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DIT:Students Union

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President set to leave office

By Dermot Keyes

DITSU Overall President Vinny Dooley looks set to step down from office in the next few weeks following consultations between both Dooley and the Union’s Executive.

Speaking to the DIT Independent, Dooley said that whilst professional matters had contributed to his expected resignation from the Presidency.

"The job has been affecting my health and because of that, at the moment, I’m considering my resignation."

Though Dooley remains as President for the time being, the next meeting of DITSU Council will determine what happens in the interim between his resignation and the forthcoming DITSU Election.

A statement by Dooley read out at this month’s DITSU Council meeting in Bolton Street stated, "It is with great regret that I am currently considering tendering my resignation." A full statement on the matter will be prepared for the next meeting of Council.

The DITSU Executive has compiled a contingency plan, under which the senior body in the union will carry out the duties of President.

Kevin St Students’ Union president caught by surprise in Tramco during Rag week

By Dermot Keyes

BEFORE anyone thinks the headline suggests that this is yet another ‘attack’ on the activities of DITSU, I cry ‘lighten up!’ Can the success of a Rag Week be truly only gauged by those among us who went insane for the week and woke up every day asking the question, ‘who are you’ to the grunting beast in bed alongside them?

If this was you, well done, you’ve suffered too much this time away again. If you were planning to see what makes Rag Week all that it truly is, Character building can be

Rag Week: can anyone remember it?

Kevin St Students’ Union president caught by surprise in Tramco during Rag week

New chairpersons of DITSU Trading and DITSU Ltd will also be decided in the near future, since Dooley occupied both posts automatically upon election last year.

While the upheaval of DITSU has only begun, the outgoing President said the experiences of the past few months, notably the Halloween Ball issue, had been difficult to deal with.

"I was heartbroken by the whole thing," he said. "As Overall President and as managing director of the company, I took the complete blame. A lot of people thought I was wrong to do that. There was an awful lot of factors and a lot of people who had to share the blame." Looking back on the failure of the Ball to lift off as one of the social events of the college year, did Dooley wish he had devoted his energies to something other than the Point idea? "I don’t regret doing it," he said.

"Some people disagree; that it killed me, that it destroyed me. I’m still fairly proud of the fact that I took it all on my own shoulders when I could have blamed others. But there were legitimate factors as to why it didn’t work.” Dooley said that criticism was difficult to take, but was to be expected.

"You always hear the bad things, you have to accept that.” The position of President had proven problematic, but he did not regret his standing for the post in the first place. "I have no regrets at all," he added.

"I wish people would actually sit in the Students’ Union for a week and see how hard it is to work everything out.

"A lot of people just don’t like the position as opposed to the person that occupies it. When you walk into the job as a stranger or whatever, you’re bound to have enemies, sometimes for no good reason.”

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**DITSU to hold first societies awards**

By Dermot Keyes

THIS year marks the first holding of the DIT Official Societies Awards, which will be held in Kevin Street on the 26th of March.

Committee members and those involved in the various societies in DIT will be asked to nominate individuals in the categories that they feel most worthy awards the role that various students have played during the year.

The awards are in the following categories:

- Best society in each site
- Best overall society in the entire college
- Best new or most improved society
- Best event
- Best individual

The awards will be judged on an application made by the society or individual detailing why they feel they deserve the particular award.

An application should include photographs and details of those events. A selection committee has been chosen to choose from those nominated.

Anita Conway, the Society’s Organiser, Celine Kelly (Chair of Rathmines Social and Cultural Council), a Clubs and Societies Officer and a student yet to be chosen.

Vivian Dooley was also expected to sit on this committee, but other circumstances will probably dictate a change in that particular seat.

The winners of the DIT Awards will represent the Institute at the National Societies Awards, organised by the Board of Irish College Societies (BICS), which will be held in April.

Sponsored by AIB, DIT have fared well in this competition for the past two years, winning best individual in 1999 (Martin Byrne, Monaghan Square Drama Society) and best group in 1998 (Kevin Street Drama Society, winning the same award last year for Kevin Street and North will attend this conference and it is our intention to get as many views as possible with regards to important issues to young people so we can present them at this conference.

The Sinn Fein Cumann in Kevin Street has been up and running since last December.

"As it is our first year we have spent a lot of time dealing with the formalities associated with setting up a new society," explains O’Rourke. "In addition to this as a political society we had the added formality of gaining recognition as a Political Society, that is gaining delegate status for the forthcoming Ard Fheis. With this work behind us we can now focus on achieving our goals.

"Sinn Fein as a party are actively supporting the current U18 Raise the Grant campaign and within the college we have nominated our candidates and await the response of the Students’ Union office.

For further information, contact Anita Conway at 087 4473681.

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**Kevin Street rag ball cancelled**

STUDENTS in DIT Kevin Street saw their Rag Ball cancelled due to poor ticket sales and instead went in on Thursday night of Rag Week in Ice Nightclub, Malahide.

"We decided to cancel the rag ball at Ice Nightclub due to poor ticket sales and instead we went in on Cathal Brugha Street and Bloom Street to the 'Tivo'," said Will Nelson, Welfare Officer in Kevin Street Student Union.

The night planned to feature magicians, Freeloaders, upstairs and a DJ downstairs. According to the Kevin Street Rag Mag, it was to be the first time a DIT college would stage a formal party, "so you’ll be part of it!"

**O’Rourke happy with Sinn Fein start**

Kevin Street Sinn Fein is sending a representative to Belfast at the end of March to attend a party conference on issues affecting young people.

"The aim is to update and improve party policy with regards young people," explains Darren O’Rourke, the Cumann Chairman. "Forty young people from both the South and North will attend this conference and it is our intention within Kevin Street to get as many views as possible with regards to important issues to young people so we can present them at this conference."

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Students get education on preventing drug rape

By Aisling Casey

IN AN effort to minimise drug-related assaults, DIT has embarked on an intensive campaign educating students on safety measures to combat drug rape, coinciding with Rag Week.

The aim of the campaign was not to create unnecessary alarm but make students aware of the dangers that face them and the steps required to protect yourself.

"I think it is a vital campaign for students of all ages, knowing what to do in the event of a drug rape," explained Ruth Allen, Welfare Officer DIT in Cathal Brugha Street.

"The reason for the campaign is the growing number of students that are telling friends and Welfare Officers in the Students Union about experiences they have had."

"This campaign was to make people aware of how you can protect yourself when going to pubs and clubs," she added. "The low numbers of reported drug rape incidents is due to the fact that men and women often fall silent."

Roiphy

If an incident of drug rape is not reported, the campaign of drug rape because they may not be able to remember it.

Roiphy, along with various other mixtures of ecstasy and cocaine are used frequently in drug rape cases.

Roiphy, with the street name "roofies", is available in Ireland on prescription and is now on the black market. It is a powerful sleeping tablet, which looks like an aspirin. If you take it you can leave the victim incoherent and drowsy, while preventing them from sleeping so they can participate in sexual activity unwillingly.

The tasteless, odourless drug is so easily administered quietly in its victim, leaving them disorientated and confused. Immobility follows before the victim collapses.

Days later, fragments of the incident may return, but then it is too late, as the memories are gone from the victim's system.

Although a blue colour has been added to the drug, it is still not noticeable to the eye in dark drinks.

To make people more aware, Student Union Officers were issued stickers bearing the words "This could be A Rape Drug". During many of DIT's Rag Week events, the officers placed the stickers on people's drinks while they were distracted.

The moral of the campaign is to show just how quickly it could happen to you.

Realised this June in October, when DIT student Lyndsey Jones collapsed at the DIT Kevin Street/Mountjoy Square Plant.

She was rushed to hospital where it was discovered that the part-time Students' Union officer's drink had been spiked with sleeping and epileptic tablets.

DIT Welfare Officer, Simon Clarke said, "Recent media attention to the issue has highlighted the seriousness of drug rape. People take the issue too lightly.

"This campaign is about making students aware of this threat and that they are not powerless to prevent such incidents from happening by putting yourself at risk."

Over the last fortnight, representatives from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre attended DIT colleges to alert students of safety measures they should adhere to.

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre is one of two charities to benefit from this year's RAG week activities.

DIT's advice to you

* Don't accept a drink from anyone you don't trust.

* Don't share or exchange drinks.

* Don't leave your drink unattended, otherwise go to the toilet - get a person you trust to watch your drink.

* Don't take drinks from large open containers, such as punch bowls.

If you are engaged in conversation where your attention might be diverted, put your hand over your drink.

Remember these drugs dissolve in non-alcoholic drinks as well.

If you feel yourself drunk after only a few drinks, seek help from a trusted friend or pub克拉克.

Consider carefully whether to leave a pub, club or party with somebody you have just met.

Be a friend by watching out for others and be aware of any changes in their behaviour.

College hosts Public Lecture Series

Waste paper a problem in colleges

By Darragh Clifford

"PAPER wastage has become a huge problem for many of the DIT colleges," says one of the students attending a lecture on the subject.

The problem stems from colleges where paper is provided free of charge to students for printing purposes. The issue was highlighted in Mountjoy Square, where an estimated 30% of paper is being wasted. "Students are hard to control when it comes to paper," said one of the students.

The lecture took place in December, when Mr. Laurence Dreyfus, a performer and academic, addressed a group of 50 staff and students in DIT Rathmines. "This lecture on musical performance went down very well," said Mr. Brian O'Neill, the organiser of the series. "A good representative group from other third level colleges attended."

At the end of January, Mr. Philip Zarrilli, Beckett specialist and theatre director, was of particular interest to the practical theatre studies group in Rathmines. Mr. Zarrilli, Chair of Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Exeter, has a wealth of experience in playwriting, directing, performing, publishing and teaching. He discussed the nature of the performer and the value of the piece.

"Initially this was a faculty idea to draw together the visual, art, music and theatre under one umbrella and try to stimulate debate across these boundaries," explained Mr. O'Neill. "The idea has fallen into the hands of the Cultural Translation and the British Council are also involved with the project."

The next lecture in the series will be held on February 19th in DIT Rathmines. Professor Christopher Frayling, from the Royal College of Art, will concentrate on the research of art and design.

The question he will be asking is "Would Jack Yeats have wanted a Ph.D.?" The lecture will be held on the applied arts website and provides an interactive discussion forum for public participation in the debate. Mr. O'Neill says, "I would hope to get people interested, and hopefully get some response to continue the debate after the lecture."

Other lectures include: March 12th 2001- Paul Clearwright: Photographic Practices and Research, DIT. March 2001- Mary Kelly: Research as a Visual Art Practice. May 2001- Surat Maharaj: Cultural Translations

Day Trippers

By Cian O'Sullivan

A GROUP of 500 students gathered in protest outside DIT Aungier Street on February 6th.

The crowd was gathered for the annual Rag Trip. DIT students are protesting for any political reasons, the cancelling of student's grants. The amount of alcohol was allowed on the tour was "way too high" and "outside the Institute. Huge amounts of cars and bottles were sold in the baggage compartments of planes. DIT 500 students were carted off on the "Magical Mystery Rag Trip".

Despite this discouraging business, DIT students improved once the first night's "Protest in Carrickmacross", was reached. The angry muggers were replaced by the usual nightlife noise as everyone began to relax.

At 4.30 p.m. we were packed onto the buses and we departed on the second leg of the tour. Our tour was made by a very large bus near Slane. A great band, a male stripper, and someone who legally enjoyed a party. Everyone was pretty drunk by the time we got back to the buses there and back into the buses at the craic on the bus. We had a good crack after only a few drinks, seek help from a trusted friend or pub克拉克.

Consider carefully whether to leave a pub, club or party with somebody you have just met.

Be a friend by watching out for others and be aware of any changes in their behaviour.

DIT to get capital grant

DIT will receive almost €2 million this year from the Minister for Education, Dr Woods, in the form of a "capital development grant".

The sum of €7,182,852 will go towards refurbishment and safety and health improvements. "DIT is constantly looking for money for refurbishment and for the overall development of the campus," said Dr Woods. "We would hope to get more of this money."

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Everyone agreed it was a good trip.
Quality assured for the DI

By Samantha Rowntree


Mr Hegarty said that the timing of the book was apt. “The book is very timely as it’s just ahead of the Qualifications Act being implemented,” he told the DIT Independent. “It will be a tremendous guide to help people react to situations that arise with informed insight.”

A USI Conference in January on quality assurance focused on the developments in assessing the standard of courses offered in Irish universities and colleges. USI President Julian de Spainn called for the implementation of the 1998 European recommendation on quality assurance in higher education. "The recommendation called for reviews on quality assurance procedures and their outcome to be published and made available to the general public,” said de Spainn. “All Irish third-level institutions should implement this recommendation.”

Ms. de Spainn: called for implementation of the recommendation courses. The other thing we have is course and student feedback which, hasn’t been implemented fully so as yet we are not completing the loop.”

Mr Hussey believes that DIT’s progress in quality assurance has been excellent. “At present 70-80% of the procedures have been implemented,” he said.

“I think previously many of the procedures were done individually but now they’ve started to grow and have been integrated into the course as a whole. There’s a necessity for all students and teachers on a course to give constructive feedback. Our other big experience was in 96/97 when the Higher Education Authority audited us. We really started to take the awarding power up to postgraduate level. The process is very much a service and have teachers doing their jobs as well as possible collectively. The one thing that strikes me is that it involves people listening to criticism on themselves or on others. It’s very difficult. The question is how to make constructive criticism without it being damaging. This feedback needs to be dealt with in a reasonably gentle way.”

Speaking at the book launch, USI President, Dr Michael Wood, said that the book had been published at a very opportune time “with the allocation by the Government of £550m under the National Development Plan for research, technological development and innovation in the third level sector”.

Design Study course starts in Bolton Street

A new two-year Design Study course has started at DIT Bolton Street. The part-time certificate course, the first accredited Design Study course in Ireland, is up and running since January, with 25 students.

The course took three years to design and implement from an initial lecture in 1997.

The course intends to provide an introduction to the theories and philosophies behind design and includes seven modules relating to some of the key areas of design that are encountered on a daily basis. “This course is a gesture by the Department of Architecture towards DIT’s stated commitment to lifelong learning,” said Mr Eamon O’Doibh, the course co-ordinator. “The student profile of the new course is very broad in terms of age and background. The male/female ratio is about 50/50.”

The course is aimed at three different groups - students who have completed the Leaving Certificate, managers who are sponsoring the launch of the book, and citizens who are attending for the experience of design work.

The annual Union of Students in Ireland Congress will take place between the 19th and the 23rd of March in the West County Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare. DITSU have proposed motions for consideration of university status for DIT. The motion proposes that the incoming and outgoing executive would attend Congress as the elections would have taken place by then.

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Focus on ... DIT Greystones

Independent Focus: Greystones move would be welcome

By Dermot Keyes

WHILE there may be a number of students who have suggested the idea of DIT having a centre in another county as a step backwards rather than a productive development, the recent proposal demonstrates a positive step forward.

The Institute’s mandarins have been rather quite of late, after the spurt of information that dotted these pages about the Grangeegorman move in the past few years.

There have been a couple of ventures, such as the LEAP scheme and the Peer Mentoring Programme, which have shown the Institute to be pro-active these past few months.

When it has come to developments within the walls of the DIT sites, with the exception of a supplement in a national newspaper, there has been little in the way of in-house projects and plans to be reported on.

The submission of the proposal by Dr Brendan O’Shea to the Department of Education must be welcomed, for it shows that DIT is adapting a forward-thinking agenda.

With a new “city” populating 40,000 people expected to be constructed in south-west Dublin, coupled with the projected 50 per cent increase in the number of residents in north county Wicklow over the next 15 years, now seems the opportune time to make the move.

Not only would the move be in line with the Wicklow County Development Plan, it would also illustrate DIT’s acting on Michael Woods’ recent vision for “Outreach Centres” to be established by Universities and Institutes of Technology around the country.

“The purpose of this exercise is to encourage people to avail of the opportunity to upgrade their skills and achieve third level qualifications without the necessity of travelling to the existing third level centre for all of the course,” reads the DIT proposal to the Minister.

“A more general and more socially embracing view of Outreach Centres would be a Reaching-Out centre, which would encourage the more socially disadvantaged to avail of the opportunity to attain a marketable skill and enhance their educational qualifications; they would be more likely to act in this manner if the educational centre was located in their own locality,”

Should DIT get the go-ahead for this Information Technology/Business Applications centre, it would be a major plus on the DIT list of achievements.

While the Institute has made significant moves in recent time to “centralise” the major centres, as is represented by the move of the entire Mountjoy Square campus to a new building in Aungier Street, there is nothing wrong with the idea of an outreach centre.

As was clarified in another report in this month’s issue, this is nothing more than a proposal that has been put before Minister Woods and will only be executed upon getting the go-ahead from Dr Woods.

This would also be the first significant effort by DIT to engage socially disadvantaged students in the third level system. IT and Business are major industries which are currently crying out for workers, as we are reminded almost daily by the mainstream media.

The push to get more and more young people from across the socio-economic divide into higher education is one of the integral factors in the National Development Plan 2000-2006, the national wage agreement, as well as the Dr Blight Review of Post Secondary Places and the Government White Paper on Adult Education.

The report states: “The disadvantaged have, by definition, not shared adequately in Ireland’s newly found prosperity. We now have the opportunity of embracing this very large segment of our population and of emancipating them from deprivation; it can only be done when they have the dignity of employment with worthwhile remuneration.

The only way for this to be realised is through education.”

Mini-qualifications would be a feature of the Greystones unit, leading on to further education and further opportunities for students.

As for those less well off who could afford to attend this new centre, DIT has not suggested any single idea along the lines of special grants, which would be the responsibility of the NCVA.

This is one of the weaker elements of the proposal as it is all very well to advocate the participation of disadvantaged people in third level studies without providing a formula by which this could be attained.

But this is surely an area that will be closely monitored in the immediate future so that a working idea can be put to both the Department of Education and the NCVA.

The American cultural ethos that only the rich should be educated cannot be allowed to become symptomatic of our newly found prosperity and there must be genuine moves met to help those in the poverty traps in all areas, including education.

Though the report states that “Education is the critical key to be freed from the scrouge” of social disadvantage, the reality is that money is the first key. Once monetary strings are ironed out, then that can open the door to education.

Make no mistake, Brendan O’Shea is to be applauded for a detailed and well-thought out approach to the Greystones idea. But there are many pressing times ahead for all third level institutes and for the Government if “outreach centres” are to truly help those who are currently out of reach.
Reads of Nassau Street

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Third level tales

In the first of a new series, Campus.ie looks at the stories making the headlines in the colleges, universities and IT's around the country.

College Course Standards under Scrutiny

THE standard of third-level courses came under scrutiny at a recent conference on academic quality assurance in higher education.

The conference, organised by the Union of Students in Ireland, focused on developments in assessing the standard of courses offered in Irish universities and institutes of technology.

The University Act 1997 sets down that all universities establish how quality is maintained.

To this end, USI's Education Officer Colin Jordan called on all third-level institutions to publish evaluation reports, so the public, as the principal funder of higher education, can access information on the quality of higher education.

The Bologna Declaration initiated improvement in the standards of third level courses, bringing greater transparency to higher education in Europe.

"It set clear European benchmarks for the various levels in colleges, and brought about discussions on standards and accreditation," Ton Vroeijenstijn from the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education said.

James Gosling, director of quality at NUI Galway, told delegates that a follow up to the College's 1997's annual professional survey to gauge student satisfaction, is set to get underway later this year.

The importance of student input in the overall course, is widely acknowledged in academic circles, and can be obtained by such means as student surveys, questionnaires and staff student meetings, he explained.

With only two European countries having students sitting on external committees, the issue needs further debate, Mr Vroeijenstijn said.

"USI's Education Officer Colin Jordan called on all third-level institutions to publish evaluation reports."

UCD documents experience of Young Mothers

SOMETHING young women have difficulty in linking sexual activity with the possibility of becoming pregnant, and have a casual attitude to contraception, a recent report reveals.

The report conducted by Dr Valerie Richardson of the Social Science Research Centre, University College Dublin, and commissioned by the Vincentian Partnership for Justice, recommended as a matter of urgency a review of sex education in schools, with emphasis placed on obtaining the views of students. Discussion on contraception as well as practical advice on sexually transmitted diseases should form part of this.

The report was based on 800 questionnaires and 31 interviews with mothers in Cork and Dublin under the age of 25 who had their first baby when unmarried and under the age of 18. The women reported that although initial support from the fathers of their children was forthcoming, contact tends to decrease with time.

While almost 40 per cent of women interviewed had daily contact with the father, the same proportion had no contact at all.

Support should be given to fathers to keep up contact with their children, the report recommends. "The development of groups for young fathers would be one way of supporting them."

While many of the women had harboured negative attitudes to school during their time there, the majority now regretted leaving school without a qualification and wished to return to education in the future, the study found.

It went on to recommend that any initiative to encourage young women to return to employment or education will only be successful if combined with the provision of locally based, freely available affordable child care provision.

The Web goes wireless @ DCU

DCU are piloting a wireless computer network in the canteen, in a move towards greater mobility and flexibility in working with laptop computers on campus. This means students can plug an adaptor into their laptop computer and access the Internet without wires.

If all goes well, DCU expect to roll the system (lapLAN)out to common areas across the campus, including bars, libraries, and even popular outdoor meeting places.

The objective of the pilot is to assess the value of wireless computer networking to DCU staff and students with a view to extending the facility in the future.

While wireless networking will never completely replace the need for wire (Cable) based network connectivity, it does allow for the opportunity to progress the concept of mobile computing within the DCU campus.

The users of the wireless network will require a wireless adapter for their laptop computers, and as part of this pilot Computer Services will loan out 12 adapters. Computer services were swamped with requests from students wishing to take part in the revolutionary pilot: "Although the initial take-up of the offer was good, it's too early as yet to gauge the amount of student interest in this initiative," James Healy told campus.ie.

Although the system is not very expensive to run in a few buildings, the main concern is the cost of students having to provide their own adaptor cards. Retailing at approximately €120-€130.

The system has been implemented in response to the growing demand by students studying for a Master's, wishing to continue using the laptop that they have been using in work by day.

Previously there was nowhere to connect them. The model is based on the University of Carnegie-Mellon, USA, who boast of 17,000 students on the network. DCU is eager to discuss the issue of managing the network when they revisit the States later this year.

DCU computer services first came into contact with wireless system while attending an EDUCAUSE conference.

This is an annual conference on education for the heads of universities in America, where technology in higher education is discussed. DCU is the first Irish college to embrace the initiative long term, and have already advanced the concept significantly.

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HMV

DCU are piloting a wireless computer network in the canteen, in a move towards greater mobility and flexibility in working with laptop computers on campus. This means students can plug an adaptor into their laptop computer and access the Internet without wires.

If all goes well, DCU expect to roll the system (lapLAN)out to common areas across the campus, including bars, libraries, and even popular outdoor meeting places.

The objective of the pilot is to assess the value of wireless computer networking to DCU staff and students with a view to extending the facility in the future.

While wireless networking will never completely replace the need for wire (Cable) based network connectivity, it does allow for the opportunity to progress the concept of mobile computing within the DCU campus.

The users of the wireless network will require a wireless adapter for their laptop computers, and as part of this pilot Computer Services will loan out 12 adapters. Computer services were swamped with requests from students wishing to take part in the revolutionary pilot: "Although the initial take-up of the offer was good, it's too early as yet to gauge the amount of student interest in this initiative," James Healy told campus.ie.

Although the system is not very expensive to run in a few buildings, the main concern is the cost of students having to provide their own adaptor cards. Retailing at approximately €120-€130.

The system has been implemented in response to the growing demand by students studying for a Master's, wishing to continue using the laptop that they have been using in work by day.

Previously there was nowhere to connect them. The model is based on the University of Carnegie-Mellon, USA, who boast of 17,000 students on the network. DCU is eager to discuss the issue of managing the network when they revisit the States later this year.

DCU computer services first came into contact with wireless system while attending an EDUCAUSE conference.

This is an annual conference on education for the heads of universities in America, where technology in higher education is discussed. DCU is the first Irish college to embrace the initiative long term, and have already advanced the concept significantly.
ARE YOU A GOOD BUDDY?

D.I.T. PEER MENTORING PROGRAMME

- USE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO HELP NEW STUDENTS
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Peer Mentoring involves an existing D.I.T. student simply 'being there' on a one-to-one basis for a first year student enrolling in September and helping them with the transition to third level.

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Initial training will take the form of a special weekend away in February 2001 involving a mix of training and fun. After this no further commitment is required until September 2001.

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Monday

The week kicked off with a bang on Monday with plenty happening in the afternoon around the college. There was a Tarot Card reader in which was very popular, a bouncy castle in the courtyard (which unfortunately didn't get much use thanks to the rain) and a DJ in the Snackery playing party games such as Who Wants to be a Drunken Bastard. Incidentally, it was James Carroll who wanted to be a drunken bastard, and was for the rest of the week. Monday morning was in Planet Murphys and quickly moved to Flannery's, then The Portobello, followed by The Snackery playing party games. Many good singers, some bad and a few great ones.

RAG week started early on Monday with our first ents taking place in our common area. We started with the Perfect Partners Couple Challenge; the winning couple being the only two who had ever actually gone out together! Next was El Minion, the object of this game was to complete a task in the fastest time in order to compete during the week for a prize. Lovely Heineken. 9 teams of 4 entered and the quickest 4 back with a bonfire build won a place.

Monday continued with a few give aways including crates and tickets and willing students legging it for breakfast rolls and pints just to win a prize. MARS came in with the Mission For Mars and gave away T-Shirts and mugs bars a plenty. The fun continued in Bodkins with music from Jilted (cheers to Eoin and the lads), and great promos all day.

By the time evening had arrived we took ourselves to Shooters on Parnell St, where a casino night was waiting to get underway. There were many big spenders, a few who lost everything, the best looking croppers this side of the Mississippi, and fun for all. Tuesday saw us giving the 4th years their last task which involved taking incriminating photos on our RAG Trip that day. The trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week.

Wednesday

RAG Trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The RAG Trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The RAG Trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The RAG Trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The RAG Trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week.

Kevin Street

The session going on the buses home.

Wednesday

Wednesday got off to a slow start with most people opting to stay at home and lick their wounds. Anyone who did come in was treated to a few fourth years came out (cheers to Eoin and the lads), and great promos all day.

By the time evening had arrived we took ourselves to Shooters on Parnell St, where a casino night was waiting to get underway. There were many big spenders, a few who lost everything, the best looking croppers this side of the Mississippi, and fun for all. Tuesday saw us giving the 4th years their last task which involved taking incriminating photos on our RAG Trip that day. The trip took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week.

Wednesday

Wednesday night was up in the Portobello with karaoke with special guest star, The Rock, of WWF fame. Around 600 Kevin Street students made the journey up and even some fourth years came out (cheers BIL). Thursday

Thursday By Thursday there were many hungover heads and it was the时候 everyone had people surface. A DJ in the Snackery did his best to wake people up but it wasn't until later that evening in Planet Murphys that hair of the dog got everyone going again. A ceilidh band played away for two hours and there was plenty of craic for everyone. Due to poor ticket sales, our own Kevin Street Rag, which was planned for Ice Nightclub, had to be cancelled, and instead we went to Bolton Street and Cathal Brugha Street in The Tivoli Theatre. While it wasn't exactly what Kevin Street students are generally interested in, Stand played a good set and the closing DJ, Candyflip, was excellent.

Cathal Brugha Street

Downing a yard of ale during RAG week

The feeling pressure

The Rag Week took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The Rag Week took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The Rag Week took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week. The Rag Week took in Kells, Navan and Athboy and apart from a few bus problems another trip went down in history as being the highlight of many peoples week.

Our final stop was to Athboy where the chipmunks never done such business in their lives. They must have taken in a years takings in one night! So after half a dozen students had found out that there was food in the Hotel and that lovely Chicken Curry and Rice! We then all tabled in to the Night Club and a good night was had by all!

Wednesday:

Wednesday: We had a Karaoke which was held in the sidewalk where we heard some great voices! T-Shirts and key rings were handed out to the best ones! Also pints of bud! Later that night we went with Mountjoy Square to the Big Tree where they had the Irish sandwich competition! Quite night was had by all!

Thursday:

Thursday: Table Quiz was on in the Sidewalk where it took some time to get started, as there were some problems with the mike. But Cathy's lovely voice along with Conner's handling of the quiz meant it was a great day. The two groups that won got T-Shirts key rings and free Bud! All went home early to get ready for the big night the BALL in the Tivoli Theatre along with Bolton St. This was also the night for the Drug Rape Campaign combining along with the Ball the very serious issue of Drug Use Awareness for students and we feel this was received very well. The night as a whole went down well with the band Stand and other bands and DJ. John from Bolton St. and also other DJs. Fun was had by all. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the RAG Crew that help the Students Union, and any other student that assisted throughout the week.

Thanks again! BJay Rass Allen, Deputy President, Cathal Brugha St.
Rag Week 2001

Mountjoy Square

Monday

Dj Slobby kicks Rag week off at lunchtime in the canteen with Blind Date where Mary McGinnity, our very own Ents officer Clionadh O’Leary shows off some of her unique talents.

Later on in The Buy a Batchelor in Planet Murphy’s, Meath was the venue; first stop was in Kells where we had to plead with mad man Steo Moran to keep his clothes on. Next stop was in Navan, the Ardboyne Hotel played host to the college. The hardened drinkers made it to Flannerys that evening for The Karaoke Night.

Now, there was beer and maybe some spirits as well, but what they were we will never know. The next day we arrived in Terenure VEC grounds to do a bungee jump at The Bouncy Castle. This thumping night saw hundreds of students dance their bodies to extreme levels, of which, I for one have never seen before. Enormous thanks must be extended to the entire Rag Crew, who were the Lifeline of Rag Week in Mountjoy Square.

Tuesday

The infamous rag trip. Drinking began at 11 am and continued into the early hours of Wednesday morning. We out-did ourselves this year, with 3 quality stops this year, finishing in Club Solar in Navan. Almost 500 hundred students thoroughly enjoyed this exasperating experience, which saw one poor stripper reveal an exceptionally small asset. Heads were clearly thumping all day Wednesday, with a very quiet atmosphere in the college. The hardened drinkers made it to Flannerys that evening for The Karaoke Night.

Wednesday

Dj Slobby kicked off the week Monday in The Buy a Batchelor in Planet Murphy’s, our very own Ents officer Clionadh O’Leary splashed out £75 pounds on the president of Aungier Insurance.

Thursday

60 brave students from Mountjoy Sq. headed out to Terenure VEC grounds to do a bungee jump at over 170ft. Mars were out there all day with Mission to Mars, there was a bouncing castle and also TV’s news cameras were there to cover the jumps. Later that night it was off to the Temple Theatre for The Rag Ball 2001.

Headlining this were Phats & Small who were flown in to Dublin especially for the night. Thanks lads. All in all a great week, FT541/l officially the party animals of the college.

Friday

The Irish Cancer Research Organisation. The “Mars Dome” and The Bouncy Castle added to a day, that even the media could not ignore. TV3 filmed the day, which appeared on the evening news. The week was rounded off in the best style possible, with Phats & Small headlining in the Temple Theatre. This thumping night saw hundreds of students dance their bodies to extreme levels, of which, I for one have never seen before.

Friday

LIMBO-DANCER. Magician, Bungee-Jumping, Hypnotist, Playboy Bunnies, and so much more….. What a week! This was quite possibly the most enjoyable Rag Week that Mountjoy Street has ever experienced.

Monday kicked off the week in extraordinary style. Aidan Kane, Magician extraordinaire, fascinated students in the canteen, while Richay. The Limbo-Dancer contorted his body in un-natural fashion. Tradition prevailed, and The Iron Stomach saw 4 insane students, eat and drink, the most vile concoctions ever seen. In Planet Murphy’s on Monday evening, a brand new event was set in motion. The Buy a Batchelor/Buy a Batchelorette was a roaring success. The highlight of the event was the sale of the 2 Handcuffed Playboy Bunnies, who were sold for £115. Then it was upstairs to The Palace for Tony Baley to impress us all with his hypnotism.

Spirits were high on Day 2, which was The Magical Mystery Rag Trip. Drinking began at 11am and continued into the early hours of Wednesday morning. We out-did ourselves with 3 quality stops this year, finishing, in Club Solar in Navan. Almost 500 hundred students thoroughly enjoyed this exasperating experience, which saw one poor stripper reveal an exceptionally small asset. Heads were clearly thumping all day Wednesday, with a very quiet atmosphere in the college. The hardened drinkers made it to Flannerys that evening for The Karaoke Night.

Entertainment was provided by our very own students, yet some of the crowd voiced their distaste at the Karring Club’s rendition of their “so-called” Anthem. Thursday was aptly named “O” Day. We pulled out all the stops, to provide a day of extreme unadulterated fun. Almost one hundred of the bravest students in Mountjoy Street & Mountjoy Square, Bungee jumped for the The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and The Irish Cancer Research Organisation The “Mars Dome” and The Bouncy Castle added to a day, that even the media could not ignore. TV3 filmed the day, which appeared on the evening news. The week was rounded off in the best style possible, with Phats & Small headlining in the Temple Theatre. This thumping night saw hundreds of students dance their bodies to extreme levels, of which, I for one have never seen before. Enormous thanks must be extended to the entire Rag Crew, who were the Lifeline of Rag Week in Mountjoy Street.

Features

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Getting in the swing of it during Rag week at Mountjoy Street

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Africa Experiences

VICKY Ntozini is a mother of three who runs a B&B business in her home. But she is not your average working mother - Vicky's B&B, located in the Khayelitsha township in Cape Town, South Africa, is indicative of the optimism and willingness to move on from the past that so many people in Cape Town display. Born from the notion that foreign visitors to Cape Town are not getting a complete picture of life in South Africa, Vicky's B&B aims to get tourists away from the predominantly white tourism-orientated areas. In conjunction with local tour operators she is trying to counter the idea that these controlled environments paint about life in this increasingly popular holiday destination.

Tours that encompass the townships and areas such as District Six and Bo-Kaap for those who are curious about the past make way for a white-only area. The experience, once done through a proper tour operator, is necessary for any visitor to appreciate just what a diverse place Cape Town really is.

There had been fears within the area that tourists would be driven through the area in air-conditioned buses without stopping to talk to locals and see just what the area is really all about.

Vicky operates and local people like Vicky co-operate to bring tourists an inside look at life in the townships. Grass Routes tours is one such operator that carries out imaginative tours run by people who are directly involved with or affected by the areas they bring tourists to. (www.grasstroutes.co.za)

Vicky runs her two-bedroom B&B from her own "shack" and for approximately £16, visitors can get a night's accommodation, a full cooked breakfast and Alternatively, in keeping with her own internet site http://www.journey.digitalspace.net/vicky.html, which provides in-depth information about her background, her family, what she hopes to achieve through her business and information about the Khayelitsha township. She was also a recent finalist in the Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year competition in South Africa.

Quick to challenge the widespread belief that the townships are dangerous drug-ridden areas, Vicky explains that security in her area is privately organised. Representatives from each street meet to patrol the area and investigate any reported crimes. So, she explains, if someone came into her home and robbed her television, the neighbours would help.

They would find the person who did it and impose their own punishment. If this sounds like a system of Kangaroo Courts, that's because it is, but it is only in place because of a lack of trust for the government police, and indeed a distinctly low police presence in the area. Crime in the township of Khayelitsha is estimated at 9 per cent, a figure that is considered extremely low.

There are 1000 square kilometres of townships in Cape Town divided into five districts populated by black and coloured people, most of whom have travelled from various parts of South Africa in search of employment.

People in South Africa of all backgrounds use the term "labourer". Coloured people are those from places such as Cape, who are directly involved with or affected by the areas they bring tourists to.

Tour operators and local people like Vicky co-operate to bring tourists an inside look at life in the townships. Grass Routes tours is one such operator that carries out imaginative tours run by people who are directly involved with or affected by the areas they bring tourists to. (www.grasstroutes.co.za)

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**Stubble trouble**

"There was a woman on from Clontert complaining about the size of her next door neighbour's cot flag," is something that the /parodied Joe Duffty on the Ares Match series would want to get to the bottom of. But what is it that makes Joe Duffty the nation's favourite lunchtime radio companion?

Could it be his endearing motto ("Go on,"), his immaculate taste in bland menswear? Of course not, folks, it's his beard.

Can one imagine the public outrage if Joe, Ronnie Drew or Santa Claus decided to dispense of the facial frizz and adapt to that clean-cut look that all 'real' men are supposed to aspire to?

The Liveline lolario would have more than women from Clontert ringing him to lacerate him on such a truly ground breaking event. Of course, it's just the odd Paddy radio celeb that decides to go with the whole beard-wearing gig.

There's the odd Paddy who captains Manchester United who has gone from having the well-groomed goat? Perhaps, although course, it's not just the odd Paddy radio celeb that decides to go with the whole beard-wearing gig.

As he avoided the wild lunges of "stylists" such as Chopper Hams (they were all dirty bastards), he also gave racors the run around as his champions, cigars and sex-filled lifestyle got the better of hiim.

Sounds a pretty good way to let a career go down the tubes! Other heroic soccer beards included the majestic, Liasonal Sources, Tony Greathall, Alexei Lalas and of course, Diego Maradona. Although when Diego took the football fields of Italy with a little white powder on his muck, it could well have proven a deciding factor in the downfall of his career. (Okay, I made that last bit up).

Finnbogas goat? Perhaps, although course, it's not just the odd Paddy radio celeb that decides to go with the whole beard-wearing gig.

To win free copies of Tom McRae's new album turn to page 8

**Finely crafted tunes**

*Tom McRae:* "I think I share with my father the same desire to stand up on some sort of stage and preach to people"
By Carla O'Brien

February 14th. The day when even the sanest of people can be tempted into attempting the most insane of acts, all in the name of romance. The day when thousands of cutey stuffed bunnies carrying red fluffy hearts will find their way into the bedrooms of an equal number of grateful (I wear?) recipients.

When the card companies make fortunes and the people who happen to find anywhere decent to eat at the last minute. Valentines Day. For every person who welcomes the day devoted to romance, there are about five who dread it and another five who couldn’t care less.

After all, while the more popular members of society struggled to get to their front door under the weight of the pink envelopes, there were those of us who were lucky enough to get one. And then were forced to confess their lack of popularity with the opposite sex who were quite happy with the array of pink fluffy cards adorning their classmates’ desks. Torture. Sheer bloody torture.

So who’s bright idea was this anyway? Who decided February 14th should be a day of vomit-inducing romance for loved-up couples, and the

Valentine cards

Even the sanest of people can be tempted into attempting the most insane of acts

designated day of ritual humiliation for the less attached among us?

There are at least three different saints bearing the name Valentine or Valentinus who are recognised by the Catholic Church. All were martyred. One tale tells of Valentine, a priest from third century Rome, Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage for young single men, believing they made better soldiers than their married counterparts. Valentine defied the emperor, marrying the couples in secret. This act earned Valentine his death warrant. Probably around Pharaoh in Aegypt, on Aungier Street, houses the bones of St Valentine.

Other legends claim Valentine helped Christians escape Roman prisons, yet another reason for his death. The saint has been credited with starting the whole Valentine phenomenon. It said that, while in prison, he fell in love with a young girl and sent her a letter bearing the words “from your Valentine.”

Of course, the fluffy bunnies and cuddly bears weren’t his fault. That can be laid at the door of corporate exploitation. Like every other holiday, Valentine’s Day means big money for card and gift companies, who see fit to provide us with more pink and fluffy cards to choose from every year. And with the advent of the internet, there are even more ways to express your love, devotion and devotion. After all, nothing says it like an e-card, now does it? As for me, this Valentine’s Day I’ve been the panting of the Opera

Dermot Keyes casts his mind back to a night at the theatre when high notes were aided by tight trousers!

The Panting of the Opera

It had been almost four years since I had “graced” a stage with my presence. Last September I nervously stepped forward to September 2000.

With the exception of the first few rows, the choral sections were as empty as we were ever going to be.

After a “practice run” performance in Clonmel the previous night, we were as ready as we had been the night before. I looked down. Maybe my fat Elvis phase had arrived, over three years after my initial impersonation of the King! But, being an artiste, I had played the part of Jesus (that fat forward to September 2000."

The virus with shoes strikes back

By Gerald Fitzgibbon

The human race, as Bill Hicks put it, is a virus with shoes. Uh-oh, here we go again - another tree-hugging prophet of doom and gloom, to come tell us how terrible we all are and how we should all amend our lives.

Well, yes and no. Humans have and will continue to do great and wonderful things. Communications, science, technology, love and the rest. It’s just that on the whole, the race seems to be on the path to self-extinction.

Well, what do I care? I’ll be dead and buried by then. I’m really fed up with story-eyed self righteous[ies like myself] giving me a hard time and ruining my day, I just want to make lots of money and have fun.

Wouldn’t you rather ruin your day, but you are ruining my planet. Not "values" and "beliefs" are a cancer on the Earth’s organism. Don’t think I don’t have sympathy for you, but I think your head has been twisted and fed with worthless foaming at the mouth.

It was predictable that you would think as you do. Has not the 1/0 money logic, to the point of suicide, been inculcated in you from birth?

Has not your precious human soul not the currency of ritual humiliation for the less attached among us?

Every one of us, is in the cosmic perspective, precious. If a human disagrees with you, let him live, in a hundred years you will not find another.

The Phantom of the Opera

Valentines Day means big money for card and gift recipients. It’s impossible to find anywhere decent to eat at the last minute. Bills of Fish and Bubbles are available. One tale tells of Valentine, a priest from third century Rome, Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage for young single men, believing they made better soldiers than their married counterparts.

The Waterford International Festival of Light Opera is a massive event in the world of musical theatre. The Suir Operatic Society was thrown at in the deep end when one of the competing companies withdrew because they knew that their show was crap.

No, that wasn’t actually the reason, but anyway Carrick was left with the unenviable task of opening the festival in the presence of Mr “In fact, oh him, the Taoiseach Jawsus!"

After two weeks, a Hits from the Shows production had been hastily assembled and I was assigned to sing two solo numbers. Though I wasn’t actually a member of the Society, I was more than happy to join in the fun, which was all it was and is all all amateur play or a musical should ever be.

After a "practice run" performance in Clonmel the previous night, we were as ready as we were ever going to be.

Valentines Day means big money for card and gift recipients. It’s impossible to find anywhere decent to eat at the last minute. Bills of Fish and Bubbles are available.

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Reviews

The last word in beer

Restaurants

Romance on a budget

You're a student, you're in love but your also skint as a mink in a fur factory and its Valentine's Day. What do you do? In an effort to save you the embarrassment of a fluorescent McDonald's dinner for two, here is a quick guide to some of the restaurants around Dublin, within the price-range of the humble student.

One of the more popular student venues is Captain America's Steakhouse and Grill on Grafton Street. Here you can impress your date with the finest America has to offer without actually going there.

The menu is relatively affordable. Most main courses start from £4 with the top price averaging £13. If it is a first date, you'll find a wide selection of cocktails to help ease the conversation.

However - be warned. Some of the staff lack personality and also I am a little unsure whether a giant mural of Captain America fighting some Nazis is the most romantic of settings.

Next stop on the romance trail is the infamous Planet Hollywood, St Stephens Green. This is a theme restaurant and contains memorabilia from different movies such as Arnie's motorbike in Terminator 2. Again, if your date is not a great conversationalist, there is a wide selection of beverages and cocktails. You can also play "guess the famous person" with the table mats. Unfortunately, Planet Hollywood fails to capture any of the magic of America. The décor is brash and the atmosphere is that of a carnival, eliminating any romantic ambiance you may have brought with you. The food is quite expensive, with main courses ranging from £6 to £15 and the merchandise on sale at the gift shop is probably more appealing than the menu.

Desperate to woo the leading lady in my life, I tried a little bistro on Upper Baggot street called Mocha Monday. This is a quiet little find that offers all you need for a romantic night out. There is soft lighting, soothing music and friendly staff. The place is fully licensed and boasts an impressive wine list with friendly prices. The food is very tasty and the service is prompt and efficient. The typical main course goes for about £8 and portions are certainly ample. For me, this was the ideal student restaurant and showed that a little effort goes a rather than some tacky memorabilia.

In an effort to save you the embarrassment of a fluorescent McDonald's dinner for two, here is a quick guide to some restaurants in Dublin brought with you. The food is quite expensive, with main courses ranging from £6 to £15 and the merchandise on sale at the gift shop is probably more appealing than the menu.

Eoin Murphy visits some of Dublin's romantic restaurants to see if you can wine and dine on pittance

Music for the soul

Mama's Gun by Erykah Badu (Motown/Universal)

The woman who brought the music world contemporary R&B with her 1997 Grammy award-winning release, Baduism, is back with her latest offering, Mama's Gun.

On this collection of poignant musings and emotional lyrics, Badu collaborates with some of the all-time musical greats, from Jay Dee, James Poyser, Roy Ayers and Betty Wright, to Stephen Marley, fromnotist Frank Lely, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, and guitarist Pino Palladino.

What results is 15 tracks of pure R&B soul. The lyrics resonate Badu's true life experiences, from the birth of her son to the inevitable romantic breakup. But there are a few odd ones thrown in there for good measure.

The funky-up Kiss Me on My Neck outlines what Badu would like you to do. Bag Lady and A.D. 2000 deal with broader universal themes, while the melodic, jazz-inspired tune entitled Booty sees Badu reject the advances of another woman's lover.

Badu uses her incredible voice and a wide range of musical instruments from flutes to percussion to create an album that is as peaceful as it is rousing. Mama's Gun definitely hits the spot.

Rating: 8/10

Anthology: Through the Years by Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers (MCA/Universal)

In 2000, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers released a double album Anthology: Through the Years which sampled the best of Petty and the Heartbreakers. The two disc compilation has virtually every hit single, including Surrender, penned 20 years ago but only recorded in 2000. Also included is the amazing Petty duet with Stevie Nicks entitled, Stop Draggin'/My Heart Around.

Anthology showcases the best of the Florida rocker's career and combines 1977's Greatest Hits and the no.1 album Playback. If you are a die-hard Petty fan or have any interest in music at all, then this collection is a must.

Rating: 9/10

Black & Blue by Backstreet Boys (Jive)

Whether you like them or loathe them, one thing is sure - whatever the Backstreet Boys release is guaranteed to go straight in at no.1! The eagerly-awaited third album from the Florida quintet, Black & Blue, features 13 tracks, honed to perfection by a whole host of producers including Max Martin and Kristian Lundin. A follow up to their worldwide smash Millennium, Black & Blue is surprisingly disappointing.

Despite collaborations with writers Babyface and Rodney Jerkins, the tunes are the usual soulful complaints about losses in love. Time, co-written by Babyface, is a melodic look at love, featuring a heavy string-arrangement. That's all well and good, but haven't we heard it all before?

After you wade through another mountain of heart-wrenching ballads, including the first single Shape of My Heart, the boys finally try something a little different with up tempo tunes such as The Cafe, Get Another Boyfriend and Everyone.

Usually a group's third album showcases maturity and an ability to adapt their musical style. Unfortunately Black & Blue does not. I feel the "Boy" s are perhaps getting a bit and not wanting to risk the wrath of teenyboppers everywhere. I suggest they step aside and make way for the next batch of boyband hopefuls.

Rating: 6/10

Albums

February 2001

HMV

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DITSU, Rathmines, Dublin 6
**REMEMBER THE TITANS**

How much interest do I have in American football? Hard to tell... Take a teaspoon and fill it with water. No, better yet, turn it upside-down and dab the water on the bottom of the cup.

No, that's too much.

It's safe to say I didn't have any burning emotions when I sat down to watch *Remember the Titans*. Set during the desegregation of schools in America, as played out through one of the first racially-integrated football teams, *Remember the Titans* is produced by that noted purveyor of gentler fare Jerry Bruckheimer (Top Gun, Flashdance, Bad Boys and more recently, Armageddon, Coyote Ugly and Gone in 60 Seconds).

Denzel Washington plays Herman Boone, hired to be head coach of the T.C. Williams High Titan football team over Bill Yoast (Will Patton), the former coach of many years.

The newly-integrated Titans (complete with such diverse characters as the Jock, the Hippie, the Funny One and the Fat One) must firstly overcome their differences (and "bond" like real men in a number of suitably glossy heterosexual ways) before they can win the Championships, or the big trophy, or something like that. To be perfectly honest, I wasn't paying a great deal of attention after the first half-hour.

There have been many fine films on the varying subjects of racism and even American football, and this is not one of them. There have been a number of fine films, period.

*Remember the Titans* is not one of them.

**FINDING FORRESTER**

By the time you read this, you will know whether or not Finding Forrester's bid to earn Sean Connery his share a number of distinct awards has been successful or not.

It seemed like a sure thing: Director Gus Van Sant was also at the helm of the award-winner Good Will Hunting and on the surface, the two films share a number of distinct similarities.

A gifted youth in a working-class area of a large American city overcomes numerous obstacles and institutionalised prejudice with the aid of a crotchety mentor.

In this case, Matt Damon and Robin Williams are replaced by newcomer Rob Brown and the aforementioned Connery - playing against type as a gruff, yet oddly loveable Scot. Jamal Wallace (Brown) is a 16-year-old black youth with an equal passion for basketball and literature.

A chance break-in leads to him meeting reclusive writer William Forrester (a sort of urban J.D. Salinger) just as he's accepted into a prestigious Manhattan prep school. Under Forrester's tutelage, Wallace's writing begins to shine, while romance seems to be blossoming at the new school with the well-to-do Claire (Anna Paquin). However, nasty professor F. Murray Abraham - for reasons that seem hazy at best - seems determined to show up Wallace as a fraud, which threatens the secrecy of his friendship with Forrester. Apart from Good Will Hunting, this film seems a little reminiscent of the recent Wonder Boys and like that, Finding Forrester goes to pieces in the last half-hour.

Which isn't to say there's a lot to enjoy. The relationship between Connery and Brown is touching and very natural, while supporting players Paquin and Busta Rhymes on excellent form.

Director Van Sant keeps things brisk and does a remarkable job at avoiding sentimental pitfalls. It was the first appearance of F. Murray Abraham's bafflingly nasty professor that I lost Finding Forrester. His character seems written as a one-dimensional stereotype and isn't helped by Abraham playing him like a pantomime villain.

Another jarring misstep occurs at a moment when Forrester reads out a supposedly inspiring speech. We never get to know just how inspiring it was, because Connery's voice fades out, replaced by a gushing orchestral score. The camera cuts to the awed faces of the listeners.

This seems an extraordinarily lazy oversight for a film whose central theme seems to hinge on the liberating power of the written word.

Like Wonder Boys, Finding Forrester is a near miss, which is a shame. It is, however, an altogether worthy shame with its heart, if not its head, in the right place.

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**THE CLAIM**

It's rare that I would get worked up about a film solely on the basis of the music composer, but this happened to be the case when I went into see The Claim. Michael Nyman (seen pottering about in the recent Bulmer's cider advert, incidentally) is best known for his work on The Piano, Wonderland and The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover.

A couple of years ago, he collaborated with Damon Albarn (of Blur fame) on the soundtrack to a film called Revenant, which turned out to be one of the finest musical scores of the decade.

It elevated the film above the ranks of the average, and is one of the few pieces of music that can instantly clue the listener in on what kind of film they were watching - in this case, a creepy thriller about cannibalism set in the Rocky Mountains in the 1940s.

*The Claim* - also set in the snowbound American west of the mid-19th century - is a far superior film to Revenant, even if Nyman's score is far less distinguished.

The story opens and closes in Kingdom Come, a small frontier town that is pretty much run by oil tycoon David Dillon (Peter Mullan), the gold prospector who founded it 20 years previously. He is a man of two faces - one for everything - money, power and a beautiful mistress (Milla Jovovich) by his side.

His life is thrown off-balance by the arrival of three strangers to the town: Mr Dalglash (Wes Bentley), a surveyor for the Central Pacific Railroad, and two women, the sickly Elena (Nastassja Kinski) and her young daughter Hope (Sarah Polley), both of whom are tied to a long-hidden secret in Dillon's past.

Along with Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, this has to be one of the most beautiful films I've seen in the last year. Winterbottom could have just shown us two hours of the breath-taking mountain scenery and I would have walked away impressed.

As it is, The Claim (loosely based on The Mayor of Castbergh (by Castleford by Thomas Hardy) has a terrifically human story that touches on themes of forgiveness and retribution in a sure and very moving way.

A gem.

**WHEN BRENDAH MET TRUDY**

Typical. You wait years for an Irish film that doesn't involve the Troubles, gangsters or coming-of-age in the 1950s, and then three come along at once: About Adam, The Most Fertile Man in Ireland and When Brenda Met Trudy. Of these, When Brenda Met Trudy could well be the most successful, given the timing, at least. Brenda Met Trudy is a film about Brendan's (John Light) successful career in France, and singing baritone in the local choirs. Trudy is a feisty burglar who refuses to watch a film that isn't in colour. They meet, sparks tentatively fly and an anarchic romantic comedy ensues.

It isn't made abundantly clear what Trudy and Brendan are made of. It's not clear exactly what the film is: is this a love story, a commentary on grief, a film with bright pink sashes and bowlers are protesting their right to march and the local cinema advertises a film called The Same Old Shite.

Peter McDonald plays Brendan, like an increasingly frantic, kohl-eyed version of Ardal O'Hanlon in Father Ted. Flora Montgomery is perfect as the object of his affections; plainly-spoken, soft-hearted, and less than willing to take the bull anyone, least of all Brendan's, over in-law.

The film references can be a little wearying but When Brenda Met Trudy has so much spiky energy, it thrives even when it threatens to slow down, the script sends it flying off into another direction.

It will make you laugh, even if it doesn't know whether it wants to be Father Ted-funny or There's Something About Mary-funny.

It may not be Woody Allen, but hell; even Woody Allen has difficulty in being Woody Allen. *When Brenda Met Trudy* isn't a new Irish film-making but it is a breath of fresh air.

And unlike many other Irish films from the last few years, it does actually deserve its praise.

***

"New" and utterly forgettable. The last word in beer
Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Romantic exploits are the focus this month as lusty Mars moves into Sagittarius, signifying change, particularly in the affairs of the heart. If you are in a relationship, it is time to take stock and re-evaluate the direction in which you are going. Singles will also find themselves considering their options as a mysterious stranger rides into town, offering an exciting short-lived romance. It's all very tempting but on the downside, you may discover that the missing ingredient in your love life is emotional compatibility.

Destiny is foreign correspondence.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 20) Venus enters your sign this month, heightening your persuasive charms. Whatever you put your mind or heart to in the next couple of weeks will be yours. Love interests flourish in the workplace and may cause jealousy among fellow co-workers. But you must ask yourself, is an affair worth risking way. Lady Luck is shining for your responsibilities. Hang on to your present. Jupiter brings good luck mid-month when a new direction in your life feels desired. Make that someone special.

Destiny is a silver envelope.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20) You have been hit distracted lately. Dramatic changes are predicted in the next few months but rather than running away, embrace the new direction you life will be taking. Romantic affairs have been relegated to the sidelines recently. Make that someone special in your life feel desired again with some sweet talking. Gemini's are notorious for their ability to flirt, so use it to your advantage and win back the heart of your partner.

Destiny is an unopened box.

Cancer (June 21 - July 23) Previous relationships have left you emotionally scared but don't fall into the trap of dwelling on the past. To forgive is to forget. Mid-month a stranger enters your life, causing trouble on the romantic front. But a bit of re-assurance goes a long way. Lady Luck is shining on you at the moment and a piece of unexpected news by the end of the month will be the answer to a problem that has given you a lot of grief recently.

Destiny wears a red coat.

Leo (July 23 - Aug 22) You have been overly pre-occupied with your career in last few of months. So much so, that you have failed to notice a promising romance just waiting to happen. Someone thinks you are fantastic. Open your eyes and you will be surprised to find you are interested too. Mars enters your sign towards the end of the month causing some heat in the bedroom. Enjoy it; it is about time!

Destiny heralds the arrival of a long awaited parcel.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22) A competitor steps onto the romantic stage mid-month but you are ready for the challenge. Virgo is the sophisticated cynic of the Zodiac so with a few carefully chosen words, you can cut the competition down to size. Hang on to what is yours. Family relationships have been poor recently.

If an apology is long overdue, don't let pride stand in the way of passion. You will be glad you finally sorted out your differences.

Destiny begins with the letter S.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 23) Jupiter enters your sign this month, throwing you into a whirl of social activity. Invites pour in from every direction all demanding you attend their party. But which to choose? You have been neglecting your work lately but a night out on the town seems so much more tempting than being stuck behind a desk. Go out and enjoy yourself but remember to make time for your responsibilities.

Destiny is a silver envelope.

Scorpio (Oct 24 - Nov 22) There's a heavy emphasis on your intimate affairs this month. Expect a passion-packed few weeks. Actions will speak louder than words, so shower your partner with tokens of your love. They have been feeling somewhat taken for granted lately but a few well-chosen gifts will get your relation back on track. However, be careful about who you are seen to be friends with as jealousy and confrontation near their ugly heads towards the end of the month.

Destiny is an unopened box.

Sagittarius (Nov 23 - Dec 21) You're destined to travel this month. While it may not be an adventure in the sun, it will be a welcome break from the norm. Sparks of passion set off romantic fireworks mid-month as you run into an old flame. But loyal friends will have to step in to remind you why you finished with them in the first place. Take off those rose-tinted spectacles and you will see what everyone has known all along.

Destiny is a bus station.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 20) You can be too self-critical at times. Stop being so harsh on yourself and forget past disappointments. Make the most of what you have in the present. Jupiter brings good luck mid-month when a project you have been working on for the last few months bears fruit. Seize any opportunities that come your way as this is the time when your talents will be recognised and rewarded.

Destiny is a forgotten photograph.
Mountaineering Club scales new heights

By Brian Healy

LIKE its intrepid members, the DIT Mountaineering Club has reached new heights. This year it has gone from being a local campus based society to a northside and southside club with an overseeing committee.

The committee is responsible for training, safety, competitions, equipment and expeditions. The club has also recognised the need for outside training.

This was initially introduced within the South Mountaineering Club but due to its success the same training structure will be implemented within the entire club.

The aim of the restructuring is to improve co-ordination between the northside and southside clubs, therefore increasing the profile of mountaineering in the college.

By Brian Healy

At this time of year since the hiking in the Mournes is a little more challenging, Sandra said. "Climbing in the Mournes is fantastic due to the dry nature of the rock, which makes it easier to climb."

Not to be outdone, the North Mountaineering Club has also had an active year. The beginning of the term saw the members concentrate on the training with weekly sessions at the wall in UCD. After weeks preparaton the group decided it was time to tackle the Donegal Mountains, or the "mountainer's centre of the universe" as club PRO, Eoin O'Dowd described it.

Despite the harsh weather conditions everyone enjoyed the trip. Two months after their jaunt to the "centre of the universe", the club headed to Glendalough for some hiking and climbing with as usual a great time was had by all. With a half year to go, the club has lots more planned, including a trip to the "haunted house" of the Mournes. For both clubs it has been an eventful and exciting year and with the restructuring of the club set to increase the status of mountaineering, it is clear that the society is going from strength to strength.

Busy schedule for sub-aqua divers

By Brian Healy

SUB-AQUA diving conjures up images of swimmers gliding through the warm and tranquil waters of the Caribbean watching exotic fish drift past. But the reality for the members of the DIT Sub-Aqua Club, is not quite as relaxing.

Every Sunday, the trainees head to Sandy Cove for open water snorkelling. Each member must be capable of completing a number of tasks to see if they have what it takes to complete their first open water dive.

This dive is set to take place in Wexford, over the St. Patrick's weekend.

The tasks consist of five, thirty-minute, open water snorkels and a six metre snorkel dive.

It sounds tough, but the treasurer of the club, Des Hayes, says the training is going extremely well.

They love the snorkelling, despite the cold water, which is about four degrees centigrade at the moment.

We thought the numbers might fall off after the initial interest, but this was not the case. We still have about 15-18 trainees who are very keen.

It is that level of dedication that saw the club win the Annual Gala last year.

This year's event will take various heats consisting of technical events and more conventional racing.

DIT has a good reputation in this gala but Des insists that the event is as much social as it is competitive.

"It's an opportunity to get the various clubs together once a year in a competitive spirit. Diving can be a solitary sport, so this event gives all the clubs a chance to meet each other.

Later in the year, the competitive element of scuba diving takes second place to the sheer enjoyment of the sport.

At Easter the club will go on a week long diving trip to Caherdaniel in Kerry. As well as being a great opportunity to do some serious diving, the group will get to visit a number of remote islands, by using the two newly acquired boats.

"The trip is always a great success," Des enthuses. "The area is beautiful, with so much to do like walking, diving and sightseeing."

Plenty more trips are planned throughout the year, but nothing is too official as the weather can often determine where and when they go away.

The most popular venues are The Hook, Kilmore Quay and Oney Island in Galway.

Latest in the year, the competitive element of scuba diving takes second place to the sheer enjoyment of the sport

place in Athlone on the 24th February and the club has been working hard to make it two in a row.

"We have been training for this on Wednesdays and Fridays in the Kevin St. pool. But it won't be easy. We go as defending champions so the rest of the competitors will be after our scalps," Des says.

The competition involves

Hockey team miss out

DIT's Hockey team, which has enjoyed a productive season, sadly didn't make it to the final stages of the Cork IT-based hockey tournament.

An eight goals to four defeat to DBS, the hockey league runners-up, in an exciting tussle. Simon Clarck, G, Colm Blennersheet and Andrew Whitaker grabbed the goals for DIT on a day when their best just wasn't good enough.

"We were missing seven of our first team players and the scorline didn't reflect how the team played," said Hockey supremo Andrew Whitaker.

Despite the disappointment of failing to make the finals weekend in Cork, there was good news on the international front for DIT students.

Keith Benson and Nicky Harris have been selected for the forthcoming Irish College's Squad, who will compete in a tournament which is being held in Holland from the 18th to the 24th of February.

Shonagh Kane was also selected but has since had to withdraw.

The intervarsity hockey season is drawing to a close but there will be a number of friendships between now and the end of the season.

Golf

The DIT Golf Club has organised two successful outings to Deer Park and Bull Island Golf Clubs.

Only those truly devoted to the 18-hole game braved the elements on what were both truly awful days.

The club is currently organising the inter-DIT golf league, which consists of a four-ball competition, which caters for student and staff teams.

The closing date for entries closed on February 9.

The league will be played over this month and next, with the finals taking place in April. For further information, contact Niamh O'Callaghan at 087 2974644.

Soccer

Ladies indoor soccer training started at Larkin College on Monday February 12 and will operate for a four-week basis, between 5 and 6 p.m.

It should prove to be successful, the weekly session could be maintained for the rest of the year. So get those shin guards on ladies!
Indoor soccer

By Anthony O Sullivan

The Kevin Street indoor football tournament came to a close on January the 18th. It was D-day for the four remaining teams that had reached the final stages - Snap Crackle Pop, Fred West Ham, The Mods and The Little Jukkas. After many weeks of hard fought league matches were there was more blood then sweat exerted from the players and were some matches resembled more a game of rugby then a soccer match, trust me, I was the poor referee.

It came down to the final round robin phase to decide who would walk away (if they still could) with the ready cash on offer. The breakfast crew of Snap Crackle Pop got to an early start with a nine seven win over the laid back Mods.

The hard-hitting Fred West Ham, who had a habit of wallpapering their opponents to the Gwylm wall, won five-two against Little Jukkas.

The Little Jukkas put some hard hits in, in the last match with a dash of flare to get a four all draw with Snap Crackle Pop in their next match. Fred West Ham stomped their ambitions of winning the cash by destroying the Mods ten-five.

But the Mods did a bit of destroying of their own by injuring one of Fred West Ham's hard hitting players, who was stretchered off.

The other type of soccer pitch

The Mods tried to salvage some pride in their last match but The Little Jukkas who still had a chance of coming second held out to win six-five.

Therefore, it was to come down to the last match to decide who would stumble away with the cash. The Little Jukkas cheered on Fred West Ham because if they won by more then four goals they would come second.

But they were soon to be disappointed, as both teams put on the piece of match fixing ever seen, that it would put Bruce Grobbelaar to shame.

They both realised if they kept the scoring close that both teams could share the winners and runners up prizes. The game finished nine-seven in Snap Crackle Pops favour, winning the glorious Kevin St indoor football title and Fred West Ham winning Oscars for their portrayal of disappointment in losing, but not losing the cash. The money was presented at the DIT Handball Race night in the Kings Inn.

Olympic handball club update

By Colin Brosnan (DIT Olympic Handball Club)

At the beginning of January the DIT Olympic Handball Club's website went online. The site includes sections for news, results and fixtures among others.

It is also possible to find the rules of the game and a number of links to other sites if you are interested in finding out about Olympic Handball itself.

The club has been actively involved in the league, playing five matches to date. Our first match, out in UCD, brought with it talks of tactics and mutterings of the Flying-V. Some began quacking.

Obviously someone overloaded on Mighty Ducks films the night before!

The last match before the Christmas break was against Loughna, a team from Tallaght, and ended up with the club being mercilessly beaten.

But that's what happens when you send out beginners against most of the Irish national team.

Toms O Brannagan (the from Telly Bingo), plays with the club, and was subjected to cruel taunts from members of the Bradminton club who hung around to watch the game. 'Don't worry,' they said, 'he's a professional he can take it.'

A number of new players joined the ranks in January and played in our second match against UCD. One of them, Hugh Quigley decided to try a rugby tackle on a member of the opposition.

Hugh took him down. Hard. The guy from UCD didn't look like he was getting up again. Fortunately he didn't suffer any injury.

Hugh was nearly sent off after being on for less than a minute.

One of the other guys told him the game was exactly like rugby and for some reason he believed it.

The members went for a club night out at the end of January, and were well taken care of by our sponsors Budweiser, who also contributed to our new kit. Everybody enjoyed the night and there were a number of calls for more of the same.

Club training times Tuesday 8pm to 10pm and some Mondays 6pm to 7pm.

For further information on the club, you can contact the following club representatives with the provided numbers: Colin Brosnan 087 2960160; Ricardo Gorman 086 3102455; Brian Keegan 087 9693678.

DIT, UCD join to tackle Clare caves

On the 26th January the DIT Caving Club teamed up with UCD on a trip to Co. Clare. Malcolm McDonnell describes the weekends' activities.

On Friday I met with Shane, Stephen, Paul and Des out in UCD to catch the bus to Clare. It is a long journey, so when hunger finally got the better of us we stopped off for dinner at Supermacs in Ballinasloe. Overall it was an enjoyable trip down with the UCD caves. We arrived in Doolin at 11:20 and after some rapid unpacking we hit the local pub, McGreens for some much needed liquid refreshment.

A full Irish breakfast got the following morning off to the perfect start, followed by a chat with cavers about conservation, Weil's disease and a general description of what to expect in the cave. We then allocated the equipment (light, helmet, belt, and over-suit) to our intrepid voyagers and departed for Poll na Gole. An enjoyable 4-hour trip underground was had by all and after a chilly change of clothes on the side of the road we returned to the house for some well deserved sustenance (soup and sandwiches).

After the gear was washed we enjoyed a good game of football with UCD. When it got dark we retired to our abode for some telly and cards. After dinner we frequented the local to discuss the days exploring.

On Sunday, although slightly hungover, Des, Paul and I joined a number of other hungover members to attempt the Doolin river cave. While the rest cleaned the houses and packed for departure. After a tiring trip from St. Catherine's One to Fisherstreet Pot we walked back to the house, had some tea packed and hit for Dublin.

On arrival we headed for Con's to reflect on the enjoyable weekend and to prepare for the days college.
Planet Murphy & The Palace Nightclub. Camden St. Open 7 nights 'till late. Come early.