



## **HEADMASTER'S NEWSLETTER - EASTER 2007.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the students, staff and parents for your on-going positive support of the school throughout this long and busy term. The months of January, February and March are traditionally the busiest in the school with so many activities coming to a climax, particularly in the sporting arena.**

**Modern sport is driven by television and the written media with an unhealthy emphasis on winning and indeed winning at all costs. I am very proud of the attitude espoused by all of the teams in St. Gerard's in all sports and extra curricular activities. It is one of participation, enjoyment, deep rooted spirit and loyal commitment. It will be most evident to you as you read through the Newsletter the successes that our students experience through their participation in a myriad of events.**

**One of our Transition Year Mini Companies is producing a book based on the memories of past and present students and staff of St. Gerard's. On reading the draft publication, it is the spirit of St. Gerard's which characterises their memoirs. The spirit is truly alive and well and most evident last Friday at the Leinster Senior Schools Plate Final with a courageous and skilled performance on the pitch aligned with the spirit, colour and enthusiasm of our supporters.**

### **BUILDING UPDATE**

*Main House:* I am delighted to announce that the work in the Main House is almost complete. As you receive this Newsletter, all of the internal works are complete and the Easter holidays will be used to put the finishing touches to the house, complete the interior decoration and move back into the various rooms.

When the students return after Easter, the Main House will contain the following:

Main Entrance, School Administration Office, Bursar's Office, Headmaster's Office, Head of Year Office, Staff Room, Reception Room, Board Room, Matron's Room, as well as other offices and school-based rooms. When all of the interior decoration of the house is complete, it is my intention to have an open afternoon for parents and students to visit the house and to re-acquaint themselves with what has always been the focal building of the school.

*Senior School Extension:* The work on the Senior School extension is progressing very well with each passing week. There are three definitive phases in the Senior School extension, which have completion dates of August 2007, October 2007 and December 2007 respectively. Currently these target completion dates are on schedule. Once again, I thank you for your patience during the extensive building programme. I can assure you that the wait will be well worthwhile.

### **CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

The €18,000 raised at the Christmas Bazaar was distributed to a range of local and national charities over the past few weeks. The letters of gratitude that were received from each of these charities highlight to us the value of the monies we raised and the positive influence which they have on the charities.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

Mr. John Reidy has put much work into the organisation of Environmental Awareness throughout the school. Recycling is taking place for paper, card, plastics, mobile phones and ink cartridges. A group of Transition Year students erected nesting boxes throughout the school grounds early in the Spring and a full school "Clean Up" took place on Wednesday last.

### **BLAST BEAT CONCERT**

The Blast Beat Mini-Company Project in 4<sup>th</sup> Year organised an enthralling Blast Beat Concert hosted by St. Gerard's School. Eight bands from various schools participated, with one of our own school bands – "Hot Stop" (Jake Bitove, James Tebbit, Andrew Keyes and Hugo Sherry) - winning the competition and progressing to the National Finals. The proceeds from this concert will be forwarded to charity through the Mini-Company Project.

### **HOT PRESS LITERARY AWARE**

Many congratulations to Caelainn Hogan (6<sup>th</sup> Year) who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Leinster in the recent Hot Press Literary Competition. There were four regional winners from a huge number of entrants and Caelinn's article was published in the March issue of Hot Press.

## **MODEL EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

A group of Transition Year students consisting of Amy Farrar, Andrew Hozier-Byrne, Philip McCann, Ronan McCarthy and Jonathan Towers will be delegates at the Model European Parliament (National Session) over the Easter Holidays. I wish them every success.

Etaoin Donovan (5<sup>th</sup> Year), who was a member of the Irish Delegation to the Model European Parliament in Slovenia last year, has this year been asked to chair a committee during the National Model European Parliament. This is a great honour.

## **DEBATING**

Since Christmas, students have been busy participating in a number of debating, public speaking and related events. In the Junior Cycle of the school, Daniel Cooney and Theo Jebb achieved marked success in reaching the Junior L & H Debating Final. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful on this occasion. Katie Nelson and Aoife McCarthy were commended on their performances in the UCD WGA's Junior Public Speaking Competition. Miriam Bourke won the In-House 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Public Speaking Competition for girls with an outstanding performance.

The Senior Debaters in the school were also working hard. Dearbhail O'Crowley and Éabha McMahon were defeated in the quarter-finals of the Denny Schools' Debating Competition.

Other debaters participated in the Youth Forum to "Stop Child Labour" and the AIB Phil Speaks Competition while Christopher McKeown, Adam Roche, Ben Blunnie and Hilary Repko were pipped at the post in the third round of the Thomas Crosbie Secondary Schools' Quiz.

During the Easter break, a group of St. Gerard's students will represent Guatemala at the Model United Nations and in the next term Dearbhail O'Crowley, Gary Walker-Ayers, James Brankin and Éabha McMahon will compete in the final of the Bray Lions Debating Competition. We wish you all the best of luck.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAW**

The Public Access to Law Transition Year programme is a specially devised law programme which gives students a unique insight into law as seen through the eyes of a practising Barrister or Solicitor. Our Transition Year thoroughly enjoyed the day which concluded with a Mock Trial. All in all, it was an excellent course.

## **SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE**

Bhí spórt agus spraoi ag na daltaí. Bhain na ranganna an-sásamh as an damhsa céilí, tráth na gceist, drámaíocht agus comórtaisí ealaíne. B'é buaic phointe na seachtaine an comórtas amhránaíochta sa bhialann.

## **WICKLOW ENTERPRISE COMPETITION 2007**

Well done to Hannah Keating and Chloe Caprani (Transition Year) for winning the Best Stand Display Award with their "Get Tagged" Mini-Company project.

Congratulations also to the "William & Scott" Mini-Company, consisting of Michael Magee, Jeremy Fullam, Philip O'Donnell, Jonathan Towers, Jordan Egan, Harry Jebb and Sam O'Brien for winning two awards – 1<sup>st</sup> place for Quality of Production and 1<sup>st</sup> place for Marketing. Their projects will go on to represent the school in the National Finals in May.

## **SCHOOL MUSICAL - OKALHOMA**

The Transition Year students performed two matinees and two evening shows of the most popular musical Oklahoma, under the inspiring direction of Ms. Jackie Olohan. The musical talent within this group, as expected, came to the fore. The undoubted highlight was the final show on the Thursday evening. Oklahoma played to packed houses and was received most positively by all of the audiences. Each year the show just gets better! Well done to all involved.

## **ART EXHIBITION**

The In-House Committee hosted an Art Exhibition on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March under the guidance of the Cherry Lane Gallery. This proved to be a most popular event which was very well attended by the student body and Staff on the Friday and by the parent body and friends on the Friday night and the Saturday. The In-House Committee once again excelled in the organisation of this event. A donation from the proceeds will go to the local Festine Lente Charity.

## **MOCK EXAMINATIONS**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Year students and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students completed the Mock examinations in February and the results to date have been most positive. We look forward with great confidence to the achievements of these groups in the Junior and Leaving Certificates in June and we wish them every success and blessing in their endeavours.

## **UNIFORM**

Please note that it is our intention to introduce a new school tie this September. It is intended that the school tie will be more representative of the colours of the school. All details regarding the school uniform will follow in May.

## **PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Many thanks to the Parents' Association for organising the various lectures this year. Internet expert, Paul Durrant, gave a sobering insight into the need for vigilance in teenagers' use of the Internet. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of parental supervision regarding internet and mobile technology use by our sons and daughters. The number of negative and harmful sites on the Internet is increasing daily and parental vigilance is the number one deterrent to counteract the negative impact. Over the coming years this will be one of the greatest challenges we will face and it is incumbent on the parent body and the school to work together to meet it.

Child Psychologist Vincent Moloney will address parents on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April on the topic of "Preparing for Adolescence". I encourage you to attend.

## **RUGBY**

The Senior Cup Team: The Senior Cup Team were most unfortunate to lose the Leinster Senior Schools' Plate Final against St. Mary's College 20-13. The game was played on a knife edge throughout the second half at 13-13 with both sides having numerous chances to win the game. The team showed their true ability by defeating The High School in the semi final 59-5 with a glittering display which included nine excellently executed tries.

The Senior Cup Team were defeated by St. Michael's College in the opening round of the Leinster Senior Cup. St. Michael's College went on to win the Cup in style and indeed our first half performance against them was probably the strongest opposition they had throughout the competition. In the Evening Herald Schools' Review, we received the Best Try of the Competition and Caibhe O'Doherty was selected on the Dream Team of the Competition.

Senior Seconds Rugby: The Senior Seconds Rugby Team were truly unlucky to lose the final of the Leinster League against Belvedere College 15-13 having led 13-5 for the majority of the game. The team, under Captain Oliver Rosenstock, had a wonderful year and winning the Forster Cup would have been due reward. They had reached the Leinster League final by qualifying in their section having defeated Blackrock College in the semi-final stage 32-17.

To reach both finals was an outstanding achievement for both squads and augurs well for the future.

The Junior Cup Team: The Junior Cup Team, having defeated Wesley College 23-10 in the opening round of the Junior Cup, were most unfortunate to lose to King's Hospital in the next round 17-16. Having led 16 – 5, the team were unable to prevent a motivated King's Hospital from scoring two tries late in the game. Under Captain Robbie Glynn, this team have shown great potential, which I am sure will come to fruition over their Senior years.

The JCT progressed to the Leinster Junior Plate Competition, defeating Skerries Community School 14-7 at home and then losing 22-7 to Clongowes Wood College.

Under-14 Rugby Central League: The Under-14 Rugby Team built on their success in winning the Under-13 Central League last year, by capturing the Under-14 Central League, defeating Gonzaga in an enthralling final. The back-to-back success has shown the talent in this group and we look forward with optimism as they represent the school at Junior Cup level next year.

Under-13 Rugby : The Under-13 Rugby Squad had a very enjoyable tour to London, where they were hosted by The Oratory School and participated well in the annual Under-13 Seven-a-side Oratory School Competition. Despite atrocious weather conditions the team performed admirably well and were most unlucky to be narrowly defeated by the eventual winners.

## **HOCKEY**

Leinster Senior Hockey Cup: The Senior Girls' Hockey team, having played excellent hockey to defeat Our Lady's Grove 2-1 in the opening round of the Leinster Senior cup, were defeated 4-0 by Wesley College in the next round. The team performed excellently and the score in no way reflected the performance of our Senior team.

Junior Cup Hockey Team: Our Junior Hockey team defeated St. Joseph of Cluny 2-0 in the opening round of the Plate Competition, with goals from Fiona Kelly and Sheenagh Walker in the opening round of the Plate Competition. They went on to lose narrowly to Our Lady's, Terenure in the next round, with Our Lady's getting a breakaway goal after much St. Gerard's pressure. Our Junior Hockey team have performed admirably throughout the season and are constantly improving at their individual skills. I have nothing but optimism for this group over the coming years.

Dollar Academy Visit: On 19<sup>th</sup> March, Dollar Academy visited the school from Scotland. They played two fixtures against Loreto Dalkey and Loreto Foxrock and then played the Celts Cup v St. Gerard's. Dollar played very well scoring five goals. However, St. Gerard's played some fine hockey with a fabulous individual goal from Storm Desmond. It was a most successful trip with great friendships made.

Minor Hockey: The Minors played in a very tough division but constantly played their hearts out and improved at their individual skills which will really stand to them next year when they go up to Junior level.

First Year Hockey: First Years improved greatly through the season with some great results in the League, beating King's Hospital 3-0 and Mount Temple 1-0, and drawing 0-0 with Dalkey. They were very unlucky not to come out of their League section when they lost their play-off against King's Hospital, losing 1-0 in extra time. They are a very talented group and with hard work and focus, they will do well next year.

Congratulations to the following girls who were selected to attend the Leinster Development coaching session over a six-week period at U-14, U-16, U-18 levels: Storm Desmond, Katie Burgess, Madison Duffy, Joy Sinnott, Brigid McKeown, Hayley Mulcahy and Emma Toal-Lennon. This is a fabulous achievement which reflects so positively on the talent within the school.

## **SHOW JUMPING**

The St. Gerard's School Annual Show Jumping Competition will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2007. Recently the St. Gerard's teams competed in the Mount Sackville Show Jumping Competition, with two teams coming in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> places respectively. Well done to Alice Murphy, Emily Murphy, Hugo Sherry, David Bourke, Kim Mulcahy, Miriam Bourke, Hayley Mulcahy and Jessica Crosse.

## **SCHOOL TOURS**

A group of forty 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students travelled to Barcelona during the week of 19<sup>th</sup> March and all had a most memorable experience.

There are two further upcoming Senior School tours to (a) Copenhagen, including the UNICEF Headquarters and World Distribution Centre and (b) a 5<sup>th</sup> year English tour to London. As always, we are most grateful to staff who organise all of these educational opportunities for the students.

### **MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE**

Mr. Seamus Jennings and Ms. Paula Hillman will accompany twenty-one students on their Easter Pilgrimage to Medjugorje. The students will spend a week of their Easter Holidays there, which will undoubtedly leave a deep impression on them.

### **RETREATS**

5<sup>th</sup> Year students had a most beneficial Retreat during January, with one group attending the Dominican Retreat House in Tallaght and another group attending the Columbus Brothers' Retreat Centre in Navan.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students will have one-day Retreats taking place in school and we look forward to the Transition Year Retreat which will take place at the end of May in Esker Retreat Centre in Athenry, Co. Galway.

### **NEW MATRON**

We are delighted to welcome Ms. Sally Ann Kane to the school staff as School Matron.

### **SOCIAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

A number of lectures have taken place this term for the Transition Year, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students in the area of social awareness. The students were addressed by Mr. Jim Power of St. Vincent de Paul, the Garda Traffic Corps, Mr. Ciarán Cuffe, T.D. of the Green Party and Ms. Jill Carey of Festine Lente. A number of further talks are planned for the final term.

**The myriad of activities listed in the previous pages took place in the main outside the classroom. All of the games, the tours, the debates, the concerts, the pilgrimages and the competitions could not take place without the support and encouragement of the staff. As I alluded to at the last Whole School Assembly on Friday, it is so important for the students to thank their teachers for the work they do in the classroom with them, and for all of the help and support they give outside the classroom also.**

**May I wish you and your family an enjoyable Easter. We look forward to the busy Summer Term and the joys that it will hold for us.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**Tom Geraghty.  
HEADMASTER.**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

<i>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April</i>	<i>Term commences</i>
<i>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April</i>	<i>Sports Barbeque</i>
<i>Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April</i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Year Subject Options Evening</i>
<i>Monday May 7<sup>th</sup>.</i>	<i>Bank holiday – no school</i>
<i>Tuesday May 8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Summer Concert</i>
<i>Thursday May 10<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Golf Tournament in Druids Heath</i>
<i>Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Senior School Family Tennis</i>
<i>Monday May 21<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>Transition Year Parents' Evening – 7.30 p.m</i>
<i>Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Valedictory Ceremony</i>
<i>Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Prize and Sports Day</i>
<i>Monday May 28<sup>th</sup> / June 1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>Summer Exams commence</i>
<i>Friday June 1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>Term ends.</i>