



Louisburg College COLUMNS

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Ireland Spotlight

by Becky Kroeger

Sinead Gilhooly of Southern Ireland and John Rodgers of Northern Ireland are first-year students here at Louisburg College. They both learned about the opportunity to spend a year in the United States from the BEI Agency in Belfast, Ireland. The Business Education Initiative was founded by Brian Smart and led by the "one and only" Tony League. The purpose of sending Irish students to the U.S. is to allow them to study business and promote tourism. During the first year, there were only 19 different places, but in the last three years the program has grown to 170 places. After successfully completing two interviews, the agency chose Louisburg College for them. John looked up information on the Web about Lou-U before he accepted the offer. Sinead had never been to the United States before this year. She has recently visited New York, New Jersey, and Florida and just visited Texas over spring break. John, on the other hand, visited the USA for the first time when he stayed with a Catholic family for six weeks in Buffalo. When asked about Louisburg and



life here in the United States, Sinead commented, "Louisburg is a small school where we are getting a great amount of personal attention." John mentioned, "It seems as if every town has the same fast food restaurants. Back in Ireland, there is a better variety." He commented that a big difference between Ireland and the USA is that the drinking age is 18, in Ireland but here it is 21. "That was hard to get used to at first, especially since I live in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, where there are 20 pubs within 5 minutes walking distance," John added. People often ask Sinead about her homeland. She said that she would like to set a few things straight. "No,

there are no leprechauns in Ireland and we do not wear kilts. We speak English though sometimes we also speak Gaelic, our native language. In Southern Ireland our main sports are Gaelic football and hurling, while soccer and rugby are played in Northern Ireland," Sinead said. She also added, "Most students in Ireland do not have a car until they have completed college or out on their own. There really is no need to have a car since everything is within walking distance." Sinead responded to a St. Patrick's Day question by saying, "In Ireland, St. Paddy's Day is a religious day. There is a main parade in Dublin, while smaller towns have parades as well."

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