.

After your exam the invigilator will have passed on the details of the incident and the actual piece of paper to the Faculty Administrator. He/She will then send you out a letter to appear before a ‘panel of enquiry’. The letter will also contain the invigilators report on the incident. The panel will be made up of your Faculty Director, the Faculty Administrator and a number of lecturers from other Schools within your Faculty. They will review the statement of the invigilator and they will ask to hear your side of the story.

In my own opinion ‘honesty is always the best policy’. If I were you I would also explain to the panel that you felt under a lot of pressure at the time. They will have some sympathy for you, they’re only human after all.

Good luck with it and don’t panic. We all make mistakes. The point is to learn from them.
If so, you could pocket a cool €200 for doing what you do best. All you have to do is buy the Irish Independent compact edition and complete 5 different Sudoku puzzles over the next 5 days and you could be €200 richer. It couldn’t be easier!

Don’t worry if you need a little extra time to grease your grey cells because we’ll be running this competition with the €200 prize fund in EVERY ISSUE of DIT throughout the year.

Once you have completed the puzzles, drop them into your Student’s Union office, addressed to Compact Irish Independent, DIT Sudoku Competition, Att. Ciara Spelman.

Irish Independent
Ireland’s National Quality Daily.
Glyder - Saviors of Irish Rock

Glyder are a four-piece rock band from deep in the hills of Wicklow. They are a hard working hard rocking no holds barred rock and roll machine. Last year the band toured with Thin Lizzy, assuring them a firm status in the world of modern and classic rock.

The debut album was recorded with legendary rock producer Chris Tsangarides (Ozzy, Priest, Sabbath, Thin Lizzy). The launch of their debut self-titled album was a huge success with a full house in the Sugar Club. Philomena Lynott gave her support on the night, giving a speech praising Glyder for their performance. She said she felt like she was at a real rock concert and that Glyder 'aren't just on their way, they are there,' and she gave the most heartfelt and honest compliments about the band.

The band live are a marvel to watch, this band is so tight and flawless on stage; they always bring the venue to life. Talking to Philomena after the show she said, 'the gig is over and the place is still buzzing, something very special happened here tonight.'

The launch in Tower Records was also very successful, the whole stock of Glyder albums where cleared off the shelves.

The album erupts with the opening hit 'Colour Of Money' which automatically leads to involuntary head banging and foot tapping. It's vigorous pace and hard rocking riffs, vocals and rhythm strives through the entire album.

It is followed by the rocking tune "PUP" (Pretty useless people) that creatively blends modern concerns and angst with a resonant classic straightforward rock sound, extremely catchy riffs and harmonic guitars, with allusions of such classic rock acts as Thin Lizzy, Free and Deep Purple. "PUP" is an example of the group's song writing capability that is well beyond their years. They have an average age of 22. 'The plastic nation feeds it's swollen head...Oh Painful fake reality.'

Throughout the entire album the melodic harmonies and sensational, ultra-impressive solos are a musical treat for any music fan.

Other tracks such as 'She's got it' and 'Saving face' display such raw talent and musicianship that inevitably makes them an instant classic.

One for the lost' and 'Stargazer' are spirited slower tempo songs between the faster tracks that compliment the album in its entirety. This is serious music, created with the highest competence and talent. Most importantly it is so catchy and oozing rock it can only be described as Good-Times music. It puts the listener in a party mood, to hit the town and party, particularly the track 'Die or Dance' an angst-ridden, anti-war anthem that is so chastely appealing to rock fans.

The album Glyder is available in Tower Records. For more information on the band, check out their website; www.glydermusic.com, or visit Glyder on Myspace.com The band will are touring Europe at the moment and will be playing on May 6th 8.00pm Dublin's Harbour Bar.

Above: The album that will save Irish rock.
The Compact Notice Board

Dance Soc in London

The Dance Society was set up back in October during Clubs and Socs week, by first year Media Arts student Rachel Mahon. Hip hop dance classes took place in Augier Street over the year. The end of the first year of the society's existence was marked by the 'Best Fresher' prize, as well as a three-day trip to London for sixteen of its members.

The main reason of the trip was visits to Pineapple Dance Studios in Covent Garden. The lessons proved to be challenging, even the 'general' level class was made up mostly of professional dancers with years of experience. Nevertheless, it was a worthwhile experience for all involved, especially the more talented and focused of the group.

The rest of the trip was taken up by sight-seeing, shopping, getting lost on the Underground and a chance meeting with Russell Brand for MTV's 'One Leicester Square'. It was an unforgettable experience, and the perfect ending to the year in DIT.

Major thanks to Rachel Mahon and Leanne Murphy for their wonderful organisational skills, and not forgetting DIT Students' Union for all their help.

Here's to another year of droppin' it like it's hot!

Letter of Complaint: Rathmines Library

I'm sending this letter because I have a serious problem with the services of the library in DIT Rathmines. I'd be interested to know if this is across the board. The majority of the staff freely allow others to talk loudly in the library which means it is difficult for others to concentrate.

But my main problem is the opening hours. I am like a high percentage in Rathmines - a music student and music students need Sibelius. (It's a presentation thing if nothing else.) Sibelius costs around 800 Euro so obviously the majority of us don't have it at home which one reason is why we need the library.

Over the Easter break the opening hours of the library were significantly reduced. I travelled up from Wicklow for 12.30pm on 12th April (the eve of Good Friday) only to be kicked out at 12.30pm (all lights off and the staff behind me rattling keys) the library wasn't open again until Wednesday 15th. Today I am stressed trying to finish work which I had plenty of time to do over the break but no means of doing it.

It's the time of year when assignments and portfolios are due. I consider it a disgrace that, in the 21st century, a third level institution is doing such a questionable job at facilitating students at such a stressful time of year.

Dara Black.
3rd Year,
BMuseEd,
Rathmines Road.

Leisure Management

The annual Leisure Management trip took place on March 22nd. 75 society members headed to Liverpool for a very wild night!

There were tears faces at the start due to the 5am early rise! But that didn't deter the entire group from causing mayhem in the hostels, spending ALL their money on Bold street, having a manic time in Meditation that night and dining in 'Wetherspoons' the next day, all with 'morning after' hang overs!

All members arrived home safely (Just about Bob 3rd year!), when the plane EVENTUALLY arrived late!

And a very big thank you goes out to the organisers - Lisa & Steve of 3rd year!

Roll on next years event!

Dtwo Night Club
60 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2
01-4764803
www.dtwonightclub.com

HOAN: over 20s id required

Thursday Night Party

Every Thursday from 10.00pm

>> The coolest Djs
>> Lots & lots of promotions
>> Game consoles
>> Foosball
>> Air hockey

Free entry to the club for all in the bar before 10pm Show your DIT ID and gain concession price from 11pm-12.30am Dtwo Thursday night party from 10pm
The Storm - Colm Lynch

Yes folks this is one to shout about: at long last a worthy contender to the Irish music throne. Real music packaged with real talent. You can forget your Euro-Idol Star-Factor rubbish, there's a new kid in town....

ENTERTAINMENT
BY JAMES CLINCH

It was with absolute pleasure that I was able to meet Colm this week and get an exclusive insight before his general release to the nation at the end of this month. So, how exactly does one train for stardom...

'To be honest it all started at home, there was always a guitar lying around. By the time I was twelve I had quite a few songs under my belt. None have survived through the years though... In fact they were fairly bad, but I was only young!'

Something must have spurred you on to write better and better though. Where did you go from there...

'It's here that Colm's story takes off. With just his acoustic guitar under his arm he built up a regular schedule of gigs all over Dublin and Wicklow. With his Dad, Jim, acting as manager and promoter he got himself some rather prestigious slots with some people you may have heard of. Declan O'Rourke, Damien Dempsey, Mundy. Yeah, the Ruby Sessions is a really great place. It's one of the last strongholds for singer-songwriters in Dublin. The talent in here week after week is truly inspiring. Every Tuesday in Doyles opposite Trinity is the place to be for excellent and original music, and all proceeds go to the Simon Community.'

I was there the night Colm played with Mundy and was expecting 'July' to be the highlight of the evening. I was wrong. Colm's live performances are a force unto themselves and you must see for all music fans. He has absolute and magical control over his acoustic guitar which can sound like an orchestra or a whisper. Accompanied by his distinctive, superb voice it's a delight to watch this comprehensive and masterful musician ply his trade with such relish.

What's next on the hit list then Colm?

'The Storm, the first single is out on the 21st April. It's a song I'm very proud of for its melody and tune. We put a string quartet in the studio and it really lifts the song as it's quite a simple ballad, though not in the traditional sense as it's not about love. I'm hoping it'll reach across the board and appeal to students and grannies alike.'

With the album in the works you must be spending a lot of time in the studio. That has to put a dent in the pocket?

'Actually it's not costing me a penny. My manager, Jim McCabe, recently signed me to Xcentury Records (an affiliate of Universal Records) under Wes D'Arcy and Paul Munsanje; they're footing the bill. I get to just show up and do my thing. It's a real dream come true. The guys there really help to get the songs just as I want them. Jim McCabe spotted me at a gig in Wicklow, he approached me and asked could he be my manager. Not to be confused with Jim, my dad!'

'Whisper in a Riot', the forthcoming album, is a masterclass in song writing styles from the catchy, upbeat soul of 'Lucinda' to the superb, silky tones of 'Sophie'. Listen out for the b-side on the single '2 Bullets & a Gun', a great piece of lyrical genius about a drug dealer and his girlfriend.

If you value the music industry at all in this country you'll be listening out for The Storm from your local radio station. Colm Lynch is the hardest working musician on the circuit right now and would be more than happy to plug on for years to come.

To find out more contact Colm at Myspace.com/ColmLynch or download his excellent live b-side '2 Bullets & a Gun' at OnTheVerge.com.
Immediate Impact on Landing

'It's really weird. I mean, we haven't had much experience with interviews or press, but we didn't actually think about it until people started talking about it. Then we suddenly realised "o.k. yeah, I suppose it is a bit different".'

Conor O'Brien of Dublin four-piece The Immediate sounds a little confused about what has just happened, but it's the same thing that happens to every band, act or performer in the initial stages of their commercial career. The turning point when art suddenly becomes a commodity; your work is tagged before cutting it loose in a crowded marketplace. The Immediate's bag, whether they like it or not, is their habit of role-swapping within the band.

'The music becomes more varied with the swapping' explains Conor. 'The song is really the central thing, so we just go with whatever brings it out the most.' No rocket science there, you may start to wonder why more rock bands don't just do the same thing.

The band's configuration changes draw the audience deeper into the performance, at the same time lending each track a new sound; an unpredictability. There's harmony and balance afloat, but it's precariously placed. 'We're becoming more aware how to use the space and the stage in terms of theatrics and acting out the music,' says Conor. 'Hopefully the music and lyrics and the physicality link together in one force of some sort. Well that's the plan!

The band, for the most part old school friends, took their time in bringing the music to the public arena. 'We didn't really do as

that time,' says Conor. 'We spent more time getting stuff ready. We tended to do a gig, and then try to get back writing a bit more. Then we'd do another gig a couple of months later. It was very sporadic.'

Writing music, like performing, is another shared process within the band. 'I probably write most of the original songs before they're brought to the table', says Conor. 'But by the end of the process they've changed so much you often can't hear the original song! There's a lot of pushing and pulling going on in the creation process, a lot of good tension. As long as it's left behind in the rehearsal studio, it works for the songs.'

Things really started to happen for the band when respected London record label, Fierce Panda offered to release their single. 'Never Seen/Say This.' Around the time of that single we did some shows in London to promote it, and a few other record companies came to see us,' says Conor, 'but Fantastic Plastic were the guys who offered something.' The band recorded an album, 'In Towers & Clouds' on the label with producer Chris Shaw (Wilco, Bob Dylan, Super Furry Animals), which is tentatively set for release at the end of the summer. 'They gave us a lot of freedom and didn't actually try and change the music at all which was great', says Conor of the label. 'We've got much more of an indie mentality, so we got to make the album we wanted to make from the very beginning. We've been lucky in that we haven't seen the ugly side just yet. But I'm

Though maybe not of the hard variety, the band are constantly learning lessons. Conor is enthusiastic about their short recent European tour. 'It's been brilliant! It's been completely different, every night, depending on how many people show up. So, we've been learning to adapt to different sized audiences. It's a good learning experience.'

The band commanded a significant amount of attention even before the release of their EP, Make Our Devils FLOW. They outshone their Irish counterparts with an impressive slot on RTE's 'Other Voices'. Conor, however, has mixed feelings about their performance. 'It's weird when you're actually there. It's a strange place to play if you're not one guy with an acoustic guitar, and just talking to the crowd in between songs. I think we could've injected a bit more bravado or something! It was difficult for us to walk out and perform in that situation.' The band was also nominated for 'Best New Irish Act' at this year's Meteor Awards. 'It was enlightening!' says Conor of the ceremony. 'We got to walk up a red carpet, and people asked us who the hell we were! To be honest, Patrick Kiely for three hours was a bit difficult to take. It wasn't the most fun night of our lives!' Who said there wasn't an ugly side?

www.myspace.com/theimmediate
www.theimmediate.tv
Make Our Devils FLOW EP is out now on Fantastic Plastic Records.
**Half of These Songs Are For You**

By: Liza O'Riordan

**★★★★★**

‘Half These Songs Are About You’ the new album from Nizlopi, has been much anticipated following the huge success of the now infamous ‘JC Song’. Nizlopi seemed to appear from nowhere before Christmas 2005, but few realise that they have actually been together for fourteen years, and previously released this album three years ago.

The variety of sounds on this album undoubtedly makes for interesting listening, but the laid back mood of the album seems to verge almost on boring. Don’t get me wrong, we all need a laid-back mellow album in our CD collections but few difficult to listen to without falling asleep, which became a problem when trying to review it. After their excellent first three singles, ‘Fine Story’, ‘JC Song’ and the newly released ‘Girls’, I felt a bit disappointed with the rest of the tracks on the album.

What I do like about Nizlopi is the fact that the album was released by the independent label, FDM Records (Folk ‘n’ Deadly Music), a label set up and run by Luke Concannon’s parents. Even after being approached by many major record labels, the boys chose to stick with their own label, claiming ‘integrity is more important than being a millionaire’. Which is just as well because from the sounds of this album I can’t see them becoming millionaires anytime soon.

**Subtitulo**

Josh Rouse

By: Emma Cawley

★★★★★

Josh Rouse describes the experience of recording his sixth album, ‘Subtitulo’, in Spain: ‘Recording at Paco Loco was one of the best experiences I’ve ever had,’ says Josh in the press release. ‘We had a pool and the owner’s wife cooked two big meals every day. We all ate outside, so it was very laid back and enjoyable.’

A roving reporter recognised Josh after bumping into him in a Spanish amusement park; knocking the singer’s oversized sombrero off. ‘How are these beautiful surroundings affecting your music?’ the reporter enquired. ‘Well, there’s the donkeys…’, muses Josh. ‘Never saw so many of them in my life. Are my arms going red? Maybe I should have brought factor 18. I would like a bit of colour though…’

The exhausted reporter finds Josh, some hours later, relaxing outside a bar. ‘Yeah, the red Speedos are definitely better than the blue ones, Josh’, the reporter concedes. ‘They match your armbands, but, what can we expect the new album to sound like?’

Josh looks momentarily confused. ‘Album? Oh no, sorry, yeah it’s kind of like singer-songwriter stuff, about the summer and all with some Spanish-ey sounding bits in it. And there are a couple of songs in English with Spanish titles, and a Spanish woman sings on it too. But in English, of course.’ (sputter) ‘Aw Jesus! What is all this fruit crap in my wine? Sang-what? Take it away and get me a Budweiser!’

**Raydiation**

Ray Jay

By: Lindsay Cleary

★★★★★

Ray J, with help from Fat Joe, Brandy, R Kelly and more, released his album ‘Raydiation’ in Ireland on St. Patrick’s Day. Ray J is already making waves in America, no doubt thanks to acclaim from aforementioned hip hop and R n B stars. Whether or not his growing success translates across the Atlantic remains to be seen.

‘Raydiation’ doesn’t really have anything to distinguish it from the mass of American urban music already pumping through the speakers in cars and nightclubs around the country. It is a collection of fifteen uncomplicated and unchallenging slabs of smooth R n B to serenade with and bouncy hip hop to dance with.

To give Ray J his dues, the CD is loaded with catchy samples and slow grooves that you can’t help moving to.

The songs are commercial, and with the current trend of hip hop-by-numbers that’s contaminating the airwaves at the moment, ‘Raydiation’ has the chance to be a big success in Ireland. But it lacks any originality and it is unlikely that Ray J’s efforts will be appreciated by much more than bored, horny teenagers at the No Name Club.

**Believe**

Sephira

By: Alys Harte

★★★★★

This musical trio who dub themselves ‘Sephira’ have just tendered their debut album and in doing do, have categorised their work as ‘classical in waiting’. Indeed. This string-led, contemporary/classical fusion ensemble is comprised of vocalist and violinist Joyce O’Leary (21), her elder sister, violinist Ruth (24) and last but not least, pianist Colm Henry (23).

While individually, each member of this modern-classical hybrid holds a résumé capable of impressing anyone (having studied at classical houses such as London’s Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music), one can’t help feeling that there is something distinctly lacking from the end product.

It is difficult to fathom how something so plainly mediocre and lacklustre could have stemmed from three highly trained young musicians who appeared to possess such promising instruction hitherto. Two words spring to mind… ‘sell’ and ‘out’. The vocals lack the conviction, resonance and depth necessary to complement the elegant nuances of the classical background. And all the while, the superficial and somewhat clichéd lyrics echo blankly of something from a Westlife b-side. That said, despite the questionable ‘is it the latest Nissan 3-door or is it a WWF wrestler’ name, Sephira will no doubt hold pride of place on our countries coffee tables by day and act as the soundtrack to many a polite suburban dinner party by night.
THE CHARLATANS

Simpatico
The Charlatans
By: Barry Cahill

Oxford Dictionary Definition: "a charlatan": somebody who falsely claims to have special skill or expertise. I will not falsely claim to know this band well. The 12 albums released since their inception in 1989 have thus far flown beneath my radar.

That said, let's get on with it: The opening bars of track one, 'Blackened Blue Eyes', have verve and attitude and cry out for distinctive and brave vocal performance: Toss a coin to see if that's what's provided.

We find the old record company chestnut: They've stuck the best song on the album on first. The album suffers from a downward slope worthy of the Winter Olympics luge: a sound defined as "ska".

I will post my colours to the mast: I don't subscribe to Ska Sports. There are some toe-tapping moments in the tracks 'Dead Man's Eyes' and 'The Architect' (any song containing the lyrics "last night an architect saved my life" gets my seal of approval). There's nothing essentially bad with this release: It is a pleasant, laid back listen. But, tellingly, it is also nothing groundbreaking nor particularly risqué. Ultimately, this would be filed under Background Music in my CD collection. It is also unlikely to infiltrate the current non-Charlatan fanbase.

My advice to them: buy song #1 off a legal download site. Or copy it off a friend. The Charlatans play in Ireland at Oxegen in July.

Girls
Nizlopi
By: Lindsay Cleary

Nizlopi have a go at continuing their success with the follow up to the now infamous 'JCB Song'. The release date for 'Girls' coincides with the release of their album 'Half These Songs Are About You'. Critics, fans and musicians alike are waiting to see if Nizlopi are to become a disposable one-hit-wonder, or if they're destined for bigger and better things.

'JCB Song', despite its warmth, was dismissed by many as a novelty song, created with the sole purpose of achieving a Christmas number one. 'Girls' should prove to the masses that there is more to this two-piece than just Zoids and Transformers.

John Parker and Luke Concannon are in top form on this single, displaying effortless talent and song writing skills. Luke's voice is gentle and a pleasure to listen to, and double bassist John adds his own layer of depth. The presence of strings makes the song almost melancholic at times, but it has a sweet summer feel, a breath of warm air to thaw out even the coldest and most pessimistic listener.

The B-Side, 'Flooded Quarry' sounds like a combination of Flaming Lips and Justin Timberlake, as Nizlopi throw a bit of beat boxing into the mix! It's good to see somebody experimenting in an art that is gradually becoming bland and characterless. Nizlopi deserve any success that comes their way, and your full attention.

Symphonic
Emm Gryner
By: Emma Cawley

'Emm Gryner is driven. Always searching, exploring and discovering, her songs stem from the darkest depths and seek to solve the unexplainable' says somebody, somewhere on the internet.

'Emm Gryner is inspired by artists such as Peter Gabriel, The Pretenders, The Cure, Madonna, Prince and Guns 'N' Roses', says someone else, somewhere else on the internet.

It has been reported that Emm has toured with David Bowie, Rulus Wainwright and Bernard Butler. She has even recorded with the likes of Curtis Mayfield and Rob Zombie.

Emm receives unanimous praise across the board, from fan chat forums to Tony Clayton-Lea in the... (Times/Indo?). Joyce bedamed, Emm even claims that TC Lea is her 'favourite Irish writer'.

'I like to hear the rough edges and the spontaneity of a song, not just a computer-crafted track similar to what you hear all over mainstream radio these days', says Emm.

None of this explains what I find inside my copy of Emm's new single 'Symphonic'. A recording of insipid, over-produced, soft chick-rock - similar to what you hear all over mainstream radio these days.

One Wish
Ray Jay
By: James Clinch

Fresh from the U.S., where 'One Wish' reached the coveted Billboard top ten, Ray J. is now setting his sights on the European market. With such lofty acclaim from over there can he swing it over here?

'One Wish' has a lyrically driven melody but has numerous piano and guitar accompaniments which fill all the gaps. It has a slow steady swing to it despite all the different sound bites throughout and is sure to be a floor filler across the board in Dublin's numerous R and B nights. The re-mix featuring 'Fabolous' will, in my opinion, be the bigger draw for DJs as it has a more defined sound, stamping more authority on the tune.

Ray's record company seem to be going to lengths to promote his musical background and credentials. Setting him up as a credible musician and steering away from the one-hit wonder side of industry money making. This in itself is a good sign of things to come from Ray J who obviously has a strong back catalogue of songs to draw on.

The Americans, it seems, have got it right this time and you should expect more from Ray J in the future. But, no doubt with a multi-million dollar promotion behind him, one wonders if we'll have the choice!
Sports Awards

The annual DIT Sports Awards were held in the Cusack Stand suite in Croke Park on Wednesday April 5 to honour those who have contributed to, and excelled in, the various DIT sports clubs over the past academic year.

These events attract a large following from the DIT fraternity and in the plush surroundings of the Cusack Stand function room staff, students and those connected with the college sat back to enjoy the evening’s entertainment.

In attendance where the President of DIT Professor Brian Norton, Chairperson of the Sports Council Matt Hussey, Manager of Campus Life here in DIT Brian Gormley, DITSU President Bob Coggins, outgoing GAA President Sean Kelly and the guest speaker for the night, rugby critic and Newstalk 106 talk show host, George Hook.

The Chairman of the Sports Council, Matt Hussey spoke first and at length about his experiences in sports in DIT in Irish and he then introduced the outgoing President of the GAA Mr. Sean Kelly who spoke at length – without the aid of speech notes – about the importance of taking part in sports while in college.

He also took the opportunity to address the current problems facing the GAA such as the on-going dispute with the players’ union GPA concerning players’ welfare; the changes that are currently taking place in our society were also discussed; and also the reasons why the GAA is so distinctive and why it should maintain its amateur status and not to rush into anything because ‘everyone else is doing it’.
A Summer of Fun - if You Take My 15 Easy Steps

By Andrew Hussey

Well here it is, my last article for the Compact and before I go any further let me say thank you to my Editor, Cormac, for all his patience and the opportunity he gave me when he took me on as sports editor.

Well it's been a pleasure covering such sports as cycling and baseball, just a taster of some of the smaller sports that should get more coverage here in Ireland, and with any luck you took a little interest and will give them some of your worthy attention in the future.

Let me get to the point of my final article, before I go any further this article is aimed at those of you who don't partake in regular exercise and I'm only passing on some of my knowledge and what I believe to be key in any attempt of exercise.

So it's the last few weeks and all we can think about is life after the exams and the summer. Yes the summer SUN, SUN, and SUN (Ireland yes?). Now with this comes a plethora of sports to watch (I don't think I need to mention them), now with the watching comes the idea of then playing these sports, the enthusiasm to become active. And what seems like a good idea at the time, donning a pair of shorts and runners and running out and playing these sports. I have only one thing to say. STRETCH.

It's such a forgettable thing to do. After spending the winter in the great indoors, the idea of a sun filled holiday is a must. Now with all this comes the want of a perfect 'beach body', how do you get one? Easy, exercise and good diet, and finally the key stretch, and do it everyday. It will only take about 15 minutes tops.

So take that hurley stick and do a couple of torso twists, stretch those hamstrings, touch those toes, because there is nothing worse than doing one hours exercise and then suffering with sore muscles for a week afterwards.

Don't say I didn't warn you!

So I have gone to the trouble of scouring the internet for various diagrams to show you how to stretch and do it correctly.

When you're thinking of pulling out that old pair of football boots, tennis racket be sure to put my 15 step stretch into action, and have a great summer.
Country + Big Smoke = Culchie Shock

They’re everywhere; in pubs, in shops, on the bus, in college, living next door to you. They can be recognised by their GAA gear bags, their pints of Guinness, and their habit of looking both ways before crossing a one-way street. I’m talking of course, about the students up from the country to study, live and generally create mayhem in the Big Smoke.

LIFE FEATURE

BY LINDSAY CLEARY

When I moved to Dublin from a little Tipperary village last September, I was totally unprepared for what I was about to try and adjust to. Sure, I’d been shopping on Grafton Street plenty of times before, and I’ve had to navigate myself towards The Olympia and Lansdowne Road on certain occasions, but nothing could have prepared me for the unfriendly, coffee-drinking, Metro-reading commuters, the confusing bus system (“The 19 or the 19A? What’s the difference?!”), and the lack of grass in the middle of the roads!

Having two homes can be tedious. You need to decide what photos you want to put in which room, you probably own two toothbrushes, you have to pack a bag every weekend, and don’t get me started on the long, arse-numbing bus journeys along the M50 and beyond. There is an obvious advantage to this living situation, however: NO PARENTS! Most students born, bred and buttered in Dublin still have to live and put up with good old Ma, Da or miscellaneous. The culchies living alone for the first time have a chance to spread their wings, live on a balanced diet of beans and noodles and listen to music played at the appropriate level.

You also find yourself having to explain yourself quite a lot. For example, I absent-mindedly asked a non-Tipperary friend if a nightclub was ‘any use’, and she had no idea what I was talking about. Likewise, I’ve lost count of the amount of strange looks I’ve gotten up here from saying things like ‘fair’ (as in ‘very’) ‘how’s she cuttin’ (as in ‘how are you’) and ‘well’ (as in ‘hello’). I also have to be careful not to say ‘I’m meeting my cousin tomorrow’ to a Dubliner. That could be social suicide, to say the least.

One of the things that helped me with the big adjustment was realising that there is life in Dublin outside of college. Some of the closest friends I’ve made since I moved up here, as well as my classmates, are from my apartment block, my part-time job, and, well, random nights in the city centre! Of course, it is important to stay in touch with some of your old school friends, the ones who were there during that awkward, gangly stage of your life. You may be lucky enough to have a few of them living in Dublin as well as you. Not only are they great company on a night out (they’re probably the only ones who know exactly how many units of alcohol you can handle), but they come in handy when you need to bitch about the ridiculous price tags that seem to be attached to everything in the city!

In Dublin you have a choice of restaurants, cafes, pubs, clubs and galleries, and an endless amount of shopping opportunities (even if it is just window shopping; a sad reality in most cases!). Then there’s the likes of Cineworld and the Savoy, actually showing more than one movie per day! An amazing feat when compared to my local cinema in Tipp; two screens, uncomfortable seats, no popcorn machine. In the city you’re pretty much anonymous, and reports on what you get up to aren’t too likely to be circulating the whole town the next day! It’s the perfect opportunity to try new things and, cheesy as it is, discover yourself. And if you ever get homesick, just turn to the Culchie Soc, or go to Copper Face Jack’s!

Hopefully, all the first year culchies in DIT have settled in by now. My advice to next year’s newbies is simple: act the maggot, be a chancer and meet as many bowsies, fiends and Jackeens as you can. But, most importantly, don’t let anybody make fun of the way you talk!
Drink Tasting as opposed to Binge Drinking?

Most of us have to admit that we abuse the bottle from time to time. You often hear a student say, ‘I wish I didn’t drink last night’ or the infamous ‘I’m never drinking again’.

Well, here’s a crazy idea: why not try a Drinks tasting? Befriend a beverage as opposed to binging and thus hating it. With the following information at your fingertips you have no excuse not to throw a drinks tasting party. Invite a bunch of people around and chip in for drinks and snacks. If nothing else you’ll learn something new, have a bit of craic and won’t have to suffer too badly the next morning. That’s provided you don’t empty the ends of the bottles by yourself!

1. Wine Tasting

Fascinating Facts:

Main types of red wine: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Shiraz, and Pinot Noir.

Red wines are served at room temperature.

Main types of white wine: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, and Semillon.

White wines are served chilled.

Tannins: These are naturally occurring compounds found in wine, derived from the skin, seeds and stems of grapes. A high amount of tannins gives the wine a bitter or puckering effect on the tongue. Wine requires a certain level of tannins to age properly.

Varietal: The variety of grape used to produce the wine, e.g. Merlot.

Directions for Wine Tasting:

Line up a number of glasses in a row in preparation for tasting, label them a, b, c, d, etc.

Pour a separate wine into each glass; only filling about a third, yes a third, of the glass. If not, you may lose some wine later when you ‘swirl’ the glass.

Note: Taste from white to red, from dry to sweet and from young to old.

Firstly, take into account the sight of the wine. Do this by holding the wine up against a white background. Observe the colour, which is an indication of age and type of the wine. Young red wines could appear intensely red in colour whereas old reds may appear more brick or amber.

Secondly, smell the wine. This is done by simply swirling the glass of wine in your hand and then taking a good whiff. This will give you an idea of the aroma of the wine. The aroma can tell a lot about the wine such as age, origin and history. These aromas are whatever you want them to be, some descriptions include fruity, floral, earthy or even dark-chocolate.

Thirdly and finally, the wine must be tasted. Time for more ‘swirling’, but in your mouth this time. Take a gulp of wine in your mouth. Swirl with your cheeks. Swallow a small amount and spit out the rest. I know waste not, want not. This is the stage where the tannins come to the fore. Is the wine high in tannins (i.e. bitter and dry) or is it a sweet wine? Such sensations arrive as an aftertaste.

I’m afraid we’re not finished yet, now it’s time for the review. Ask yourself the following questions:

Is the wine well made?

Are the components in balance?

Is it drinking well now or will it improve with time?

What is the quality level?

2. Vodka Tasting

Fascinating Facts:

Vodkas are usually distilled from wheat, rye or potatoes or a mixture of these. Wheat vodkas are soft and smooth, rye vodkas are strong and robust and potato vodkas are slightly creamy.

The more often the vodka is distilled and filtered, the higher the quality and purity. It is the impurities in vodka that cause (atrocious) hangover.

Vodka is generally stored in the freezer to give the drink a more viscous and cleaner taste.

Vodkas can be infused with anything from raspberries to roses.

Directions for Vodka Tasting:
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Well, it's hard to believe, but here we are at the end of another year in college. For those of you just completing first year, 'Yes, all the years do go very quickly!' But it must be said, this year seemed to go quickest of all my SIX years in college, although probably because it was my busiest.

Semesterisation and Modularisation were the buzz words this year, or in some cases profanities! Joking aside, students were under a lot of pressure this year adapting to the new timetables and 'Review weeks', and we have had our fair share of work to do as a result, but that's what we are here for, and we have built a good working relationship with DIT management while troubleshooting and pinpointing the problems and issues that arose over the year. Major kudos to Mary, Sharon and Ber over in Academic Affairs for the way they kept the students fully informed and represented on matters Academia.

On the welfare front, we had some excellent campaigns run, as well as advice and help provided. Campaigns such as WellFair and SHAG week were extremely well received and very appropriate. Big up to Amy and Ber, and the gang in 'the brugha' for all the hard work over the year.

Entertainment wise, we had some great gigs over the year, with Tradfest being one of the highlights of my college life. Too many times we have leapt around the Palace, the Temple, the Big Tree and other such hosteries to the sounds of the Saw Doctors without ever having had them play live, but that all changed on 8th of November, with a Barnstorming, Hay-Baling show in Dublin's Vicar St. It'll be hard to follow that!

We also had our first ever centrally organised Graduation Ball's, which were held in the salubrious surroundings of Killashee house in Naas and were a massive success. A big thank you to Vi for all her organisation and efforts.

The Rag Trip was also, eh, memorable... The biggest ever, with 2500 students, it will also probably be the last ever, unfortunately, due to the trouble caused before we left the city. On the bright side, RAG week raised over €25,000 for charity, the biggest sum in (my) living memory, so big thank you goes out to the volunteers who made this possible, including Vi, Eve, and Al down on Ents and Events.

This very publication, The Compact, has been a revelation and has been very well received, with some top drawer interviews and pieces appearing over the year from a variety of student contributors. We could not run a college publication without this type of involvement and input, and it is greatly valued. Of course we must thank Cormac, who has done a fine job as editor of the magazine.

Also in the communications department we have run the ever improving Website www.ditsu.ie, as well as various campaigns and textlink over the year, and the hard work in this was done by Gaye, Dan and Colm, who deserve massive credit for their input.

Most notably this year, the major change from last year is the improvement in the trading situation with the shops. They have been turned around from a debt making operation to a profit making one, in a short space of time with huge work on behalf of Management and Staff. We also have brought in an extensive clothing range as well as gaining the right to run two Ticketmaster outlets, in Bolton St. and Aungier St., which is a massive boost to our reputation. I have to say a big thank you to Maggie and all the shop managers, especially Jimmy and Marcela, who have been feeding me since I came to college here!

And finally, we come round to Chief operations, now based down in Bolton St. We have had a hectic year to say the least, from the crossover to class rep recruitment drives (2), and everything in between, including elections and overseeing the running of all the other departments. I couldn't begin to try to explain the amount of work done all year, between councils and accounts, by Maura and Bronagh, needless to say it is colossal, so a big thank you to both of them, and also Claire who has assisted in this department for most of the year.

Our not-so-new structure has been bedding down again this year, and with nearly all the required staff in place, we are getting to grips with how exactly our union should run. We are losing some very experienced staff, with Vi, Gaye and Daniella all moving on to greener pastures this year. They will be missed greatly and remembered fondly, and will hopefully be back to visit!

So we are on the look out for some new blood and talent, and hopefully we will have a full staff complement in place for the new year.

I would also like to thank all the part-time officers and volunteers, too many to mention, but you know who you are. Without you, we would be on our knees. Also, on a personal note, a big thank you to all of the crew who helped me re-elected, especially Dec, my campaign manager. And I would like to wish Ber and Al the best for the future, it's been great watching ye working with me!

Overall it's been an exciting year, we have made a lot of progress in some areas and identified others which need our attention, but the key to a successful union is its members, and we need the participation of the members to make this union work. So remember to become a class rep, a PTO or just get involved wherever you can. It's a great experience, in a great union. Have a great summer, we'll see you back here in Sept for another year in college or Repeat exams! And remember, keep her country...
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