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Inside this issue:

- Ógra Fianna Fáil's "Pimp My Party" Recruitment Campaign
- Its show time - Get involved in the election campaign
- Greater Access to Third Level Education
- Q & A with Minister for Children Brian Lenihan TD

Cathaoirleach's Address-
Barry Andrews TD

I hope you all enjoyed the summer break and are now fighting fit and ready for the busy times ahead. Thank you for all your hard work to date. I urge Ógra members to get out now and be active in your community by organising local recruitment days, canvassing with election candidates and driving voter registration. Support is available from the National Youth Committee and Party Headquarters for these activities.

I have been very impressed by the commitment of the Ógra units I have visited recently and I hope to meet with Ógra units throughout the country over the coming months.

Some challenging areas remain in terms of getting certain Ógra units established and it is crucial that senior members do not stand in the way of full participation of younger members at all levels of the party.

Since the last youth conference, I have asked the National Youth Committee to focus especially on topical issues and to bring a different perspective to resolving the challenges affecting young people today. We have already made recommendations to Fianna Fáil Ministers on matters of Road Safety, Education and Foreign affairs and we will be launching some key campaigns over the coming months.

Finally, I look forward to meeting all Ógra members at the 70th Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis on November 4th where Ógra will be holding a special event that weekend for all younger Party members.



Ógra Cathaoirleach Barry Andrews TD & Leas-Cathaoirleach Anthony Kelly launch the new look Ógra website

Dates for the diary

- October 13th -15th Cruinniú Eamon deValera – Ógra Irish Language and Culture School, An Daingean, Co. Chiarraí
- October 14th Annual Eamon DeValera Commemoration Ennis Co. Clare
- October 15th Annual Wolfe Tone Commemoration , Bodinstown Co. Kildare
- November 4th 70th Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, City West Conference Centre, Dublin
- December 1st Cairde Fáil Taoiseach’s Dinner, City West Hotel. Dublin
- February 16-18 2007 Fianna Fáil National Youth Conference, Galway

Thanks to all those who've helped to put this issue of Grassroots together. Special thanks to Minister Brian Lenihan, Cathy Herbert, John Sheridan, Peter Doris, Brian Nolan, Anthony Kelly, Barry Andrews, Maeve Donlon, Declan Jackson, Jimmy Healy, Daniel Carry, the Ógra National Youth Committee, Gary Gartland and Neworld, Colman Byrne, Clara and all in Foresight Communications.

The next issue of Grassroots will be published at the Ard Fheis. If you have any suggestions for stories then please drop an email to ogra@fiannafail.ie Grassroots is always looking for photographs from Ógra events so if you do have any Ógra related pictures then please do send them to us. Be sure to submit notices to the Ógra website www.ogra.ie or any articles for inclusion in our weekly ezine.

If you would like to subscribe to the ezine or have queries about any Ógra events then please contact National youth Officer Aidan O’Gorman in Fianna Fáil HQ.

Leas Cathaoirleach update

Firstly, if you have just joined the party in your college, I would like to welcome you to Ógra and Fianna Fáil. In a new, modern and diverse Ireland, where we cherish the values of freedom and democracy, you too can play your part, you too can voice your opinion. An active involvement in politics makes you a player, someone who scores, not someone who shouts from the sideline. We cannot predict the future but through politics we can contribute to the way it is shaped. Fáilte go dtí an pháirt!

It has been a very busy time for the Youth Committee since our first meeting in Killarney in April. We have been working with enthusiasm to implement some changes to Ógra, changes we believe will be of great benefit to us in our efforts now and in the future.

The new Ógra website is a fantastic tool and should be utilised by all members to their advantage. It is more interactive than ever and retains some of the features of the old website such as the discussion forum.

Ógra will be running some campaigns over the next number of months on road safety and voter registration and along with our annual pre-budget submission we will be producing a detailed policy document on youth suicide and depression, its causes, effects and our recommendations.

We will be concentrating very much on our recruitment initiative in colleges and towns throughout the country and we will be giving all the support necessary to ensure that our Northern members set up active Fianna Fáil societies in the six counties, a huge progression in the history of Fianna Fáil. The Ógra parachute jump for charity will take place in Coleraine, Co. Derry and a Youth Committee meeting will follow.

The first Cruinniú Eamon deValera – the Ógra Irish and Culture School, will take place in An Daingean, Co. Chiarraí from Friday October 13th to Sunday 15th. This will be a major gathering to which all members of Ógra are invited. Further details will follow very shortly and I would encourage as many of you as possible to come along for what promises to be a great weekend. On behalf of the Youth Committee, I wish you all a very successful year in college, and encourage you to stay active in Ógra. Have your say.

- Is mise le meas,
- Anthony Kelly
- Leas Chathaoirleach Ógra

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Pimp [Verb] Origin-
American Slang: To make "cool", or desirable, hip and stylish, accessorising to improve and add value. In large part, we have MTV's popular show "Pimp My Ride," to blame - or thank - for the use of "pimp" as a verb.

This year’s Third Level Recruitment Campaign calls on new members to “Pimp my Party”. You are asked to bring your energy and ideas, to make Fianna Fáil even better and stronger.

This theme is appropriate because when making the decision to join a political party you do so because you want to bring about change and improve your community and country.

You have your own ideas and will influence the Fianna Fáil Party and its policies. Political involvement demands a personal touch beyond unquestioningly accepting the party line. In Fianna Fáil you are invited to challenge the status quo by getting involved and expressing your opinions.

Fianna Fáil is a party that listens to the concerns of all; our members are the conduit for this process. As a member you will get to know many politicians and influence their views. You can shape Ireland’s future by campaigning for Fianna Fáil’s candidates and ensuring the continued implementation of Fianna Fáil policies

that have resulted in a more prosperous and fairer society. You may even wish to stand for election yourself and have further opportunity to represent people and implement change.

Fianna Fáil has constantly attracted the best and brightest to its ranks. At various pivotal stages in the party’s history, younger generations have come to the fore to lead the party into new areas of growth.

Fianna Fáil has always been driven by visionary input from the young. This has ensured that we have remained the most successful political party in Ireland. We have more achievements to be proud of than any other party and we will not rest until we have built an Ireland that is generous, inclusive and truly cherishes all our citizens young and old. Joining Fianna Fáil -“Pimping our party”- will help us to continue our work of building a better Ireland.

This is your opportunity to make a difference.



Leas Cathaoirleach Ógra Anto Kelly has a few words of advice for An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD.

Delivering Greater Access to third Level Education

A recent report by the Higher Education Authority entitled 'Who Went To College in 2004' has shown a major increase in third level participation. The report found that 55% of 17-19 year olds nationally entered a third level college in 2004, up from 44% in 1998. This startling increase over just a six year period shows that the creation of over 34,000 extra third level places by this Government is having an extremely positive impact.

In reality, the numbers of students furthering their education is actually much higher. The 55% figure does not include those numbers who would have gone to college in the UK or Northern Ireland (approx 5%), commenced Post Leaving Certificate Programmes (an estimated further 16%) or undertaken apprenticeships.

Young people from Sligo are the most likely to go to third level, according to the HEA report, with 71% of 17-19 year olds from the county entering third level in 2004 - way ahead of the national average of 55%. The other counties in the top 5 were Galway, Kerry, Mayo and Leitrim.

Overall, eight counties had participation rates over the 60% mark.

2004 also saw a substantial increase in the admission rates for all parts of Dublin. A 13% increase on its 1998 figure saw Dublin move closer to the national average as admission rates for all of its post codes rose.

According to Minister Hanafin, the most satisfying finding of the HEA report is that the number of young people from areas like Finglas, Ballymun, Tallaght and the North Inner City in Dublin doubled over the six year period. "Although participation rates are still very low in these areas, the fact that the numbers doubled in just six years shows that the supports this Government has put in place to help young people from disadvantaged areas



Minister for Education Mary Hanafin TD with Davinia and Evelyn Kingston from Cork South West Ógra

to finish school and go on to college have made a difference. And I have no doubt that the new action plan for targeting disadvantage being implemented this year further improve the opportunities available to young people from disadvantaged areas around the country", the Minister said.

As well as providing greater resources to help students from disadvantaged areas to do well at school, Minister Hanafin is determined to improve the financial support available to less well-off students at third level.

During the summer she announced an increase of 22.5% in the top-up grant as well as an increase in the regular maintenance grant levels. This follows on from a 20% increase in the top-up grant in 2005.

The maximum grant available in 2006/07 is now €5,970 including the top-up grant - compared with just €2000 when the

maintenance grant is €3,110 this year, while students who qualify for grant assistance also have the student service charge paid on their behalf.

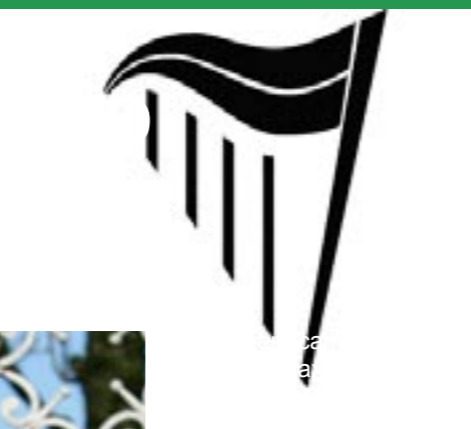
More than 50,000 students qualify for a maintenance grant, with more than 12,000 of those getting the top-up grant as well. In 2006, over €228 million has been allocated to meet the costs of the grant schemes administered by the Department of Education.

The income limits for ordinary maintenance grants have increased by 5.3% for the 2006/07 academic year. This is ahead of the increase in the average industrial wage for the September-to-September reference period and ahead of the current inflation rate. The top income limit for grant eligibility, where there are less than four dependent children, now stands at €46,700.

Minister Hanafin has also announced that a new Student Support Bill is being drafted which will provide for significant reforms in the administration of the grant schemes. Under new arrangements being put in place for next year, students can expect to get paid their grants much earlier.

Minister Hanafin said, "As a Government, we have consistently prioritised increases in the student maintenance grants rate and in the income thresholds for grant qualification. I am delighted to again be able to deliver an extremely substantial increase in the 'top-up' rate for this academic year.

"I am determined to target financial supports at those students with the greatest need. Greater participation and equitable access are vitally important if the fruits of the economy are to be enjoyed by all."



"It's Show Time" Join the election campaign



Election fever is in the air. The 2007 General Election will decide the direction of Irish politics for the next five years. Ógra is committed to working for the re-election of a Fianna Fáil government. We are determined to continue the most successful and dynamic leadership in the history of our state. There is no more exciting time to join Fianna Fáil and to really get involved.

Fianna Fáil candidates value highly the energy and enthusiasm Ógra have traditionally brought to their campaigns. Much work has to be done, whether it's canvassing at the door steps, preparing literature, highlighting issues, getting the vote out, or convincing potential voters. Now is the best time to get actively involved in politics. You will become part of a team of diverse and interesting people.

On the campaign trail you will make many new friends and quite simply enjoy yourself. You will be part of a committed team and your affinity to Fianna Fáil and to your candidate will grow. You will develop new skills such as; canvassing, persuasion, how to use the electoral register and how to connect with people. By the end of the campaign you will be a master of the art of tallying and understand the electoral process. The fundamentals learnt will stay with you throughout your career.

This election is an opportunity for Fianna Fáil members to assert the successes of Fianna Fáil and to tell of our vision to ensure that our achievements in creating a modern, highly educated and prosperous society will be built on and further improved. It will be a challenging campaign and we need all the help you are willing to offer.

If you have any time to give, contact your local cumann, public representative or Fianna Fáil headquarters and you'll be put in touch with the Fianna Fáil candidate for your area. Get involved and make a real difference.



Right: Meath West Ógra out campaigning in Navan
Left: Niamh muldoon canvasses in Portlaoise



Brian Lenihan TD



In Grassroots' regular feature, Minister for Children Brian Lenihan TD has kindly agreed to answer questions submitted by Ógra members

1) If you could have a ministerial portfolio of your choice what would it be and what would you like to achieve while there?

I've been very fortunate in Public life, I was made chairman of the All Party Committee on the Constitution a year after I was elected. I chaired that for five years. I think in general I gave satisfaction in my work in that respect and for the last four years I have been Minister for Children and I must say it is the portfolio of my choice now that it has full presence at the Cabinet table. I enjoy it very much and I get a lot of satisfaction from my work.

2) What do you believe has been your greatest challenge or accomplishment since your appointment as Minister for Children?

Well there are a number of issues I've been working on as Minister for Children. I launched a major national play strategy in 2004. As a result of that there has been a huge increase in the amount of playground infrastructure in Ireland. We persuaded the Department of Justice to establish a dedicated youth justice strategy. We will now eliminate the prison service from the custody of all children under the age of eighteen and that's certainly something I'm very proud of. I've introduced reform in the whole area of adoption and foster care. We had the Contact preference register established so that people can voluntarily find each other. So there are a number of issues I've been working at and again I could go on the list but I think they're areas where I have made a difference, where I have actually been able to do things myself.

3) In light of the controversy surrounding the Mr A case, who do you feel should take responsibility for the mess that unfolded?

The first point about the A case was that it's a Supreme Court decision so there was nothing the Government could have done before, during or after the Supreme Court decision that would have made any difference to the decision and I think that's a very important point that has been somewhat overlooked in the public debate about the A case. We have to respect and accept that Supreme Court decision and work on it and I'm glad that we did get legislation through that at least provided a measure of protection when the Supreme Court declared the section to be unconstitutional. We have now established an All Party Committee on Child Protection and the Opposition spokes persons and Minister McDowell and myself are all on this committee and I hope we can make progress on that in the months ahead.



Brian Lenihan TD

4) Do you think that sixteen year old teenagers are mature enough to make their own decisions about consenting to sex?

Some persons by the way have criticised me and said it's absurd that I should be even talking to children about this, well I don't agree with that. I think it's very important that we certainly talk to fifteen, sixteen and seventeen years olds about what they think the law should be but their view can't be conclusive on it.

5) Has your appointment as a 'super' Junior Minister given you great insight into the workings of Cabinet and what difference has this made?

The basis upon which I have been asked to attend Cabinet meetings is to provide a distinctive voice on children's issues at the Cabinet. I think that's very valuable because every Government decision then is checked by me and my officials to see whether it is a child-friendly approach and I think that's a valuable change in the Government. Of course it has given me a huge insight into the workings of Government because I am at all the Government meetings and it is a great privilege to be part of the Government, part of the team and to see what's going on there and to participate in the decisions a Government arrives at. The Office of the Minister for Children spans three Departments, Health, Justice and Education but all of the civil servants involved in the children's issues in the three Departments work well under one roof.

6) Charles Haughey once said that every young TD from the day they enter Dáil Eireann dreams of being Taoiseach. If you were Taoiseach for one day, what would you like to change?

Well I have to disagree with Charles Haughey because on the day I entered Dáil Eireann it didn't cross my mind that I might be Taoiseach. Well I think every Taoiseach of Ireland has to look at the whole question of Northern Ireland and see how a unity of hearts can be created between all the Irish people because the reconciliation of the Irish people is something which is a very

deep ambition of mine. I think that the border that we have in Ireland is an artificial boundary. I don't believe it has worked and I believe the only way it can be beaten down is through a reconciliation of all the Irish people fulfilling Wolfe Tone's dream of reconciling Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter and substituting for them the common name of Irishmen. I don't believe incidentally that Sinn Féin, who talk a great deal about Irish unity, have any real practical policy for securing it. They seem to be deeply enmeshed in tribal communal politics in Northern Ireland and they are as much a part of the problem as part of the solution but a solution has to be found and the leadership has to come within this part of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland to that issue.

7) The pundits are talking up Fine Gael, will Fianna Fáil continue to lead the country after the next general election?

If you look at the polls it's not correct to suggest that Fine Gael has gained huge momentum but there's no doubt that because we have been in Government now for nine years, we're under challenge in the next general election I think it's important for the country that we provide a central position in the next Government. I am not impressed with the quality of the opposition parties in Dáil Eireann today. To me they seem to be a very fragmented group of individuals, very disparate opinions.

In the last few weeks of the last Dáil session, it was very unusual to find them voting the same way on any one question and that's very unusual for opposition parties. The alternative has not demonstrated itself to be capable and it's quite obvious that there's no massive surge in support for the Labour-Fine Gael axis.

8) What in your opinion is the legacy of your father Brian Lenihan to Fianna Fáil?

Well when I was selected first as a candidate, I said to the party convention that if I could do half as much in my time and generation as he did in his, I'd be a very proud man.

9) Your father was a hugely talented and popular politician, do you hold any grievance with Charles Haughey or the PDs over what happened and what was the significance of you being asked to take part in the ceremony at Charles Haughey's funeral?

I certainly don't have any grievance with either the late Charlie Haughey or the PDs over what happened to my father during the famous presidential election of 1990. I don't believe that bitterness is helpful in politics and in relation to the ceremony at Charles Haughey's funeral. I was very honoured to be asked by the family to read a lesson at his funeral. Clearly you do anything you can do to assist a family who are in grief, it's an important Irish custom. I think respect for the dead is an important part of Irish culture that we should remember.

80^ú bliain de Fhianna Fáil

Le Dónal Ó Carraidh

Bhí slua breá mór i láthair ag an ócáid stairiúil den chomóradh 80ú bliain de Fhianna Fáil ar an 14 Bealtaine. Bhí aitheascfear iontach beomhar i dTeach an Ardmeáara agus bhí craic agus spraoi ag gach uile duine a bhí ann.

Thosaigh an oíche le taispeántas iontach speisiúil de chuid sean postaeracha de bholscaireacht Fhianna Fáil agus grianghraifeanna de ceannairí na páirtí tríd na blianta.

Bhí an craoltóir Mary Kenny mar láithreoir don ócáid agus labhair sí ar dtús ar seanchas Fhianna Fáil agus ar na méid daoine a bhfuil tarraingt acu leis an bpáirtí tríd na mblianta. Chuir sí fáilte mhór go háirithe roimh Iar Uachtaráin Pádraig Ó hÍrghile agus Iar Thaoiseach Ailbe Mac Raghnaill a bhí ina láthair agus ar na daoine a tháinig i láthair roimh na hiarcheannairí den pháirtí. Go mór mór chuir sí fáilte mhór Seán agus Eoghan Ó hEochaidh a bhí ann in áit Iar Thaoiseach Cathal Ó hEochaidh agus bhí buala bos iontach mhór ann nuair a bhí a ainm luaite.

Thug an aisteoir cáiliúil Barry McGovern léiriú ar an gcéad óráid a thug Éamon De Valera ag an gcuinníú san amharclann La Scala ar an 16 Bealtaine 1926.

Tar éis sin, thug An tAire Stát Brian Lenihan TD cuntas ar stair Fhianna Fáil agus ar cuspóirí agus polasáí Fhianna Fáil tríd na mblianta.

Ansin thug aoi speisialta an ócáid An Taoiseach Parthalán Ó hEachtairn TD, Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil, a óráid fhéin ina labhair sé faoin grá don tír seo atá ag Fianna Fáil agus faoin poblachtánachas praiticiúil atá againn i bhFianna Fáil, poblachtánachas atá réalaíoch agus a thugann meas don Bhunreacht ina bhfuil ár stat bunaithe.

Tar éis na óráidí bhí píosa ceoil leis na Celtic Tenors agus tháinig ardphointe na hoíche nuair a chan siad seanamhráin Fianna Fáil..... "Soldiers of the Legion of the Rearguard".



27th Ógra Conference



Questions and Answers Ogra Style: Fionnán Sheehan, The Irish Independent, Iggy Ó Muircheartaigh President NUIG, Cllr Malcolm Byrne, Minister Brian Cowen TD and Mary Cunningham Director NYCI.



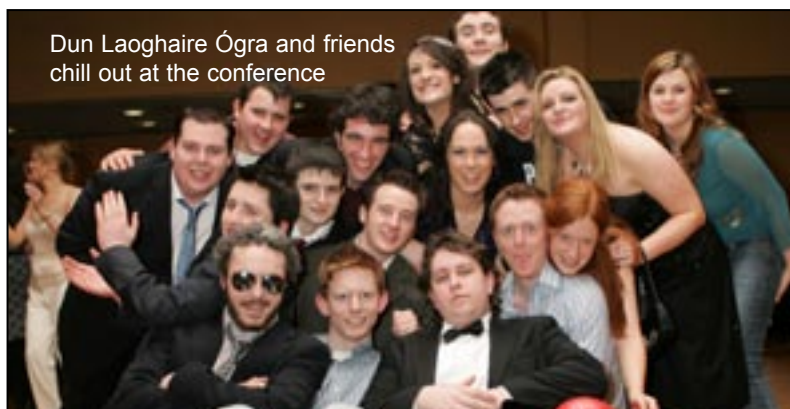
"Minister Mary Hanafin talks to incoming Leinster Ard Comhairle Rep Brian Nolan



Delegates enjoy the craic at the National Youth Conference"



An Taoiseach with members of Dublin Central Ógra



Dun Laoghaire Ógra and friends chill out at the conference



Outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach Michael Shovlin with Nicholi Cody of the Youth Committee



Delegates enjoy the music of Eirn's Fury



Some of the Dublin South Delegates at the Conference Banquet



Minister Eamon Ó Cuív. presents the DeValera debating cup to Peter Doris & James Carroll from UCD



Lorcan Price Galway West, Emma Brennan Roscommon, Tiernan Brady Donegal and Enda Heslin NUIG



Cllr Cathal Crowe addresses a workshop along with Sean O Neachtain MEP and Nicholi Cody