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DIT:Students Union

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Jones ordered to address SRA for non-attendance

By Aisling Casey

IN RESPONSE to complaints by the Kevin St Student Representative Assembly, Deputy President/Welfare Officer, Kevin St, Lyndsey Jones has been ordered by the students union’s Disciplinary Committee to address the SRA and explain her lack of attendance at their monthly meetings.

Following a complaint by the Kevin St Student Representative Assembly for non-attendance at meetings for the academic year, Ms Jones was summoned by the students union’s Disciplinary Committee to a hearing to discuss the case.

Ms Jones was summoned by the students union’s Disciplinary Committee to a hearing. Disciplinary Committee member, Graham O’Sullivan, chaired the hearing. The case took place on February 24 in Aungier St. Both the prosecution and the defence were heard in camera by the committee. There, Bolton St Welfare Officer, Naomh McNamara, supported Ms Jones. Speaking for the prosecution were SRA members, Fergal Connolly and Jurath Molloy, both of whom were elected by the SRA to attend the hearing.

At the hearing, the SRA representatives voiced their displeasure with Ms Jones for failing to attend any of the SRA meetings for this academic year. When the report was returned, the Disciplinary Committee said that all that was wrong with the situation was a lack of communication between Ms Jones and the SRA. The reasons for non-attendance, Ms Jones explained, was for health reasons and pre-arranged DITSU meetings, all of which were backed up by documentation. However, over the year, the SRA had not been told of her circumstances.

The Disciplinary Committee has instructed Ms Jones to stand up in front of the SRA at the next meeting and explain her situation. She must also complete a training module on the SRA, understanding what an SRA should be and what role a class representative should play in DITSU.

Speaking to the DIT Independent, Jones said, "At no time did I mean to show disrespect to the SRA. During the last two years in office I have had the students and SRA’s interests at heart but due to ongoing health problems I have had to put my health first. I hope this is not seen as selfish.”

Documentation received from Ms Jones highlights her reasons for not attending. At the first SRA meeting back in October 16, Jones attended a secondary school in Waterford to give a presentation on the 10k walk. On November 6, she attended the Aungier St Health Centre with Deputy President/Welfare Officer of Aungier St, Joe Savage to discuss staffing and facilities with Health Centre Staff. For the following three SRA meetings Jones was absent due to Illness which was backed up by medical certs which were all shown to the Disciplinary Committee at the hearing.

Final year J1’s face the axe

THIS will potentially be the last year final year students will be allowed to travel on J1 visas because of the impending amendments in the US State Department regulations.

Heightened security measures in the US since September 11th have forced the US State Department to propose changes to the J1 Summer Work & Travel Programme.

The most sweeping change is that potentially the summer of 2003 will be the last year that final year students will be allowed to travel on J1 visas. In addition, second time applicants or applicants will also be prevented from travelling.

SAYIT are now encouraging anyone who falls under these categories to avail of the chance to travel on a J1 visa this year as changes to the US regulations will more than likely take effect from next year.

If you will be a final year student for the academic year 2003/04 and wanted to travel on a J1 in 2004, then the opportunity may not be obtainable.

However, other proposed changes will affect all students hoping to travel to the US on a J1 visa.

All students may be obliged to submit details of a legitimate US job offer before receipt of their visa documentation for completion.

In this instance, the Self-Financing Declaration will no longer be offered.

The US Embassy may also require all J1 applicants to attend an interview at their Dublin office before the visa is issued. An additional processing fee of €35 may also be required.

SAYIT Travel has been offering a J1 visa service for over 5 years and currently hold over 1/3 of the J1 market.

The J1 USA visa programme has been a core part of college life for over 30 years. Between 8,000 and 10,000 third level students visit the US on summer working visas.

At the moment, the changes are still under review.

SAYIT is advising all students to check out the US jobs section of their websites or use any contacts you have in the US to help you secure a job.
**DITSU ELECTIONS**

### OVERALL PRESIDENT

**Name:** Hugh O'Reilly  
**Position:** Overall President  
**Age:** 22  
**Course:** Furniture Design  
**Previous Position:** Overall President, 2002/2003  

**If you succeed, what will your main aims be?**  
- To further improve the professionalism, communication, accountability and planning of the students' union.  
- To increase the level of training provided for student union officers and staff.  
- To work on the recommendations of the strategic review.  
- To put in place a strategic plan for the union.  
- To improve the representation services provided by the union.  
- Increase staff levels to support the work of the union officers.

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### OVERALL WELFARE OFFICER

**Name:** Eoin Kearney  
**Position:** Overall Welfare Officer  
**Age:** 21  
**Course:** Electrical and Control Systems  
**Previous Position:** Deputy President/Welfare Officer at Bolton Street, 2002/2003  

**If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?**  
I hope to bring a more open view to the union. I will promote it and get as many students involved. But my main aim is to help students to be more aware of health related issues, not only STD's etc but also issues such as depression and alcohol abuse.

### OVERALL EDUCATION OFFICER

**Name:** Marc Murphy  
**Position:** Overall Education Officer  
**Age:** 29  
**Campus:** Kevin St  

**If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?**  
A Charm; At a most basic level, I want to be there as a friend and ally to you in times of trouble. Whether you're having trouble on your course or if you need to launch an exam appeal, I will have to establish the position as well as doing it at the same time.

The job of Education Officer is brand new. If elected, I will have to establish the position as well as doing it at the same time.

It is a huge challenge but with seven years behind me in the college and nearly five years involvement in the SU, I believe I have the ability and maturity to take that challenge on. We are losing our friends in college, enrolment is falling and more and more students are dropping out every year and this is before you even start to take into account the fact that if the Government gets its way more of us will not be able to afford to come back next term.

Students are not being represented on course committees, class reps are not attending SRA's, and councillors are not going to council. This is a spiraling problem. If I get elected these are just some of the issues I want to work on.

### BOLTON STREET PRESIDENT

**Name:** Francis Fox  
**Position:** Site President, Bolton St  
**Age:** 20  
**Course:** Transport engineering/motor industry management  
**Previous Position:** Clubs & Societies Officer 2002/03 and Irish language officer 00/01  

### AUNGIER STREET PRESIDENT

**Name:** Elizabeth Morrissey  
**Position:** Site President, Aungier St  
**Age:** 21  
**Course:** Social Care Practice  
**Previous Position:** President of Rathmines/Mountjoy 02/03, Entertainment Officer Rathmines, Councillor, Disciplinary Committee, Social and Cultural Committee Rathmines, and Class Representative.  

**If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?**  
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### VICE PRESIDENT/CAMPAIGNS OFFICER

**Name:** Brian Whitney  
**Position:** Vice President/Campaigns Officer  
**Age:** 21  
**Course:** Social Care Practice  
**Previous Position:** President of Rathmines/Mountjoy 02/03, Entertainment Officer Rathmines, Councillor, Disciplinary Committee, Social and Cultural Committee Rathmines, and Class Representative.  

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### AUNGIER STREET PRESIDENT

**Name:** Joe Savage  
**Position:** Site President, Aungier St  
**Age:** 23  
**Course:** Retail and Services Management  
**Previous Position:** Deputy President/Welfare Officer Aungier St, 2002/2003  

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### AUNGIER STREET PRESIDENT

**Name:** Sharon Hughes  
**Position:** Overall Welfare Officer  
**Age:** 20  
**Course:** Auctioneering, valuation and estate agency  
**Previous Position:** Has sat on student council as a class representative.  

**If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?**  
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DITSU ELECTIONS

DISTU elections - not much contest

By Aiding Casey

CAMPAIGNING for DITSU Elections 2003 are underway. However, contention for positions is certainly not the highlight this year.

This year’s Overall President, Hugh O’Reilly is hoping to retain his position. It should be a straight run for Mr. O’Reilly as no one has decided to run against him.

Two of the new positions, Overall Deputy President/ Campaign Officer and Education Officer, each only have one candidate willing to take on the challenge.

Brian Whitney, President Mountjoy Square/Rathmines is hoping to stay in the union and step up to establish the new Overall Deputy President/Campaign Officer position. While long term union member, Marc Murphy of Kevin St will run for Education Officer.

With the new DITSU Structure, there are 3 Overall Welfare Officer positions up for grabs.

It should be an easy contest as there are only 3 candidates, Alan Keane, Sharon Hughes and Eoin Kearney.

It looks like a by-election is imminent in Mountjoy Square as no one has been nominated for Site President.

The only position with a nomination was David Naughton who is running for Public Relations Officer. Kevin St will probably be the highlight of this year’s elections, with a battle between Nicky Cunningham and James Carroll for Site President. There are also 6 nominations for part time positions. Aungier St Welfare Officer, Joe Savage is hoping to progress to Site President. However, he faces competition in the shape of Liz Morissey. Likewise in Bolton St, Welfare Officer, Naomi McNamee is nominated for Site president and she also faces competition from Francis Fox.

There is certainly no competition in Cathal Brugha St, as Eoin Cassidy runs alone for the position of Site President.

There was also a lack of nominations for part positions in Cathal Brugha St, with Hilary Ni Aogain the only person to run for a part time position.

The elections will take place on Wednesday March 12, with the count the following day in DIT Aungier St.

Every candidate had the right to publish a picture and candidate details. Forms were available from the returning officers on each site.

KEVIN STREET PRESIDENT

Name: Nicky Cunningham
Position: Site President, Kevin St.
Age: 21
Course: Applied Science
Previous Position: Clubs and Societies Officer

If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?

I want every student who walks through the gates of Kevin St to know that the SU is there for them. I want to improve communication with all the students. I feel that the students deserve to have a strong voice to put forward their concerns. I believe I can be that voice.

Name: James Carroll
Position: Site President, Kevin St
Course: Applied Science and Computing, Year 2
Age: 21

If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?

The reason I am running for this position is to promote the facilities available to students, which are provided by the SU. If elected, I will do my utmost to make it be known that the SU is not just there for students’ entertainment but also for their education and welfare needs.

CATHAL BRUGHA STREET PRESIDENT

Name: Eoin Cassidy
Position: Site President, Cathal Brugha St
Age: 21
Course: Professional Cookery, Year 1
Previous Position: PRO

If you succeed, what will bring to the job?

I will aim to encourage a greater student involvement in the day to day running of the SU. I will also increase awareness of the SU in the college.

Name: Michael Kelly
Position: Entertainments Officer
Course: First year Business Studies, Aungier St

If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?

To work with the President in arranging all the events and to continue the excellence already established by this year’s union.

Name: Liam Phelan
Position: Clubs and Societies Officer
Age: 20
Course: Business Studies

If you succeed, what will you bring to the job?

I wish to establish the union member, Marc Murphy as no one has decided to run against him.

I want to raise awareness of all student issues from racism, to LGB, disability to gender. I want to make the current failing campaign loud, demonstrative and make the union work for every student, something previous officers have failed to do. I want to stop non-active union member and non-active unions and make them work for all students across the board.

Name: John Galloway
Position: Public Relations Officer

Name: Karen Murphy
Position: Public Relations Officer

Name: Rachel McSherry
Position: Entertainment

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**DIT Independent**

**An bleak future- Students bear the brunt of economics**

Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey once said, "I did not come into politics to take the easy options" and he has certainly kept his word on this if nothing else.

It is safe to say that a comprehensive review of higher education funding is needed because as it stands many are still being conducted, which is not even mentioned in the same breath. The government's attempts to save money is indeed the only strategy they have on their agenda. This is not in the interest of education.

The Fianna Fáil-PD coalition, elected by the people for the people, seems to have one key fault. People are shouting from the rooftops the consequences of re-introducing fees, primarily a reduction in access to education, however it is falling on deaf ears.

Let's take a look at what the Loan Scheme will mean for students of the future:

Emma, originally from Clare, completed a four-year degree in economics and French at Trinity College Dublin last year. Her father is a dental nurse, while her dad is a bricklayer. Under Mr. Dempsey's Loan Scheme she borrowed EUR5,000 to complete her degree. Because of her parent's income, she did not receive a grant nor did she receive the 25pc fee discount on her fees.

Emma has been working for the last 6 months In the ISP earning EUR25,000. She is paying back four per cent of her salary each month to repay the loan. However, she is happy in her job so she does not resent having to pay back the loan.

Cork man, John completed a degree in philosophy last year. His father is a secondary school teacher and his mother works in a local Chinese restaurant. Under the Loan Scheme the Government advanced John EUR1,000 to pay for his fees. Now he is paying back five per cent of his income each month to repay the loan.

Despite this, John is unhappy as he remains under the burden of a huge debt, without the benefit of the work in his chosen field.

**DIT committed to music education**

DIT has been accused by parents for deliberately downgrading its Conservatory of Music and Drama because it does not fit in with a campaign for university status. The conservatory, formerly known as the College of Music, has been teaching music to generations of children from all over Ireland since 1890. Parents of the children now attending the college are charging DIT with elitism and egotism at its very worst.

DIT has rejected claims that its aims of achieving university status were contrary with the provision of junior tuition. The college has a very proud tradition in music provision. Recent President, Dr Peter Jordan, called music education to be fully integrated into the broader curriculum and asked that the Minister responsible bring together the major providers of performance tuition to develop a new approach to music education in Ireland, within a context and which clearly identifies where further development needed to be focused.

DIT is the largest provider of tuition in the visual, performing and media arts in Ireland. It boasts of its involvement in the arts, it even attempts to look good at the state. John is unhappy as he remains under the burden of a huge debt, without the benefit of the work in his chosen field.

**In the age of accountability, student's interests have been left behind**

Two obvious areas in the DIT where students have little or no real impact are: Student Finance and Academic Quality Assurance.

Student views & opinions can be raised through our elected Student Union representatives, or by the Finance Committee except on Finance.

In light of further 3rd Level FF cutbacks, DIT will have less of a budget to spend or squander. As plans for the buildings we use are in dire need of work, it would not allow for it. Students using university status as an excuse to blame DIT is not a valid argument.

It is the policy of the DIT Independent to correct any inaccuracies as soon as they occur. An corrections or clarifications will be printed in the next edition of the newspaper. It is also the policy of the DIT Independent to offer the right of reply to any person who feels aggrieved by comment or opinion contained within. Please forward any such comments in writing to the Editor.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Students' Union.

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**Jordan calls for review of extended pub opening hours**

In response to a decision to extend pub opening hours, USI President Colm Jordan has called on the Government to rethink their strategy.

Speaking at a forum on “Alcohol in Irish Society” in Dublin last week, Colm Jordan said this was just one of a number of strategies which should be looked at in the battle of curbing alcohol consumption. He called on the Government to consider the issue without delay taking licenses from publicans who sell alcohol to under-aged people under the age of 18.

Jordan referred to a report by a Government task force, published last week. The report attributed increased consumption of alcohol to rising wealth, increased availability and a failure to considerably increase taxes on alcohol.

While the Government has increased the convenience of drinking by extending pub hours, it had failed to adequately increase taxes on alcohol.

However, the Government has instead decided to move towards banning alcohol advertising, which the task force had discovered would have a lesser effect on curbing drinking habits.

The chief executive of the Vintners’ Federation of Ireland, Mr. Tadgh O’Sullivan, said it was naive to imply that increased consumption was linked to extended opening hours. He explained that following extended opening hours in 2000, there was no increase in beer and wine consumption in 2001 and a decline in 2002.

However, he accepted that the drinks industry has its faults such as advertising, happy hours and cheap promotions, which he said only serve to disguise the industry.

Although the Minister for Health does not work, said that some progress had been made in tackling the problem of increased alcohol consumption, he admitted much remained unresolved.

**Happy hours and cheap promotions are attracting students to drink as much as they can afford to**

In the age of accountability, student’s interests have been left behind.

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**letters to the Editor**

Dear Madam,

I have never been so glad to be in my final year as I was at the weekend when the government announced the return of college fees.

The government, instead of working to increase the numbers excluded from our education system should be working towards inclusion. While fees will mean that some students will not be able to attend third level education, too many students who can’t afford to attend even with free fees. There are no moves to extend third level education to all regardless of social background.

A young and educated work force has affected industry in Ireland. The diminishing of well-trained and educated workers can only have a negative impact on outside investment.

The minister’s plan for a loan-based system, where by students pay back their college fees when they earn over a certain amount of money will make college education more feasible than a free based system but it still does not extend education to those who are marginalised by the present system.

It is easy to get caught up in the fight- the-fees campaign but other issues are being smothered in the fight.

Education should be a right, not a privilege. What we need is an overhaul of the entire financial structure and in particular, the grant. This has become a cliché by now but it is still true. The grant alone is not enough for a student to survive. The cut off point should be increased. The current method of assessment does not work. Clever students who really need it are being smothered in the fight.

Good lecturers should be cherished and rewarded. Lecturers of a medium standard should be given the means and training to improve their skills. Poor lecturers should either be given a big hand up or a quick kick out.

As Staff / Student Course Meetings, if we have legitimate concerns, want a solution and not a confrontation. It is my experience that lecturers band together under the guise of fairness and disgust, and still isn’t finished.

Happy hours and cheap promotions are attracting students to drink as much as they can afford to.
SOUTH AMERICA & AFRICA EVENING

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Dempsey commends DIT's commitment to transport industry

THE Minister for Education and Science has praised DIT's commitment to the transport industry through the provision of a new degree programme.

Minister Noel Dempsey was the guest speaker at the recent launch of DIT's Honours Degree in Transport Technology, which was attended by representatives of the transport industry.

DIT's transport technology degree is the first of its kind in Ireland solely dedicated to the transport industry.

The first students, who enrolled in 1999, will now become the first graduates to bring their skills and knowledge to the employment market when they complete their studies at the end of the college year.

The programme, designed to meet needs of the transport and logistics industry, has been warmly welcomed by those in the field.

Speaking at the breakfast launch, Minister Dempsey said, "Our modern dynamic economy demands easy access to markets, efficient and effective movement of goods and safe and convenient travel for people".

Addressing the future of the transport industry, he added, "Our legacy to future generations must be a modern state of the art road and rail transport system."

DIT President, Dr Brendan Goldsmith reiterated DIT's commitment to industry. He said, "The Transport Technology programme is truly inter-disciplinary and embraces the fundamental principles and applications of technology, business and the management sciences in order to provide a solid foundation for the management of transport systems."

Wishing the students well in the completion of their degree, Dr Goldsmith thanked them for playing such an important part in taking part in the new programme.

Student loan scheme to replace fees

By Darragh Clifford

AN Taoiseach Bertie Ahern has entered the debate on third-level fees for the first time by saying that "pouring more money" into education is not the solution.

Speaking at O'gra Fianna Fáil in Portlaoise on March 1st, Mr Ahern stated: "We need to step up activity. I do not believe this can be achieved through simply pouring more money into the same approaches. Support has to be targeted at those most in need, and it has to be at a level which really supports them in college."

His comments came the same weekend that Minister for Education Mr Noel Dempsey indicated that a new student loan scheme will be put in place instead of directly re-introducing fees.

Students can now be sure that the current system of free third-level education will be finished come next September.

Under the new system, students will be loaned the cost of their college fees. Once students graduate and are in full-time employment, they will have to repay the loan.

This new system is modelled on a current scheme in Australia, where students pay between 3% and 6% of their annual income, depending on how much they earn.

So students will be loaned the cost of their college fees. Not all courses are equal. Some courses do not cost as much as others. For example, maths, science and computer courses cost €3,000 while degrees like law and medicine courses cost €4,000.

This means that students hit by fees of this nature could end up with a bill of at least €9,000 for the most basic degree and as much as €30,000 for a medical degree.

A review of third-level funding commissioned by Mr Dempsey is now not expected before the end of the month.

But with Mr Ahern finally coming out in support of Mr Dempsey, it appears that the review will include some serious changes to the current system.

This latest twist in the ongoing saga of third-level fees comes only three weeks after the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) had indicated that third-level fees would not be in place by next September.

Mr Dempsey's stance on fees has the support of all Fianna Fáil cabinet members, including Minister for Finance Mr Charlie McCreevy, who has publicly described the abolition of third-level fees as one of the most socially regressive measures ever taken.

However, an Tánaiste Mary Harney has repeatedly stated that the Progressive Democrats do not favour the re-introduction of fees.

Children's course for the chop

By Aedín Donnelly

DIT's ongoing budgetary crisis threatens yet more students this week, but this time it is the youngest amongst us who will have to face the music.

"The Children's Conservatory of Music and Drama, the former College of Music, has been instructing children since 1890. Now it plans to increase fees, reduce numbers and will re-admit students for their places every year.

Some classes for younger students will even be discontinued.

Fees could jump 25pc for part-time students in comparison to just 10 per cent for others in the college.

Outraged parents who have formed a 'Parents for Music' lobby group described the situation as a 'national crisis'.

Spokeswoman Ms Caroline Elbay has called on the Minister for Education, Mr Dempsey to turn down DIT's budget for the conservatory unless it is amended.

And parents have accused DIT of deliberately downgrading the Conservatory because it does not fit in with a campaign for university status.

Press Officers for the institute claim that this is "absolutely not the case".

Ms Imelda Slattery went on to reiterate that cuts are proposed across all faculties. She said the college had a "very proud tradition" in music provision and had no wish to end up at that.

But parents say that the body set up in the 1890s to best elitism in music and to provide "musical instruction at moderate charges" has forgotten it's mission in the race to achieve university status.

"We have no doubt that these cutbacks are part of DIT's campaign to get university status.

"What university has young children running around? It's elitism and egotism at its very worst," said Ms Elbay of Parents for Music.

The City of Dublin VEC is awaiting amendments to DIT's proposed budget for 2003-2004 before granting approval for funding.

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Anger over decision to abolish student summer scheme

In reaction to the Government's decision to remove the Student Summer Jobs Scheme, USI has asked for a rethink in light of its abolition.

The scheme allowed students to earn up to EUR 700 over the summer months by working on local community projects. USI has said that the decision to abolish the scheme will act as a further hindrance to increasing the number of third-level students going to college.

USI has denounced the decision as both anti-student and anti-community. Throughout its existence, the scheme has been heavily criticised for paying below the minimum wage. Local sporting and cultural organisations and special needs and senior citizens projects were assisted by the scheme, and many of these worthy projects will now be abandoned this summer.

With an increased competitiveness in the workplace, employers are now unwilling to employ students on short-term contracts. USI believe that this latest development will force many students to defer or drop out of college altogether. This is another setback from students who have been the brunt of several cutbacks this year.

The Government third level strategy will deter many families from allowing their children to further their education.

News

Back to Education allowance to be downsized

The decision by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to discontinue summer payments of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) has come under strong criticism from both the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU).

BTEA is a scheme designed to encourage and facilitate social welfare recipients to improve their skills and qualifications and their prospects of returning to the active workforce. The back to education allowance is available to those in receipt of social welfare payments and is paid at a rate of 30% above the minimum wage. It is paid every two weeks and is withdrawn when the recipient starts employment.

Back to Education allowance to be downsized

According to figures released by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency, nearly half (9,000) of all births outside of marriage in 2001 are unplanned student pregnancies. Of these, 60pc of students finding it difficult to talk about contraception when they are in a relationship.

In an effort to make students more aware of their options when facing an unplanned pregnancy, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency has launched a new campaign.

The Positive Options Campaign offers a comprehensive list of help services for females worried about being pregnant. It is being run on each college campus in conjunction with the USI.

The help services can be accessed by logging on to www.positiveoptions.ie, by leaflet or by text message. The services provided include pregnancy testing, access to free pregnancy counseling on parenting, adoption and abortion, information on social welfare and other rights and entitlements, accessing medical help and information, contacts for agencies providing post-abortion counseling and agencies providing medical check-ups after an abortion.

Chairperson of the Crisis Pregnancy Agency, Maureen Woods, is in full support of the campaign. She said, "There is a lot of ignorance and stigma in society around the issue of crisis pregnancy. This campaign aims to change the current feelings of many young women in Irish society who are made to feel ashamed and very isolated. I feel that raising awareness of the support network that exists out there for women is of paramount importance".

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was set up by the Government to devise and outline a plan to tackle the crisis of pregnancy in Ireland.

Unplanned student pregnancies increasing

In an effort to make students more aware of their options when facing an unplanned pregnancy, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency has launched a new campaign.

The Positive Options Campaign offers a comprehensive list of help services for females worried about being pregnant.

WHERE TO GET HELP

www.positiveoptions.ie

The Positive Options Campaign offers a comprehensive list of help services for females worried about being pregnant.

Health Minister slammed over anti-suicide campaign

Minister for Health, Mr Michael Martin, has been criticised by USI for failing to support the union's anti-suicide prevention campaign on the grounds that "it doesn't suit his Minister".

Recent research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has found that young Irish people were more likely to commit suicide than other Europeans. The tragic deaths of two Cork students have amplified the need for awareness of the campaign.

Speaking at the opening of the USI Emotional Health Awareness campaign, President, Colm Jordan, said, "We are working on this campaign with other members of the emotional health community, such as the Samaritans and Aware. We hope, with the support of the USI, that this awareness campaign on suicide prevention will help young people in Ireland to take their own lives. This compares to an average of 5.6 in other OECD countries. USI has launched a poster campaign, in conjunction with Aware and the Samaritans, to heighten awareness. The poster encourages students to ask for help for emotional problems. Jordan has called on the Government to initiate its own campaign of depression awareness.
Sex and the Big Smoke

Furry handcuffs, vibrators, sexy lingerie and orgasm. You know what I’m talking about ... it’s the Ann Summers experience. Ciara Moran took on the challenge

I had the pleasure of attending an Ann Summers party not too long ago and I must say it was quite a surreal experience. All too quickly my friend’s family room turned into a place of utter disrepute and I think it liked it! Wine flowed, lingerie was passed around if in fits of passion. My best friend’s mother, then we went on to be for wine. If we were having an name made for the of bingo. The room was getting loud. There were twenty of us gals waiting to take a look at the goods, mainly in our early twenties with a few more mature ladies taking part in the night’s costly festivities.

Our hostess for the evening, an incredibly bubbly girl but not too bubbly as to make you want to throttle her, gently started off the evening as the place filled. The room was getting excited. All of a sudden stickers were passed around with our new names for the evening upon them, cue girlish giggles and a few more raised glasses searching for wine. I was Titanic Tits (if only!). Then we went on to a game of bingo. We went about creating our bingo cards thinking what innocent fun. Then our hostess explained that if we got a number we had to scream out as if we were having an orgasm (chance would be a fine thing, but you know use your imagination). She then proceeded to go round the room and listen to what our organs sounds would be.

At this point I had not enough wine and one of the mature ladies in the room was my best friend’s mother, who I still get embarrassed to be drunk in front of, although I’ve had a lot of practice, let alone scream out as if in fits of passion. One pathetic groan later and the game began.

Oddly enough though, my competitive streak surpassed my more Catholic guilt. Embarrassment and orga

There were about 20 of us waiting to take a look at the goods, mainly in our early twenties with a few more mature ladies taking part in the night’s costly festivities.

The lingerie, although I’ve had a lot of imagination). Who wouldn’t want a glimpse of their hostess for the evening? Our hostess didn’t have to say an ounce of trepidation spread across their face as they contemplated the evening ahead.

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lively enough, and when I say lively of course I mean drunk, to bring on the hard sell.

Magazines were passed around the room, which was now thoroughly trilliated, and sample pieces of some of the lingerie also floated across the room.

The lingerie, which is definitely not cheap in price, whatever about looking, ranged from beautiful, intricate purple and pink lacy affairs to see-through black, slutty, split down the middle for easy access tasteless affairs. The tasteless affairs won by a mile. It was surprising how many women were looking for easy access! As the lingerie sales halted, we moved on to vibrators and more adventurous bedroom.

Material. The room was watered down with enthusiasm at this stage.

Our hostess didn’t have to say as many samples to pass around in this regard so we all giggled and reddened (but I’m not sure if that was from embarrassment or rather sheer drunkenness), as we flicked though the pages and saw a multitude of vibrators, liquid latex, handcuffs, a loving couple enjoying the wonder that is bondage and the rest.

Funny pink handcuffs hopped across our knees as we looked at the goods, mainly in our early twenties with a few more mature ladies taking part in the night’s costly festivities.

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Just another vote to be wasted?

By Barry J Whyte

Twenty-four years ago the Seventh Amendment of the Constitution was passed. It provided for the extension of Seanad voting rights to all institutes of higher education. It has never been implemented.

Currently only the old guard of Irish universities can vote in Seanad elections. Only graduates of Trinity College and the colleges of the NUI can decide to enter the upper house of the Oireachtas.

Dr Richard Thorn, Sligo IT, wants this to change. He wants all graduates of Institutes of Technology to be included in the Seanad elections.

At the moment it works like this: there are six `university seats' in the Seanad, which are divided between Trinity and the NUI. Those six seats are divided between the two equally. It seems an unfair system.

The Minister needs to focus on patterns of drinking and problems of excess drinking rather than trying to prevent young people from entering pubs, writes Aisling Casey.

Political apathy is riding high and no one seems to want to get out there and place their vote in the box (or press the button beside the appropriate candidate). So, if vast numbers of graduates can't be bothered getting out and voting for who will run their lives for the following four years, why would they even want the right to vote for who gets in and performs the sterling work the Seanad does? rubber stamping legislation? Still, while many would probably treat the Seanad vote in the same way they treat the vote every other plebiscite, it is undemocratic not to give them the opportunity.

The right to vote does not just mean the right to vote, it also means the right not to vote. Not giving graduates of all the other third level institutes a chance, whether they take it or not, to vote in the Seanad elections is undemocratic, especially when the Seventh Amendment states that they have the right.

This leads to the wider question of whether it is unconstitutional to deny the right to vote to Seanad elections to the rest of the population? We look back on the not-so-distant past when only the elite had a vote in parliamentary elections as being a backward, undemocratic time, but we don't notice that the same system operates in Seanad elections and no one bats an eyelid.

Why should the right to vote on any election be given to only one sector of society? Not only should the right to vote in Seanad elections be given to graduates of all third level institutions, but to everyone when they turn eighteen.

It won't, as Dr Thorn believes, re-ignite the population's love of politics but at least it will be fair.

No troublemakers allowed

The Minister needs to focus on patterns of drinking and problems of excess drinking rather than trying to prevent young people from entering pubs, writes Aisling Casey.

It seems the Minister may have an underlying reason for his new plans.

The Minister arrives.

The opening hours would be set between 11 pm and 2 pm. However, many have warned that such a move would further fuel alcohol-related violence.

The Government believes that they are preparing to address what has become a chronic alcohol problem in our society. After years of neglect, this is the Government's answer to an ever-growing social problem. But there is nothing to worry about just yet. In typical fashion the Dail will be debating the bill for at least another 6 months.
What dreams may come?

By Rachel Healy.

As the controversy of Roy Keane's departure from international football still lingers and while the majority of Ireland's media outlets eagerly await the Irish Open held in Dublin this summer, people tend to forget that the largest sporting event that has ever to be staged in Ireland is coming this June.

The Special Olympics, staged in Ireland this summer, will be the biggest international sports event this year. It will be the first time since its origin in 1968 that the Special Olympics will be hosted outside the United States.

While the sporting world has been tarnished by allegations of drug abuse, corruption, commercialism and greed, the Special Olympics continues to stay purely ideal, which is mirrored by the athlete's oath, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt".

Through their involvement, athletes enhance their social and adaptive skills, build positive self-esteem, demonstrate courage and experience joy.

Originally a summer camp, the Special Olympics were initially a dream of Eunice Shriver Kennedy and became a reality in 1968. Born into the famous Kennedy clan, Eunice's sister Rosemary was born with a mild learning disability. Eunice remained very close to her sister and was aware of her capabilities which resulted in a summer camp for those with special needs in 1963, which has now become an international sporting event involving thousands of athletes.

While Special Olympic volunteers and many host families make the final preparations to welcome the 7,000 athletes and their families, it allows many Irish people the opportunity to start afresh, to realise the idiocy of categorising people in a specific group for looking different to the accepted norm and the prodigious thoughtlessness of overlooking people with learning disabilities.

Although there are fears that in the event of war with Iraq, athletes from the United States and some parts of the Middle East would not travel, the World Games are still scheduled to take place.

With over 160 countries competing, comprising of 7,000 athletes, along with 30,000 volunteers, 3,000 coaches and officials, a further 28,000 people are expected as family members and supporters.

The Games will be located in the greater Dublin area, however the entire island of Ireland will play a vital role in the organisation of the games.

A major part of the World Games is the Host Town Programme. The host towns will welcome athletes and coaches four days prior to the Games, from the 16th June to the 20th June.

To date, about 650 homes have been visited, considered and found appropriate for the task of hosting a family. The host town phase represents a wider, community level of the Games.

Over 170 communities will welcome delegations world-wide with open arms and give them the opportunity to delight in the pleasures of Irish culture prior to the Games.

From the host towns they will move to the Dublin region for the Games. The Opening Ceremony takes place on 21st June in Croke Park, where the "Flame of Hope" will arrive for the ceremony to mark the final stage in a journey begun in Greece three weeks earlier.

The Special Olympic World Games gives the athletes the opportunity to show the world their strengths and talent, to show those who are sceptical that people with learning disabilities can achieve anything when given encouragement and the opportunity to shine.

The Special Olympic movement began in Ireland in 1978. There are now an estimated 12,000 athletes participating in the programme in Ireland alone.

The athletes compete in Ireland in local, regional, national and international level. Like all competitive sporting events, the competitors experience success and failure as only a lucky few make it to the Olympics.

The Special Olympics sporting body have a set of regulations similar to other sports organisations, which the athletes must abide by, if they fail to do so, they are disqualified.

The Special Olympics is similar to other athletic sporting events where participants are judged on their performance times, however their performance is rated differently.

Athletes are divided into levels based on gender, age and fitness levels. In this manner the Special Olympics allows athletes to be judged with their contemporaries rather than those at an elite level.

Although Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are awarded like most competitive sports to those who come in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, those who achieve fourth through to eight place are awarded a ribbon to acknowledge their achievement, reflecting the principles of the Special Olympics.

In terms of costs the World Games needs €34 million and a further €23 million in-kind products and services to be staged. Most of this has been raised through sponsorship. Now the countdown starts as athletes, coaches, families, volunteers and the public eagerly await the World Games.

The games will not only be breaking down barriers and creating awareness, but it will also be a huge investment for the tourism and retail industry. Indeed it looks certain that we will all benefit directly or indirectly from the 2003 Special Olympic World Games and so people should adopt the World games motto and "Share the Feeling".

The Special Olympics World Games Ireland 2003
Iraq: The French Connection

Donald Griffin looks at the friendly French-Iraqi relationship, which dates back to the 1970's and Batista in Cuba, Saddam was a man in a volatile region with whom business could be done. And business was, of course, the oil business.

The US has long been the entry of the French in the Middle East. A prickly but profitable relationship has long existed between Saudi Arabia, most of the Emirate states (UAE, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait) and the US. When Chirac visited Saddam, he went to establish a similar relationship, ie you sell us your oil and we'll allow you to do unto your people whatever you wish.

In 1976, as part of an official State visit, Chirac, then the Prime Minister, visited a young Saddam Hussein who had almost consolidated all power in Iraq. Like most Western leaders, Chirac was impressed with this moustachioed figure, lured out in full military regalia. Like Milosevic in Yugoslavia, Pinochet in Chile.

Meanwhile, Jacques Chirac and the French government, desperate to avoid a war, are stretching diplomacy to its very limit. The anti-war camp, ie the majority of the world's population, finally has a leader in Chirac and his government. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the French Prime Minister, rallied the February 15 protesters with an anti-war cry of 'France is giving hope to the world, France is giving peace a chance!'

This much is certainly true but why has France suddenly sprung to the fore of the anti-war lobby? A glance through history reveals a murky agenda revolving around that magic word: oil.

In 1991, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait and the Gulf War began. French troops took part in the war but the relationship between the two states remained. As soon as the war ended, the French government set about establishing itself as the main powerbroker in Iraq.

The post-war UN sanctions were killing thousands of Iraqis and the French lobbied to establish an 'oil for food' trade programme. The relationship between the two was strengthened as the French government had almost unlimited access to Iraqi oil-fields while Peugeot became... of the main automotive companies in the region. In 1995, the French Embassy was rebuilt in Baghdad.

Around this time, Saddam decided a special reward was in order. The French state-owned oil company, TotalElfFina, was granted exclusive rights to two Iraqi oil-fields. Majnoon, on the Iranian border, is worth an estimated 10 billion barrels of oil while Bin Umar can produce approximately 440,000 barrels a day.

This brings us to the present day. Chirac has what he envisioned all those years ago: a powerful trading relationship with a country second only to Saudi Arabia in terms of oil reserves.

George W Bush is absolutely sick of having to rely on the belligerent Saudis for oil. Those Iraqi oil-fields would reduce this reliance and would be a step towards reversing that relationship altogether. In essence, control of the Iraqi oil-fields would make the US twice the power it is now. To the millions of people who marched on February 15 (and to most of those who didn't), that is a scary thought. To Bush, it's simple business.

Any student of relatively recent military history knows that while US forces are useless at guerrilla warfare, they do not lose the air strike-based variety. If this was gone ahead, the US will win. And Chirac knows what approach a US-friendly Iraqi government will take to promises made by Saddam to a French government which supported his tyranny for over twenty years: 'sorry Jacques, all bets are off'. This is why the Chirac administration is throwing all of its diplomatic weight around to prevent this war from taking place.

At this stage, the anti-war camp will take as their leader anyone who is willing to exert all influence to stop military action but one can only worry that the future of Iraq is a depressing one. If Bush emerges the victor and invades without the UN, Iraq will be another American ally with little concern for democracy or human life. If Chirac's diplomacy wins the day and war is prevented, history seems to dictate that France will continue to trade with, and prop up, a murderous despot.
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FASHION

Victims off the rails

By Clara O Donovan

'Off the Rails live' is the brainchild of Catherine Condell the shows producer and stylist. Her aim was to capture trends from the world's catwalks and re-create them with merchandise from the cream of the Irish fashion industry.

Combine this with top Irish models, presenters, a talented team of make-up artists, and technology crew along with a decently priced ticket and you have yourself an event to remember. The RDS was the chosen venue and proved excellent in terms of commuting, size and facilities.

Teetering to the fashion show in our stilettos, Andrea and I arrived fashionably late. Thankfully, the fashion show had not commenced. Nesting in the seat, placed favourably beside the catwalk, I observed the style conscious audience. I felt subtle in my lace top when compared to the girls fashionably late.

Military chic was undoubtedly the order of the day. Fashion victims one might think, but these women could pull off the military look with ease, without taking the look to extremes. Like Christina Aquinda in the "Dirty" video

Finally, after a thirty minute wait, music began to pound from the speakers, and in cohesion with the music, the two saucy presenters Caroline Morahan and Pamela Flood strutted their stuff down the catwalk.

Both women were stylishly dressed; Caroline in an Indian inspired red top and tight jeans and Pamela in a sophisticated and military look. The fashion show had already begun.

From a cinema screen came clips from the musical "Chicago." This theme was sure to be a hit amongst the audience. I observed the style conscious audience. I felt subtle in my lace top when compared to the girls fashionably late.

Each outfit had binding and fringing, recreating the dazzle and allure of the 20's unequively. Fishnets, sexy suspenders, and feisty lingerie further eroticised the outfits.

The male models sauntered down the ramp in dapper pin-striped suits and held an air of arrogance, as they absorbed the wolf whistles from the female audience. The roaring twenties was instantly reiterated. The clothes were mainly from Debenhams with jewellery by Carriona Hanly and suits by Louis Copeland.

Next, the audience was transported to the orient to a land of beautiful design and soothing music.

A visually enchanting journey of fine textured coats, kimono shapes and blossoms prints entrapped us. Traditional headdresses, delicate Chinese slippers, and flashes of bright colours adorned the models that carried off the outfits with their angular features. The obi belts by Rocco were my favourite.

However, the most dominant theme was "Army Dreamers" and boasted an array of trendy mini skirts, tailored jackets, combat, and mesh tops.

This look reflected the audiences' style and the impending war. Several of the garments were from Julien designs and footwear was by Faith at Top Shop.

Other themes were "The Sopranos" which was a melange of sharp tailoring and boudoir chic. Killer heels and an assortment of accessories made this quite a lucrative look.

It's a style for men with gangster attitude and women with Bling Bling! There were also collections for kids, sports enthusiasm, and mothers to be. Bridal wear by Vera Wang was the final showcase and how dramatic it was.

Simplistic swan like dresses and kilts conjured up images of medieval Scotland.

The music as well as the entrances were powerful and created a mystical atmosphere.

The stands were a disappointment after such an array of fabulous clothes.

The only impressive stall was Peter Marks because they had interesting demonstrations. It was more fulfilling, to sit, and watch the fashion pack mingle with the crowd of style conscious people.

"Off the Rails live" was an enjoyable event but not an exceptional one.

DUBLIN BAND LEAD NME REVOLUTION

The Datsun's, The Thrills & The Beatings

The Ambassador

By Claire Mc Keown

Tonight the NME took over the Ambassador to showcase the darlings of their self styled "New Rock Revolution" scene.

The cynical amongst you may only see this hype as a way to shift more magazines but there is no denying the current music scene is very exciting and diverse, at least more so than in recent years during which we've had to endure the draught of Oasis, Stereophonics, Travis et al.

First on stage tonight were London based band The Beatings. I've heard a lot about this band, and they didn't disappoint.

They were exciting, energetic and seemed to have a very Jarvis Cocker-esque guitarist who, by the look of him, was definitely suited for e's and whizz.

I would definitely recommend looking out for this four-piece in the future.

Next up were Dublincere The Thrills. Looking at the bill initially, I wasn't sure how such a mellow band would fare stuck between 2 groups of punky/AC/DC speed-breaks, but I was pleasantly surprised.

Their blend of countryish Neil Young, Beach Boys and jangley Smiths-style guitars with the vocal style of Mercury Rev or Granddaddy really touched the crowd. Recent single 'Santa Cruz, (You're Not That Far)' was stunning, and it was obvious why everyone from Morrissey to Hotpress to NME are applauding them.

They had a lot of hope to live up to but it didn't seem to faze them and they definitely won a few more fans on the night.

Headliners The Datsun's, however, I was not so sure about. I liked their recent single 'In Love' but it wasn't so taken in by the album that just seemed too immersed in 70's AC/DCtron (see song "MF From Hell"'). But I was looking forward to seeing them live probably because of the way they have been hyped up in the press. Unlike The Thrills, however, they didn't quite live up to all the praise for me.

Although there is no denying that lead singer Dolfo de Datsum is sex on legs of elastic, or that they really go for it live, a lot of the rock posing was a bit over the top for me, and a little embarrassing. (Phil, the guitarist in the white trousers, constant back bending was verging on a Spinal Tap piss take).

They wanted to be AC/DC a little bit too much for my liking.

In saying that though, they did entertain me, if not impress me, and if cheap hard rock thrills and rock posturing is what you're after, The Datsun's are the band for you.

At last year's NME bash, the Coral and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club were bottom and second from bottom on the bill, respectively.

Considering that they are the one's who have hit the big time out of the last bunch, perhaps the same fame awaits The Thrills, who were definitely my surprise favourites. You never know, it could be a case of number one; you're not that far ...
The Good Thief: looks and feels similar to Ronin, yet it lacks the pace provided by the unique car chase

By Eoin Murphy

Neil Jordan has brought us many classic genre movies that range from Interview with a Vampire to Michael Collins. Now he sets his mind to another classic genre piece, the caper movie.

It looks and feels similar to Ronin, yet it lacks the pace provided by the unique car chase. It is slick yet lacks consistency as we follow the antics of a luckless anti-social criminal/junkie striving for a slice of life. Charismatic as always, Nick Nolte leads an ensemble cosmopolitan cast.

In Neil Jordan's enjoyable but uneven heist movie. Looking grittier than a pack of mountain bears. Nolte plays Bob, an ageing junkie and compulsive gambler.

It seems though that these days we need an abundance of character flaws before we are satisfied.

The days when autism was enough to provoke an inspired performance are clearly in the past.

It appears that Nolte is not only a bad seed but a compulsive gambler.

Of course a life like that can only spell gloom and doom for this character and as the allure of losing money and getting high fades from his vision, Nolte decides to go for one big score to bolster his lifestyle.

Since this is a Neil Jordan flick it is clear that Bob won't go for one big score off the liquor store or even the local branch.

He instinctively picks out an exclusive Monte Carlo casino and gets a crew together, formulating a plan to relieve the establishments of a series of priceless paintings.

However, the law, in the shape of his old nemesis Roger (Karyo) aren't far behind, while Bob's paternal relationship with an East European hooker could also prove problematic.

On the surface, The Good Thief may appear to be a simple heist thriller, a sort of art house Ocean's 11, but it becomes clear that Jordan is more interested in exploring his characters, and creating a gorgeous atmosphere than rapidly pursuing the narrative (the film is based on John-Pierre Melville's Bob le Flambeur).

Jordan himself conceals that it is far more difficult for a director to put together a film that is based flatly from fiction but that is more of a no brainer heist movie.

In this film it is clear that he tried to go above this but found it too high a mountain to climb.

The movie, at times, lingers in eccentric trying desperately to be something it's not.

As it stands it is better than a lot of the other movies that have graced the heist genre bracket (The Score springing to mind), it just not revolutionary.

Unfortunately the movie unusually seems to be all foreplay with no climax. Jordan gets too hung up with the process of the robbery that the event itself comes across as rushed and leaves the audience a little dissatisfied.

In truth it is a good film with Nolte stealing the show but just isn't deep as it tries to be.

Director: Neil Jordan
Starring: Nick Nolte, Tchéky Karyo, Said Taghmaoui, Gerard Darmon, Emir Kusturica, Marc Lavoine
Details: UK / Fra / Ire / 108 minuets / (15PG).

The Ring

By Darragh Clifford

Decent horror movies are a rare thing. Over the past decade, there have been some memorable horror moments with movies such as The Sixth Sense and The Blair Witch Project. What has been the disadvantage of these films, however, is that the media and so audiences are satisfied with the funs of huge Hollywood blockbusters. The Ring is based on a 1998 Japanese movie called Ringu, which was based on a novel of the same name by Japanese author Koji Suzuki.

Japanese movie called Ringu, Ring is based on a 1998 Japanese movie called Ringu and has become something of a cult classic among dedicated foreign film enthusiasts in the English-speaking world.

At first glance, the plot seems farcical. Watch an abstract arty video, get a phone call to say you have seven days to live, and then die seven days later. Not even Ken Russell could conjure up such a plot. But surprisingly, it works, mainly down to director Gore Verbinski (Mouse Hunt, The Mexican), and actress Naomi Watts (Mulholland Drive). But for such an unconventional horror film, The Ring starts like any other horror flick of the nineties: in a suburban house with two attractive high school girls. But it becomes apparent quite quickly that The Ring is very much not a Wes Craven movie as the manner of the first victim's death is very disturbing.

The movie centres on Seattle journalist Rachel, played superbly by Watts. When her niece dies mysteriously after watching a video, the inquisitive Rachel decides to investigate. What she finds is that her niece had watched the videotape with three others in a mountain lodge, and to her horror, the remaining three had died at the exact same time as her niece in various circumstances.

To make matters worse, Rachel's ten-year-old son Aidan (David Dorfman) starts behaving in a strange manner. When Rachel herself watches the video and gets that phone call, she knows she has seven days to solve the mystery before she kicks it. Unfortunately for Rachel, her son Aidan and her ex­boyfriend Noah (Martin Henderson) also see the tape.

As Rachel's seven days progress, she becomes more and more desperate in her effort to exercise whatever spell the tape has unleashed.

This may all seem a bit too off-the-wall, but director Verbinski has enough tricks up his sleeve to leave viewers on the edge of their seats. The audience gets to see the tape in full (which only lasts two minutes) and it is fair to say that some of the footage contained on it is quite disturbing.

As the movie progresses, different clues that are contained within the tape become apparent to both Rachel and the audience. And in true horror flick fashion, what you think to be the end of the movie is not quite the end. The final 15 minutes are truly terrifying, and even when the credits start rolling, you will leave the movie theatre feeling uneasy. Unless of course, you wait until it is out on video.
**Keep on Your Mean Side**

Ken McHugh has a wealth of production experience behind him

By Sarah Graham

God help the newly formed Lamp Recordings if this "Moonlight EP" is their maiden release. I'd rather chop my ears off and flush them down the toilet than listen to 'Stanley Super 800' again. The title track 'Moonlight' is bad. Stan sings the same note over and over to a type of electro-acoustic beat, guaranteed to irritate even the most open-minded of listeners. The song is a fabulously journey on the back of some girl's bike from darkness to sunrise. It reminded me of 'My Lovely Horse' by Ted and its catchy 'Supergrass' versus 'The Monkees' melange. It just makes no sense at all. Most of this is just, well, execrable.

**Not So Super Stan**

By Donal Griffin

The Kills can certainly make a racket, considering there are only two people in the band. Hotel (guitarist, American, male) and VV (banger, English, female) met in London, left, formed the Kills in America and returned to record this.

Keep On Your Mean Side, the Kills' debut album, is certainly one from left field. Which is not to say it's not very good. The opener, 'Superstitious', starts with a stuttering drum-machine. Just as one is expecting a pounding riff the song takes the song in the completely opposite direction. 'Cat Claw' and 'Pull A U' are slightly more conventional but the sparse sound of just a guitar, bass, a drum-beat and making it work is still relatively unchartered territory in rock music. The White Stripes have proved its worth and now the Kills are doing the same. Things get slow and psychedelic on 'Kissy Kissy' and 'Monkey 23'. There is a definitely a strong taste of the Velvet Underground and My Bloody Valentine in the Kills' sound, i.e. why use five chords when one will do, over and over again? The slower songs give room to the vocals and VV has a great female rock voice - powerful, intimidating and sassy.

The album even finds some room for twisted country music on 'War' and 'Gypsy Doctor'. However, Keep On Your Mean Side isn't without its duff moments. Any Velvet-style jam needs an edge to keep it interesting. Some songs just don't have this and begin to grate after a few listen. But this can be forgiven. Anyone lucky enough to witness the Kills supporting the John Spencer Blues Explosion in the Tivoli in January saw the onstage chemistry/sexual tension shared by Hotel and VV and, hopefully, this band can build on this excellent debut. And here's hoping they release 'Fuck The People' as a single so MTV viewers will be singing along to the best chorus written in years: Hey...fuck the people.

**Jive Country**

Autonata
Jive Country
Lefthand Records

By Ciaran Murray

This track is culled from Dublin-based artist/producer Ken McHugh's debut album My Sanctuary and it's a pleasant enough electronic pop song. With a wealth of production experience behind him (he owns Dublin's Area 51 studio), he showcases the full range of his technical ability on this single. Maybe that's part of the problem: in his eagerness to use every gadget in his well-packed studio, he has forgotten to let the song breathe. Leaving the Poor还须在无的 moment, any Velvet-style jam needs an edge to keep it interesting. Some songs just don't have this and begin to grate after a few listen.

The trio hail from the home of country music, er, Vancouver.

The Be Good Tanyaus

It's Not Happening

By Clarian Murray

One of the members of this female three-piece holds a copy of DH Lawrence's The Lost Girl prominently on her lap in the cover shot for this single. It suits the theme of this sweet country/folk/bluegrass song perfectly. For this is an ode to the power of denial, urging you to "just shut your eyes, it's not happening".

The trio hail from the home of country music, er, Vancouver. Fruezy, Irish and VV apparently came together through their passion for old-time music and vintage clothes. Well, each to their own. Mainstays of country music, guitar, mandolin and banjo are all present, and the skilful interplay between them works well. All three have angelic voices, and the overlaid harmonies contrast nicely with the otherwise unpolished production.

And yes, my nose tipped once or twice, but I wear it as a spasm. This at least restores some pride to the straw hat brigade, after years of damage inflicted by the twee bastardisation of country music by Satan's minions Brooks, Twain and Rimes. The return to form of a certain Mr Cash may be the only thing standing between this lot and a scattering of Best Country awards come the end of the year.

Not bad this, as folk music goes. Just don't tell anyone I said that.

**Stylophonic 'Man Music Technology'**

By Aisling Dunne

Oh MY GOD...I hope this is a joke album but I worry that it isn't. Fair enough, I'm not a fan of retro beatz, happy house, vinyl style etc but this is just hideous, totally hideous. I like some kinds of dance music but this is just a nightmare. I know I sound like a fifty-year-old but the keyboard-driven solo just annoyed the crap out of me.

I'm sure a hardcore dance fan would want me dead but to understand how anyone would enjoy this music I accept that it's intended to be danced to, but it's not exactly dance-friendly (try and failed). There are a few feel-good moments but it's really pure stuff (the only way I can refer to it is as a 'white crack' album). I'm off to watch the Donaghy/Finnish this week.

She said of 'Man Music Technology', sound like Daft Punk, on a bad day, but that's about the only compliment I can give them. The man responsible for this sham is 33-year-old Stefano Fontana. He says that he was heavily influenced by eighties dance music, and we all know that the worst 'eighties' and 'dance music' would strike fear in the heart of any right thinking man. The electronic, synthesised vocals and repetitive patterns from right back to 1986 and we all know that this can't be a first for anyone.

**Nada Surf 'Hi-Speed Soul'**

Do you remember the Weezer-accented pop song called 'Popular' out in 1996? The men responsible were Nada Surf and this is the second single from their third album 'Let Go'.

The word 'Weezer' is highly relevant here because the parallel between the two bands is uncanny alike. They both go for the whole 'reality is a postcard from the future' look and they both write very catchy, melodic songs. 'Hi-Speed Soul' is a fine example of this. It's an unassuming song (highly welcome in the comparison to an absolute deluge of 'compliment' I can give them. The men responsible for thisExternally everything is fine but this is not in a good 'it rocked my world' way.

The b-sides are impressive too. 'Bed Creation' has some great harmonies in the chorus and you can almost see the Leenonheads, it's definitely not a bad thing. '80 Windows' was originally on Nada Surf's 'Freakin Out' and it's one of those songs which can be danced to, but it's not exactly 'dancing-friendly'.

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I'm sure a hardcore dance fan would want me dead but to understand how anyone would enjoy this music I accept that it's intended to be danced to, but it's not exactly dance-friendly (try and failed). Some tracks are less offensive than others. 'Way of Life' sounds like a comparison to an absolute deluge of 'compliment' I can give them. The man responsible for this sham is 33-year-old Stefano Fontana. He says that he was heavily influenced by eighties dance music, and we all know that the worst 'eighties' and 'dance music' would strike fear in the heart of any right thinking man. The electronic, synthesised vocals and repetitive patterns from right back to 1986 and we all know that this can't be a first for anyone.

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By Jason Burke

The Formula 1 season is just around the corner. It promises to be exciting and interesting while being a little confusing as teams and fans alike get to grips with the changes in the sport.

The Australian Grand Prix will once again play host to the season opener on the 9th of March. This year sees a few changes to the F1 calendar. The Belgian GP has been dropped due to tobacco advertising. There will also be an extra few late nights for European fans as the F1 road show moves on to Malaysia after Albert Park and will not arrive in Europe until the San Marino GP in April.

Jordan's announcement that Ralph Firman would be their season driver was unexpected. However, he is a driver with good racing credentials. He won both the British F3 championship and the Macau F3 championship in 1996 in which he beat the likes of Juan Pablo Montoya and Nick Heidfeld. His only experience in an F1 car came last December when he impressed in a test for BAR.

Firman may be a rookie in terms of Formula 1 but the 27-year-old is an experienced driver. He has spent the last six years in Formula Nippon in Japan and won the championship last year. He has known both good times and bad and it is hoped he will be unfazed by the difficulties facing him as he attempts to establish himself in F1. It appears that Firman's nationality has helped persuade a tobacco company Benson and Hedges into returning to F1. Born in Northern Ireland, Firman seems to have been a perfect incentive to lure B&H into the sport.

The nature of Formula 1 dictates that the top teams will be most likely to adapt quickest to the new rules and thus will remain on top of the sport.

Michael Schumacher and Ferrari will once again be favourites to secure both the drivers and constructors championships. McLaren has made good progress over the winter and will hope to improve on a relatively poor showing last season.

Williams BMW has a strong package but Juan Montoya has too long been touted as the man to shake up F1 without fulfilling the promise. He needs to firmly establish himself over the younger Schumacher before he can challenge Ferrari domination.

It remains to be seen if the rest will be able to make any inroads into the superiority of the big three. Jordan, having secured an engine deal with Ford, may start the season well but could fall back as the Works teams continue to develop.

Having secured exclusive youthful Dutch Honda engines, BAR will have to deliver a car that will get results if they want to keep Jacques Villeneuve from leaving at the end of the season.

Renault has taken a strong package and will continue to persist with the Jekyll and Hyde of F1, Jarno Trulli. The Italian driver is consistently quick in qualifying but rarely produces the same speed in races. Fernando Alonso is a much brighter prospect.

Sauber should consolidate their strong showing. In Frentzen and Heidfeld, they have two experienced and consistent drivers. Toyota will be hoping to progress with a new partnership of Panis and Brazilian rookie Di Matta. It will be left to Juegur and Minardi to scrape it out for points at the end of the grid.

The rule changes are the most drastic taken in the 54 years of the Championship. The emphasis is being placed at the feet of the drivers, literally. From the first race in Melbourne, telemetry from the pit lane will be banned and other devices such as traction control, launch control and fully automatic gearboxes will be banned from the British Grand Prix onwards.

Although this season may not see a change in the results, the starting grids are sure to provide some interest. If the predictability of last year came as a disappointment, you would be forgiven for looking on this season's opener with some scepticism. However it may be worth staying up on March 9th.

The signs are that this season is set to be far but formulaic.

By Keith Reilly

In recent seasons, the UEFA Champions' League has continually attracted criticism from football purists in response to the convoluted format it has adopted since the 1999-2000 campaign.

Having introduced a second group phase, European football's governing body thus ensured a massive increase in the number of games played and, of course, revenue generated by the globe's most prestigious club competition.

However, the updated format means that the potential winners for the last three seasons have had to play a total of 17 games in order to claim the famous trophy. This represents almost half the number of games they play in an entire domestic season.

Predictably, such a burden of games has provoked bitter complaints from many of Europe's top managers, and UEFA has taken the ultimate step to assuage the tension. Next season's competition will see the abolition of the second group phase as the Champions' League takes the shape of a knockout competition nearing the end of the campaign.

This year sees a second group phase, and what an exciting one it proved to be.

Matchday ten saw three of last season's strong showing. In Frentzen and Heidfeld, they have two experienced and consistent drivers. Toyota will be hoping to

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So, with this season's competition nearing the knockout stages, it would seem that we are about to witness the final throes of that much-maligned second group phase. And what an intriguing prospect that is, as many of Europe's footballing Goliaths awake from their winter slumber......

Following the tenth round of matches in this season's competition, the quarter-final line-up seems certain to have a look of familiarity. Of the teams who have claimed the last nine European titles, only Bayern Munich are absent from the list of those still in contention this year.

Matchday ten saw three of the continent's most prestigious clubs secure their place in the knockout stages. Barcelona dropped their first Champions' League points of the season when drawing 0-0 with Inter Milan in the San Siro, but the point they earned was enough to ensure their progress to the business end of the campaign.

AC Milan and Manchester United went one better than the Catalonians, confirming their places in the last eight as winners of groups C and D respectively. The Milan giants became the first Italian side to reach the quarter-finals in three years when they ground out a 1-0 win over Lokomotiv Moscow.

Despite fragile conditions in the Russian capital, a 33rd minute penalty from Rivaldo sufficed to see off the tepid Lokomotiv challenge.

United, meanwhile, emphatically brushed aside the challenge of Italian champions Jaenetus with a resounding 3-0 win in Turin. A brace from Ryan Giggs saw the 1999 winners head ahead at the interval, and Ruud Van Nistelrooy established an unsurpassed lead when he tapped home midway through the second half.

It was a Dutch double as Manchester United went through in 10th European goal of the season, making him the continent's top scorer.

The five remaining matches will be crucial, as they will decide who qualifies for the next round of the competition.

Groups A and B are far more open. Newcastle United have revived their chances of seeing off Bayer Leverkusen at St James' Park on February 26th, and will compete with Inter Milan to see who qualifies along with Barcelona from Group A.

Group B's final outcome is quite literally on a knife-edge. All four teams - Arsenal, Ajax, Roma and Valencia - still have a chance to qualify. The next round of games will be crucial, as Arsenal host Roma and Ajax's masters Aija seek to guarantee safe passage at home to Valencia.

Should you fancy a flutter on the team you consider to be a favorite, Juventus, FC Basel and Deportivo La Coruna will be keenly watched for the first place in Group D, while holders Real Madrid and German champions Borussia Dortmund will do likewise in the wake of AC Milan.

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So far, Manchester United's Rued Van Nistelrooy is top scorer in the Champions' League.
MARCH

**By Niamh Egan**

STUDENTS from six different Irish colleges and universities took part in the annual World Handball championships, which ran from February 19-22 last. Pentathlon and Doubles. Amongst these were 13 DIT students, comprising ten men and three women.

The students travelled to the west coast of America to participate in the tournament that incorporates 27 different third level establishments from all over the US. The championships, now in their 51st year, were hosted by Portland Pacific University with 230 players in all taking part.

The Irish did not fail to make their mark on the competition and the birthplace of the game was indeed well represented. In the top men’s competition the men’s open, Ireland contributed three of the four semi-finalists, a true reflection of the country’s impact on the tournament.

The eventual winner was Dessie Keegan, an Ayinger University, student and a member of the Ballaghadereen Handball Club, Keegan, presently competing on the US Pro Tour, is the first Irishman to win the title back to back, having also won the open competition in Texas last year.

Ironically, Keegan defeated two fellow Irishmen on his way to the final. Olleffs of NUIG in the quarter-final and fourth seed. Sligo IT’s Noel McHugh in the semi-final.

Keegan overcame the stiff opposition of number two seed. Emreich and Dublin U21 star, Mick McMahon looking to number five seed, Barry Durkan of Queens in his second round game. After a keenly contested game which led to a tie-breaker, McGowan won the opening tie at the final. Keegan lost the first game 21-14 as Peixoto turned on the style, but the Mayo man never looked back to take the second game 21-11. In the tie-breaker, Keegan controlled the play well and went for the kill at every opportunity with Peixoto’s passing shot proving ineffective against Keegan’s power.

The DIT man emerged eventual winner on an 11-4 scoreline in the tie-breaker.

While Keegan impressed his dominance, his DIT colleagues took on other American opposition. Padraig Cahill was unlucky to go down to City University’s Neil Larson after a tie-breaker in his opening game. Cahill’s doubles partner, Paul Fitzpatrick won his first round game, but went down to number five seed, Barry Durham in the consequent round.

Kevin Street’s Mark McGowan won his opening game in style (14, 4), only to meet fellow Ulsterman, Ryan Daly of Queens in his second round game. After a keenly contested game which led to a tie-breaker, McGowan activated the tie in the final. Daly reached the last 16, having faced Sligo IT’s Joe McCann but the DIT lad could find no way to overcome the sixth seed, losing in two straight games 49-10.

Daren McCadle, Darren Flynn and Conor McGinnity all made early exits from the open competition, but McCadle and McGinnity, as well as Cahill, won their first games to add further points to the overall team competition.

Ronan Costello, who was a Sportsmanship Award nominee, came close in several games to advancing to the second seed. Who was incidentally playing two grades higher than last year, just couldn’t get that lucky break. Dermot Reynolds, having dropped down to contender level, reached the last 16 of the competition, but was unfortunately beaten by Ben Ireland of Western Washington University.

Keegan, who had ever handballers nightmare of playing forced to play all his games at 8am, put in great effort and qualified for the last 8 of the men counters level but lost out to Brian Powell of the University of Kentucky.

In the women’s section, DIT’s hopeful, third seed Mary Keegan unfortunately was defeated in the final quarter by Samantha Bingel, England was ranked sixth but the Lake Forest College student put up a great fight to beat the DIT girl and take her place in the semi-final. The final was defended by number one seed, Lake Forest’s Megan Mehaffy, who also took the doubles title with partner Amy Cox. At the end of the tournament, Dorothy Cassidy, who won the women’s B intercity title in Belfast recently, won her opening game of the BC split with great determination but will unfortunate be defeated in her further games. Niamh Egan lost her opening game but will also progress to the intermediate level. She was beaten at the semi-final stage by eventual winner Brooke Boggs of University Texas.

In the team competition DIT men finished a healthy seventh, having been excluded in the opening rounds. Keegan finished the colleges in Pentathlon and Doubles. Waterford IT, Sligo IT, Queens University Belfast and University Limerick.

Dessie Keegan also received an All-American award, a certificate awarded on the basis of his performances in the open competitions. Keegan finished the colleges in Pentathlon and Doubles. Waterford IT, Sligo IT, Queens University Belfast and University Limerick.

Next year sees the championship set for in Springfield, Missouri, but the DIT men will likely be fixed on the 2003 World Handball Championships which will take place in Ireland from the 17-26 October at various venues across the country.

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**Three-in-a-row success for DIT ladies**

By Sarah Graham

DIT Ladies Basketball could not fluctuate any more this season. After last week, plagued with injuries and exams, we finally had a full panel for a Dublin League game on Wednesday 12th of February last. And what a difference it made.

Nobody had to play the whole game without a rest and everyone enjoyed playing together for the first time in ages. The DIT spirit was back and we were on fire.

After a shaky, settling-in period against an aged but experienced ‘Team Euro’, DIT simply could not miss. Everything found the basket. Lay-ups through the center from Alison Heffernan, three pointers from Patrice Howell, hustled shots from Niamh Griffin, and Lisa Maher even executed a nifty hoop lay-up.

Michael Jordan style. Cathy Molloy took down the rebounds all evening, while Aisling Goss made shots like second nature. A great performance by all and well deserved of the 75-40 score line. Things were not so rosy the following evening as a game against the College of Surgeons team coincided with the mystery rag trip. We started the game on Thursday the 13th with only one substitute. From the off, DIT was obviously the better team but the inexperienced Surgeons team was not to be underestimated. Their one decent player kept their head above water throughout the first half and matched DIT’s every score. We eventually pulled away by 20 points in the third quarter and victory seemed inevitable.

That was until disaster struck and two DIT players were fouled out of the court leaving only four against five for the last few minutes. Surgeons had a great advantage and used it well to narrow the lead to seven points. The last moments of the game saw frantic tactical efforts by coach Karl Fin to maintain the lead. Surgeons were on team fouls so two free throws. Lisa Maher, after making two, ran the clock but even to the last second the result was unclear. DIT breathed a sigh of relief as they realised the score of 64-62 was in their favour. A lucky escape.

On Monday the 17th of February, the team took the train up north to take on Toulouse IT. After a bit of a mix-up with starting times, the game eventually got underway. The Toulouse team didn’t seem especially skilled but managed to get a few scores up on a DIT team unwilling to play. Defense. The girls ate it in the small lead that they had established thanks to perfect rebounds from Cathy Molloy, an effort from Lisa Maher which resulted in easy lay-ups for Alice Heffernan.

DIT’s new team was certainly different but a couple of injuries and some foul trouble became a worry in the third quarter.

The game ended rather slowly but at a score line of 67-66, 1003, with NUI, Galway finishing in fourth place. The other Irish colleges represented were Waterford IT, Sligo IT, Queens University Belfast and University Limerick.

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**Back row (l-r) Padraig Cahill, Conor McGinnity, Fiona Healy, Mark McGowan, Padraig Gaffney, Ken Clarke, front (l-r) Paul Fitzpatrick, Darren Flynn, Ronan Costello, Darren Mcardle, Dermott Reynolds, Niamh Egan, Dorothy Cassidy**
By Miguel Delaney

SO, DIT's Sigerson Cup adventure is over for another year. However this season Joe Moran's side can keep their heads held high, having pushed an illustrious UCD side to the limit in a pulsating and exhausting first round match at Belfield.

In a game where neither side truly dominated, UCD's players will have been relieved to hear the final whistle as DIT pushed them right to the final minutes. Indeed it had not been for the magnificent performances of UCD's Liam Ó hEainneachain and Peter Lawless, the outcome could have been very different. With many of UCD's key personnel struggling on the day it was down to these two to rescue Dave Billings' team. And they duly did with Ó hEainneachain's scoring prowess and Peter Lawless' flawless kicking contributing all but a point of UCD's scoring on the day.

It was Ó hEainneachain who was first off the mark, putting UCD into a 0-2 lead within minutes. However DIT responded promptly and quickly grabbed a hold of the game. The constant running and pressure of the full forward line of Freeman, McKeigue and O'Hagan caused UCD's usually impermeable back line some problems and it wasn't long before DIT had established the lead. Making better use of their possession they managed to go 0-6 to 0-4 after two frees from M'Ldon and a point from Stephen Bray.

It was DIT's midfield that was the launch pad for the team's performance with Ger Coughlan and Dublin under 21 star Hugh McInerny dictating the play for long periods and even overshadowing UCD's impressive Brendan Ó hAinnaidh.

With DIT looking stronger, it appeared a quarter-final place in the Sigerson Cup was well within their reach, showing how far they had come since UCD convincingly beat them in the league earlier this season. However, just like that game, it was one swift counter-attacking move, which once again turned the game in UCD's favour and underlined the Belfield side's quality.

Three minutes before half-time Brogan played a perfect hand pass for Ó hEainneachain to run onto. He collected and blasted the ball home for the only goal to make it 1-5 to 0-7.

Ó hEainneachain and Lawless then exchanged frees, leaving UCD with a one-point lead at the break. The balance of the game didn't change much in the second half, with DIT continuing to battle hard and push UCD. However, just as Ó hEainneachain's scoring had been their bane in the first half, Lawless' kicking consistency proved to be in the second. He added three more inch perfect frees, followed by the best point of the day to put UCD just out of DIT's reach.

DIT continued to press, but UCD's defence eventually recovered their usual stingy form and limited Joe Moran's side to only two points in the second half. DIT simply couldn't conjure one last grand assault and the match ended 1-11 0-10 to see UCD through to the Quarter-Finals of the Sigerson Cup.

DIT GAA Development Officer Des O'Donnell was proud of the team's performance and paid tribute to the progress made.

"It was a magnificent performance by the team. They controlled the play for 35 to 40 minutes of the match and were at many times the superior team. But it was unfortunate the UCD goal came when it did. It took the momentum out of our performance and we petered out towards the end. The match was a great tribute to the astute management of Gervais, Seamus Reilly and Joe Moran, the quality of that game means that progress that side has made in the last year."}

DIT: S Duffy, L Mooney, F O'Donoghue, B McGrath, D Burke, B McGrath, G Coughlan (0-1), H McInerny (0-1), G Prior, D O'Mahoney (0-3), S Bray (0-2), D Freeman (0-1), S Griffin, T O'Connor, B Cahill, R Kelly, D Magee, B Ó hAinnaidh, P Curran, J Hanly, L Ó hEainneachain (1-3), A Brogan, J Sheridan, Peter Lawless (0-7)

Subs: B Ó Connor for Evans (25mins), R Barry for Curran (35mins) R Ronaghan for Sheridan (40mins), S Lucey (0-1) for Kelly (44mins)

UCD: G McGill, D O'Donoghue, C Evans, P Coughlan (0-1), D McGinley, G Scanlon (0-1), A Brogan, J Sheridan, Peter Lawless (0-7)

Subs: D Conroy for Evans (25mins), R Barry for Curran (35mins) R Ronaghan for Sheridan (40mins), S Lucey (0-1) for Kelly (44mins)

The only sour note of the afternoon for LIT was when Gearoid Condine was forced off with a serious leg injury midway through the second half.

He was missed the following Saturday as LIT were thrashed by UCD in the quarter-finals.

It would appear that DIT have a long way to go before becoming truly competitive at the elite stage of third-level hurling.

DIT: D Conroy, B Perry, J Moran, J O'Loughlin (B Fern 17), W Comerford, M McEvoy, R Fallon (0-2), R Hayes, D Flanagan (S McDonnell 38), G Gavin (0-1), M Greenan, J Shaw (1-2), J Corcoran (S O'Shea 56), M Phelan (0-4), S Ó Conmara (P Bowden 57).

LIT: S Haws, B O'Connell, K Kennedy, R O'Reilly, A Murphy, C Plunkett, M O'Brien, I Tannam, G Condine (0-1), (K Kerlin 48), E Kelly (0-11), B Nugent, S Tierney (1-2), M Keane (C Early 60), A Quinn (0-5), D O'Connell (1-0) (P Russell 60)
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