



SOLAS

St. Aidan's Community College, Dublin Hill, Cork
Newsletter Issue 2 Summer 1999

PARENTS' COUNCIL GAINS NATIONAL AFFILIATION

For the first time since its foundation St. Aidan's C.C. Parents' Council is now affiliated to the National Parents Association of Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (NPAVSCC).

On Friday March 6th two parents, Mrs. Mary Kelleher and Mrs. Ena Howell, from St. Aidan's Parents' Council, travelled to Mullingar to attend the 14th Annual Congress of

the Association. Mr. Richard Bruton T.D. opened the Congress with his address entitled "Parents Active in Partnership." Saturday's main speakers were Mary O'Rourke T.D. and Michael O'Regan, National Association President.

Some motions were presented and voted on during Saturday afternoon and the weekend's events were successfully concluded with a pleasant evening banquet.

TWINS SET THE STANDARD

The O' Flynn sisters Anne and Pauline are from a family of 11 children from Ballincollie Road all but one of whom have attended or are presently attending St. Aidan's C.C.

Twins Anne and Pauline entered first year in 1987 and completed their Leaving Certificate in 1992.

Anne subsequently attended R.T.C., now C.I.T., from 1992 to 1995 where she studied Certified Public Accounting. In 1996 she was employed by F.J. Forde but continued to study in C.I.T. 2 nights per week. Her employers allowed her time off for study and exams. In November 1998 Anne grad-

uated in Dublin as a Certified Public Accountant. She is now employed by one of the foremost accountancy firms in the country, Ernest and Young.

After completing her Leaving Certificate Pauline studied Science in UCC and, during her second year of university, specialised in Ecology. She graduated in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree. Pauline worked in Cork and Germany from 1996 to 1998 and then returned to UCC in September to continue her studies.



She is now pursuing a Masters degree in Rural Development.

We congratulate Anne and Pauline on their dedication and hard work and wish them every success in their future careers

GRADUATION CEREMONY

On Thurs. May 21st the Class of '99 will graduate from the College.

The ceremony will begin with the Graduation Mass which will be followed by a presentation to each student of a certificate and a specially engraved pen. The evening will be concluded with an informal social gathering of parents, teachers and pupils.

ST. AIDAN'S CLASS OF '99



Class Agata pictured with Mr. O' Brien (Deputy Principal), Ms. Owens (Class Tutor), Dr. Steele (Principal) and Ms. O Reilly (6th Year Tutor) and Rev. Fr. S. Furlong (College Chaplain).



Class Eistir pictured with Mr. Cremin (Class Tutor), Mr. O' Brien (Deputy Principal), Ms. O Reilly (6th Year Tutor), Dr. Steele (Principal) and Rev. Fr. S. Furlong (College Chaplain).

ST. AIDAN'S CLASS OF '99



Class Fiachra pictured with, Mr. O' Brien (Deputy Principal), Ms. Dineen (Class Tutor), Dr. Steele (Principal), Ms. O Reilly (6th Year Tutor) and Rev. Fr. S. Furlong (College Chaplain).



Class Daivi pictured with, Mr. O' Brien (Deputy Principal), Ms. O Reilly (Class Tutor), Dr. Steele (Principal) and Rev. Fr. S. Furlong (College Chaplain).

ADULT LEAVING CERTIFICATE



Adult Leaving Cert. Class with teacher Ms. Dineen

Have You Your Homework Done?

The hum and buzz has died. Students and teachers are cosseted in their homes watching Home and Away or Coronation Street. At 6.50p.m. the caretaker, Eamon or Christy, makes his way to C04 to make sure the lights are working and the over-head is in place.

A car swings in the school gates, and then another. Three or four pedestrians appear, soon the assembly area echoes with the chatter and laughter of a small group. This is a diligent group of eleven adults who are preparing for the Leaving Certificate in June.

On Monday and Wednesday nights, since September 1998, this scene has become a familiar one in St. Aidan's Community College. The dedicated students are studying English and History under the expert guidance of Ms. Dineen and Mr. Cotter.

A great sense of camaraderie has developed within the group as they experience the highs and lows of such diverse topics as Brian Friel's Philadelphia Here I Come, George Orwell's Animal Farm, as well as Irish and World History. Their teachers have commented that they never cease to be amazed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the group.

On June 10, they will take their place amongst the younger members of the community in the Exam Centre. We wish them all well and look forward to the upcoming Graduation Ceremony.

If you would like to make the Leaving Certificate one of your goals for the Millennium, please contact Brenda O' Donoghue, Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator, at 307486.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

As a rookie teacher in the 70's without chick or child, I was in the habit of telling mothers of large families how to raise their children. It was a time before guidance counsellors were born and when the worst a boy could do was get caught with a woodbine.

Now that I have a family of my own and am suitably humbled, I cringe at my arrogance back then. I have come to realise that few issues are as black or white as we see them and that all parents want is what's best for their children, though teachers may sometimes differ in the approach to be taken. I've also come to the conclusion that unless I can meet you or your child on a human level, no matter how professionally qualified I am, you will avoid me like the plague. Therefore, I set my stall out as a listening, sympathetic ear and, occasionally as a challenging voice for parent and student.

"How many points for Arts? Is music essential for primary teaching? Has the E.S.B. advertised for apprentices?" are questions which require factual information and can be answered in a half breath. Discovering a student's interests and aptitudes, and correlating those with courses and job opportunities, are more time consuming.

The effects of death or separation, peer pressure, exam stress, unrealistic expectations, bullying, are some of the issues that regularly crop up in my line of work.

The Celtic Tiger also has an impact. Part-time employment which leads to irregular attendance patterns in school, increased tension at home, poor academic performance, and limited earning power thereafter, is a cause for increasing concern.



My office is, I hope, a Waffle Free Zone, on either side of the desk. Supporting your child in a lifetime discovery of who s(he) is, discovering what s(he) wants, and how to achieve these goals, is the main focus of my work.

Sometimes I speak up for them, be it to parent, teacher or management. *I stand for the students realising their own dreams rather than us realising our dreams through them.* As a parent I know how difficult that can be. Rather than leave you with the impression that you have a Superman as Guidance Counsellor, let me acquaint you with one simple fact. A school of this size is entitled to one ex-quota Guidance Counsellor as per Dept. of Education and Science Regulation. If I spent my time on nothing else but meeting students, each student would get to meet me for 1 hour per year. It would, indeed, take Superman to cater for everyone's needs adequately on that allocation. Having said that, however, a good Guidance Counsellor can make a difference. I have an office, I have the interest, confidentiality is assured, the ball is in your court.

David Kingston
Guidance Counsellor

TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME

Fourth Year was introduced at St. Aidan's in September, 1994. To ensure that all pupils gained the benefits of six years of post primary education it was decided that the extra year would be obligatory for all pupils.

Aims

•To provide a better chance for all our pupils.

The extra year brings extra maturity. Every pupil, of whatever level, deserves the advantages that come from being older when decisions that have a crucial impact on life chances are being made.

• To help pupils start again, catch up, aim higher.

When a pupil goes straight from the Junior Certificate to the Leaving Certificate programme, there's very little time to help those who've developed late or fallen behind. The extra year gives all involved a chance to sort out whatever needs sorting in the light of experience in the Junior Certificate programme without sacrificing part of the Leaving Certificate programme

•To help students become Autonomous Students.

Life-long learning is now a feature of modern life. In the extra year the aim in every subject is to help pupils grasp both what to learn and how to learn, to become not just dependent pupils, but independent learners.

•To encourage pupils to aim for a third-level qualification

Research on the matter can be summarised in this way: The more you learn, the more you earn. We live in a qualifications society. The extra year can help us all focus on the best qualifications possible, to

look to the heights and to ensure that no one gets left behind.

Content

• Personal Education

is catered for in the programmes for Religious Education and for Physical Education. In RE the aim is to foster a faith based on conviction rather than on convention. In PE the aim is towards a personal understanding of healthy living.

•Social Education

is catered for in programmes focussing on the nature and role of the Media and on the responsibilities of Marriage.

•General Education

is catered for in the continuing programmes in Irish, English, Mathematics, and French.

•Orientation Education

is catered for in programmes in Computers and in Careers. By means of the European Computer Driving Licence programme, every pupil receives a good grounding in Information Technology and, by means of visitors from a range of companies, receives also a sense of the world of work. A particularly positive feature of the extra year is that it allows pupils to try out different areas of study before finally choosing option subjects and far fewer are stuck in Fifth and Sixth year with subjects they should never have chosen at all.

In conclusion the maturity gained from the extra year has a positive impact on Leaving Certificate results. This benefit should be there not just for the lucky few, but for all our children.

Those interested in joining St. Aidan's in Fourth Year should contact the Principal.

EMERGING TALENT



I am a fifth year student in St. Aidan's and I have been playing the violin since I was six. I completed Grade 8 in 1997 with a scholarship from the Cork School of Music and I am also studying Grade 6 piano. I am a member of the Cork Youth Orchestra, the Cork School of Music Symphony Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland U18. Last year, I toured Wales with the Cork Youth Orchestra and in the summer I will tour Denmark for two weeks with the National Youth Orchestra. In March I was lucky enough to win the

William Barrett Memorial Perpetual Trophy at Feis Maitiu Cork and I was recently Commended in the Senior Recital Competition at the Cork School of Music. As well as in music, I also have an interest in computers. Last summer, I helped to create the school website. Every Wednesday night I assist in the teaching of the ECDL Adult computer course at St. Aidan's. I am very interested in the area of computers for recording and composing music. I hope to pursue a career in Computer Electronics or in Music.



BEST ACTOR AWARD FOR AIDAN'S

Following their impressive debut in "Macbeth" last year, St. Aidan's Drama Group produced an extract from Brian Friel's "Dancing at Lughnasa" for this year's Dramafest, held recently in Deerpark CBS. Performing superbly, the group was elated when Sarah Dowling

scooped the "Best Actress" award on the night for her moving portrayal of Kate.

Picture overleaf shows (LtoR) Claire Lewis(Chris), Darren Kelleher(Willie), Emer 'O Doherty(Maggie), Mary Rose Howell(Agnes) and Sarah Dowling(Kate).

EVENTS GUIDE

World Book Day, the biggest celebration of books and reading ever mounted in the UK and Ireland, took place on April 23, and every school child received a free £1 book voucher. Laura Murray of class Colmcille was the winner of the St. Aidan's World Book Day bookmark competition.



Evelyn fell head over heels in love with a Ring-Tailed Lemur. After lunch, we returned to the Education Centre to discuss our results. This gave all concerned the basic information required to answer Leaving Certificate questions on this topic. It was a highly profitable and enjoyable day and, while everybody benefited, the one thing that most people took home with them were little plastic animal pencil-tops. We nearly missed the train home, but thanks to James and Mr. Doyle we made it just as it began to rain. Another successful day in Fota was complete

Both Leaving Cert. Biology classes, under the watchful eyes of Ms. Foley and Mr. Doyle, made the annual pilgrimage to the grounds of Fota House recently on an **Ecology Fieldwork trip**, this



Mr. Kelly pictured with members of the St. Aidan's Hurling Club who gave an exhibition of hurling skills for our recent French visitors from College St. Francois, Lesneven, Brittany.

being an integral part of the Leaving Cert. Syllabus. Various techniques were employed to capture and identify animals and plants in the woodland. The morning was spent decimating a sizeable portion of the area of woodland under study. Pitfall Traps were dug, and filled in again, insects were sucked into pooters, many an unsuspecting spring-tail was trapped in a net and



and life in the Park could return to normal. The '98-'99 **Basketball season** has been hugely successful for St. Aidan's. The new PE hall has allowed extra training sessions and has attracted a threefold increase in the numbers playing the game. For the first time ever, St. Aidan's has a boy's basketball team. A five match unbeaten



St. Aidan's First Year boys basketball squad with coach Ms. Dineen.

record led to a very exciting quarter-final against Col. Mhuire, Cobh. Unfortunately a three-pointer in the last minute saw victory slip from St. Aidan's. The First Year boys are due to play the semi-finals of the Co. Cork VEC League against Glanmire CC shortly. The boys U19 team shot to victory in the Big AI's 3v3 league in Neptune on April 10th and will play the finals in the National Arena, Tallaght, on May 8th. The girls basketball teams have gone from strength to strength this year with the U16 girls winning the Co. Cork VEC. final in Neptune Stadium. They had an impressive 38-24 win over Ballyvourney. The U14 Girls team also reached the semi-final of the same league and played an outstanding game against Beara Community School. The school's performance in the Schoolgirls Basketball Association of Ireland (S.B.A.I.) League has been

fantastic at all levels. The Minor girls achieved a quarter-final victory over Col. Treasa. Kanturk having won all but one of their pool games.

Each year in Cork schools gather to perform on stage in the **Cork Schools Dance Celebration**. St. Aidan's has performed in this celebration over the past number of years. This year because of the great response, two groups from the college participated. The senior group danced to "Mysterious Times" and the junior group danced to "Planet Love". The dances were choreographed by the students themselves.



Both groups, dressed to impress, traveled to the Opera House and were accompanied by Ms. M Kavanagh and Ms K O'Driscoll. Following impressive performances both groups received excellent reviews. To finish off the day professional dancers displayed their talents. Overall it proved to be a most enjoyable outing.



St. Aidan's Drama Group in a scene from Dancing at Lughnasa.