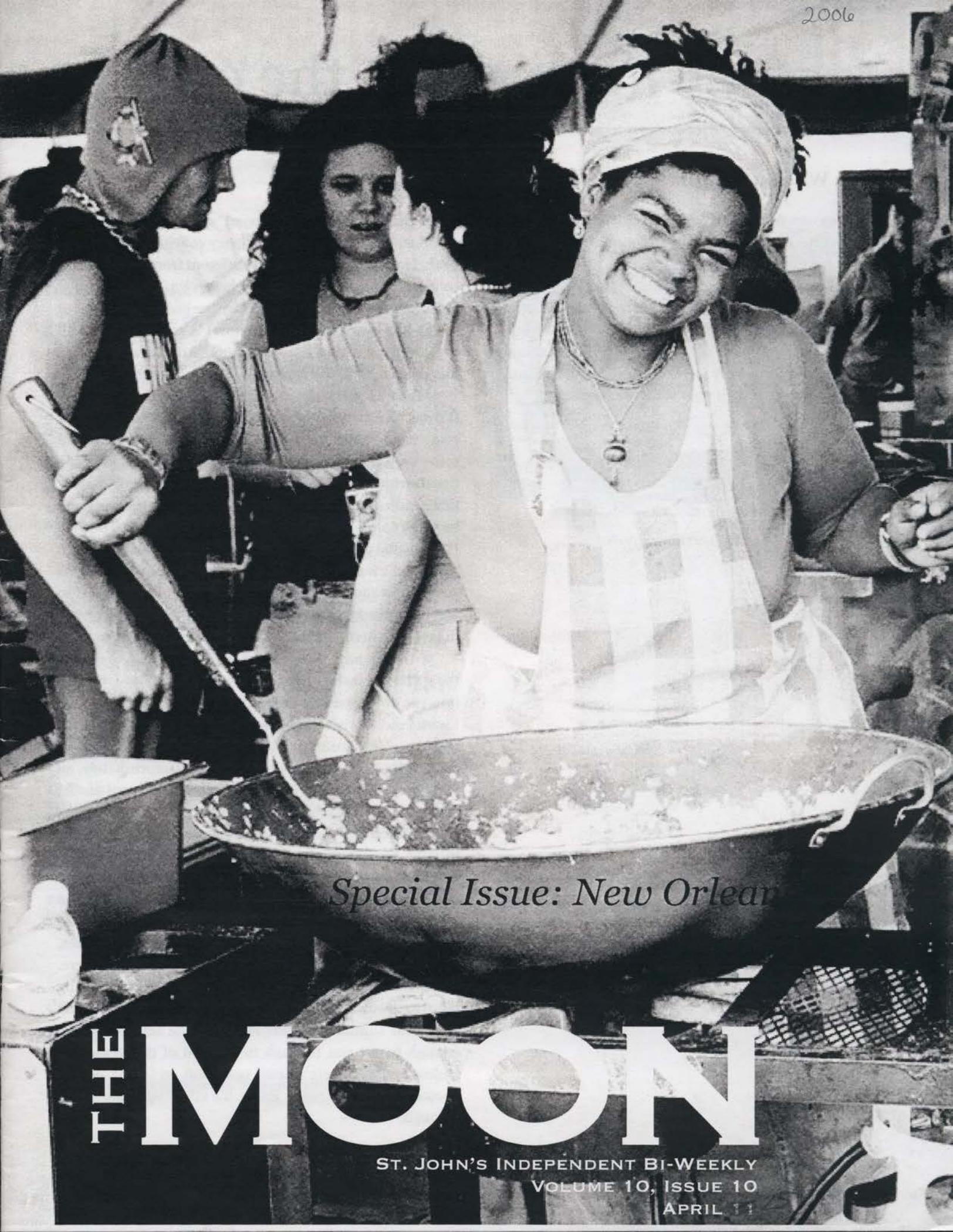


2006



*Special Issue: New Orleans*

# THE MOON

ST. JOHN'S INDEPENDENT BI-WEEKLY  
VOLUME 10, ISSUE 10  
APRIL 11

# from the editors

## Adam Willson

We're very sorry this issue is so late in coming. Lately, we have had so few submissions and very very few that have met any deadline. You, fellow-students, seem to be growing more and more tired or lazy, etc. Well, so am I. All of my free-time is occupied by napping (a lot of my not-so-free time, as well). And considering that it is just another late night when I'm writing this and that I need to get up early for work, I bid you adieu and publicly sympathize with your state of exhaustion.

## Trystan Popish

Having reached my second spring semester as a Johnnie, I'm wondering if ordinary colleges are like this. Yeah, I know, St. John's is very different from any ordinary college. We do magical things here. But do students at other schools get this worn out by the end of the year? It seems like everyone (including me) is so exhausted, and we've still got a month left of school. An entire month. Is this normal, or is there something seriously wrong?

More importantly, is there something we can do? It'd be nice if there were some kind of pill to take, or some magic tonic that would reenergize us all. I'd award someone a Nobel Prize if he/she could invent it (assuming that I actually got to decide who got the award). Okay, that's ridiculous, I admit, but it seems like there should be some solution. At least, I'd really like there to be one. It's a dismal prospective, knowing that every spring, when the world's waking up again, all I'm going to want to do is sleep, or at the very most watch movies. I don't want to feel like doing my homework is like pulling teeth. I want to be committed, maybe even enthusiastic again!

If there's anyone out there who's managed to escape the spring semester melancholy/lethargy, I'd love to know how you do it. I personally don't know the solution, though I wish I did. I wish I had some great, fool-proof advice for you all, which, from my high pedestal as assistant editor of *The Moon*, I could shower upon you. Unfortunately, all I've got is a few words of encouragement. It's not much, and it's coming from someone who's just as rundown as you, but don't give up yet. In classes, in extracurriculars, in your relationships. Whatever. Hold on just a little longer. Before too long, we'll all leave this secluded world of ours for three whole months. It might go quickly, but it's a lot more time than it seems. It's plenty of time to remember what we left behind at our respective homes, and realize what sacrifices we're making to be here. Make sure your sacrifice is worth it, that you're getting out what you've put in to be here. And hey, maybe if you start your summer contemplation a little early, it will be enough to get you through to the end of this semester. Unless someone gets started real soon on the St. John's Second Semester Energy Elixir, it's all we've got to get us through.

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*photo by Chris Quinn*

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Adam Willson

*Editor*

Trystan Popish

*Assistant Editor*

Laura Waleryszak

*Moon Intern*

Timothy 'Manu' Meixell

*Layout Minstrel*

## Contributors :

Mark Ingham

David Netter

George Pogiatis

Margaret Odell

Adam J Braus

Benjamin Gaddes

Dauren Valez

Gretchen Oorthuys

Dan Grimm

Nick Christou

James Bixler

Tristan Chambers

Ilana Kirschbaum

Chris Quinn

Blake Hindley

Back Cover:

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The Moon is the independent bi-weekly student newspaper for St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As such, all opinions expressed within represent only the views of their respective authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the College, the Faculty, the Administration or the Moon Editors. Issues are available at no charge to all members of, and visitors to the campus, and yearly subscriptions can be obtained for \$30.

The Moon is composed of student works and all contributions are welcome, but the Editorial staff reserves the right to demand an indefinite amount of revision in order to uphold our strict journalistic standards and to ensure that each issue is relevant, informative, and damned fun to read.



STJOHN'S  
College

ANNAPOLIS - SANTA FE

## DON'T LIKE WHAT WE'RE DOING WITH THE MOON?

### COULD HAVE FOOLED US!

The editorial staff of the Moon is constantly bombarded with questions, comments, and threats about the content of this or that Moon issue. Our stock response is to gently suggest that the individual accosting us write a letter to the editor. Almost universally, this suggestion has the effect of causing him to stammer, avert his eyes, and shuffle away, often while muttering angrily under his breath.

Inevitably, no letter follows.

Why oh why are you so silent, campus mine? We want your input! Are you too meek to voice your opinions in a public forum, too lazy to type up a statement of your grievances, or do you simply have nothing to say?

C'mon. We know you've got at least 95 Theses in you. Nail 'em to the door.

Send constructives criticisms, destructive witticisms, or threats of death and dismemberment to [moon@sjsf.edu](mailto:moon@sjsf.edu).

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*Join us or suffer the  
Kantsequences...*

The Moon Editorial Staff now has the distinction of actually having staff members who are not editors. But they are few. So the call is going out for anyone interested in reporting, cartooning, layout, editing, making sweet sweet love, living, drinking, being the Dean, or self-actualizing. If interested, contact :

Adam Willson x4184 or  
Trystan Popish x4095

## Lament for My College

by Mark Ingham

I love the idea of St. John's College. I read the admissions brochure with joy and applied nowhere else. Therefore I am capable of disappointment and even hatred when I reflect on the reality of her many failures. Yet I have hope. In the spirit of hope for the future improvement of my college, I will take the first step and point out some glaring problems. To echo a memorable Don Rag, though I state my appreciation for St. John's very briefly, and dwell in greater length on my criticisms, I mean for the appreciation to be given the most weight. Having spent three years in Annapolis, and then having graduated last year from our Southwest campus, I shall critique both campuses as though they were one. The choice of drug is not particularly interesting.

Is St. John's College the place where children are made into free men and free women? Why do a pathetic number of alumni give annual gifts to their beloved college? We talk of virtue and the good, yet why do both campuses share the most typical problems of the mainstream American soul, even as seniors? If we seek to be healthy in body and soul, why does the college administration undermine us with a cafeteria system that serves the average American grub?

All too many graduates from St. John's College are not men, are not women, are not free, and are not even noble in their childishness. Many will be distinguished in their careers like the graduates of most

expensive east-coast colleges. But I do not foretell greatness. Great men and women, such as the authors we read, were nurtured in environments where the agon within the soul is taken seriously and where there are high standards of discipline. I would argue that so few alumni give to the college because of two reasons, 1) they are cynical about their education, or 2) they lack discipline. That the numbers are improving only as a result of fundraising efforts is disappointing.

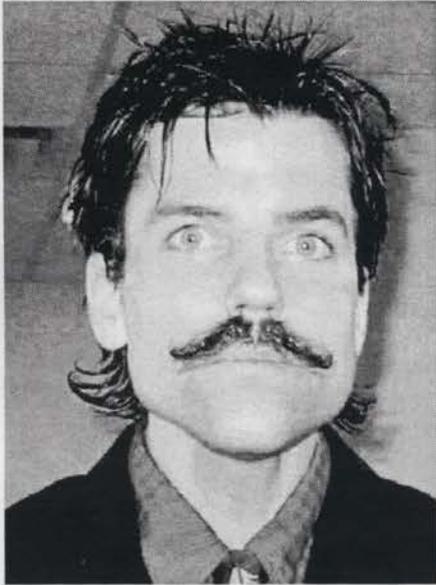
The stringent aroma of pot wafting down a hallway or across a quad was a daily occurrence in Santa Fe. Pot weakens the will and dulls the minds of some of our most brilliant Johnnies. This lowering of potential greatness to a lazy mean is all too common in the Southwest. It disappoints me that St. John's has failed to be an island isolated from the worst seductions of Southwest culture. Such telling clichés of "take it easy," and "chill out" confirm a prognosis for democracy even more chilling than de Tocqueville describes, and borders on Nietzsche's last man. Pot should not be tolerated on campus. This would not eliminate the problem, but at least it would be conducive to a culture of shame and danger around what is currently flaunted shamelessly. For those of you who continue to mindlessly repeat your pseudo-intellectual reasons for this drug, I recommend the punishment of translating Baudelaire's *The Poem of Hashish*.

As for the recently exposed secret of cocaine on the Annapolis campus? There are honest and noble ways to merit inclusion into an aristocratic elite. Cocaine is not one of them. The endurance of noble feelings is admirable, not their brief stolen intensity. Those who shame our college with cocaine provide just one more testimony to a liberal education that has failed to take root in their souls.

Given what I have just said, perhaps I contradict myself by supporting a wet campus. Although I remain disappointed by the many individual failures, I would not for this reason wish for the rest of us to be denied the opportunity to learn how to drink responsibly and openly among friends, loudly discussing Euclid's first definition. Our many discussions as RA's persuaded me that we will have fewer problems if alcohol does not have to be consumed in a secret corner of a dorm room or off campus among strangers (although a dry campus might result in more Darwin Award nominations among Johnnies). I am glad that the administration has so far had the courage to work with students to organize parties, rather than taking the path of least legal risk by outright prohibition.

Drugs, alcohol... oh yes, hip hop... There is occasionally a student that reads Plato's *Republic*, takes seriously the idea that regularly listening to music with the beat of sexual intercourse might make their souls more trivial and bestial,

*Lament/ continued on page 6*



*Mark Ingham, himself*

and has the courage to experiment with changing their received musical habits. I admired these classmates, and was disillusioned by the indignant jeers of the Johnny majority. Of course, this is one of the ironic instances when a rare soul might be made better for having to walk alone and overcome much. Yet I cannot help but be sorry for those who shamelessly hold their membership in the mainstream American herd, especially at a liberal institution which boasts of rising above the indignations of received opinion.

How would Plato judge the gamers who spend their leisure time in virtual reality fantasies rather than doing their seminar readings, or testing their bodies against other men and women in real contests? Is there a possible reasoned defense for gamers?

As for sex? I insist that those smooth tongued Johnnies who practice rhetoric for selfish and shortsighted sexual gratification or business success have not paid close attention to Plato's Gorgias. What is the state of one's conscience who reads the Phaedrus and yet refuses the beautiful challenge of doing what is best for their beloved? I blame a Johnnie for reading the Phaedrus and yet charging confidently forward with the unbridled passion of their black horse. I also blame a Johnny who did not read the Phaedrus. Such Johnnies should not be called liberally educated, nor ladies and gentlemen. Such souls remain petty and nurture a culture that is typical and uninteresting.

I'm sorry to bring up the distasteful topic of our cafeteria food, especially following the topic of sex. I mean no offence to the people who work in the cafeteria. I blame two groups for the unhealth forced upon all of us who value the on-campus mealtime conversations: 1) the stubborn opinions of "liberal arts" students who insist on white bread and french fries; and 2) the administrators who ignore the problem and fail to guide the college community in a better way. Food habits perpetuated at St. John's College are largely to blame for the unexceptional physique of the average alum. Typically we are pale and either as flabby or as gaunt as the average American. Too often we are the sophists of Aristophanes, not the philosophers of Plato.

Being liberally educated by great books in a place of weakness, unhealth, and stubborn indignation might be ideal. A rare and great soul might be nurtured at St. John's College without changing anything. Exceptional human beings overcome much. The contradictions between word and deed, and the evident lack of distress over these contradictions allow phenomenal insight into the state of American souls. The predominance of psychiatric medications among Johnnies proves much to the astute observer. And the predominance of cigarette smokers gives evidence for collective nihilistic despair about the future. No doubt many Johnnies will be "successful." We learn how to use words to influence or rule in politics and education. But are we better human beings, living fuller and healthier lives? When I read the admissions literature, I hoped that the answer was yes. My experience has too often taught me otherwise.

I hope that this article contributes meaningfully to dialogue about what can be done to address the problem of St. John's College, and of liberal education in general. And I want more than an endless conversation of whether or not virtue is teachable. Dante's Limbo is not a place of hope. My ambition is to create a liberal arts college in Canada that will attract students who are both eminently critical and courageously hopeful. If you are serious about liberal education please email me, [markingham@gmail.com](mailto:markingham@gmail.com).

## On Living in the World of Appearances

by David Netter

I find it increasingly difficult to be anything but optimistic about this place. Take it as a challenge, if you will. The potential of change lies in whatever you perceive contrary to your aesthetic.

I sometimes describe things much too vaguely, and strangely it seems that I am often misunderstood. So by attempting to choose words carefully, the intricacy of the movement from thought to word is made more apparent to me. In trying to convey a feeling, human expression requires a bit of loose interpretation.

Can you see confidence in a person? St. John's teaches intellectual confidence as its secondary curriculum. Our thoughts shape the environment of the classroom. The action of our intellects upon the pattern of thought in the room is immediate

and far-reaching; one comment can change an entire seminar.

Emotion may or may not come into it. A heated seminar melts the ice of persona that sometimes causes intellectual motion to freeze. Let us be men as we speak to each other of virtue.

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In trying to convey a feeling, human expression requires a bit of loose interpretation.

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We enter into an unspoken agreement every time we sit down together. It is an honor to converse; it fulfills the longing every Johnnie feels before coming here. Let us truly feel the thoughts which arise. We are potent in our enthusiasm for the expression of thought.

We have all mastered inclination for the sake of the great. Think of going to a "normal" school and the clearer path of occupation that arises from becoming a business major. At St. John's College we do not endeavor overmuch to acquire worldly goods. Our dorms and living spaces sometimes exude a certain austerity which reminds one of a cloistered order.

It means something to be a Johnnie. It is a quality which we all express, combining an ideal vision of what it means to be human with the intellectual prowess needed to sustain a four year examination of humanity's progress in this collective endeavor.

If we didn't care we wouldn't be here. This statement is meant to remind us that the true meaning of St. John's is to uplift the common spirit which makes all of these works the work of us all.

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## Event News

Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>: A concert of songs in the Great Hall featuring Kirsten Lear, soprano and Robert Tweten on the piano.

Friday, May 5: Chrysostomos presents "Much Ado About Nothing"

Steven Crowell, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Rice University, our guest lecturer on Friday, April 14, 2006 said of his visit to St. John's College:

"And I truly relished the opportunity to give a talk at St. John's: the students and faculty I met were first-rate, and I learned a lot from the question session. It is wonderful to be able to converse with

such a smart, critical, and imaginative group. I hope the talk was well enough received not to cause you any residual difficulties..."

"And I had plenty of opportunity to enjoy both the lovely town of Santa Fe and the surrounding hills. Very impressive, and a spectacular place to pursue the life of the mind."

## Suggestions For Improving Seminar

by George Pogiatis

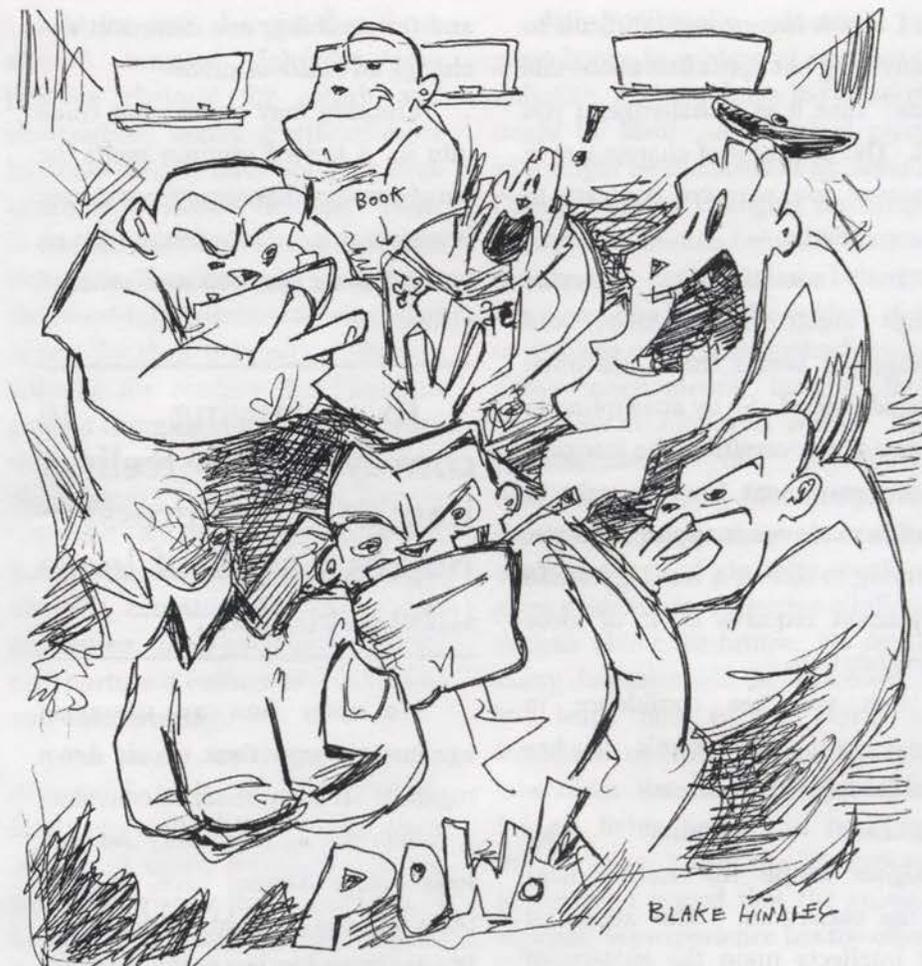
Too many questions are raised in seminar but insufficiently addressed. Quite often, after I ask a question, and someone replies, I am not fully satisfied with the reply. Yet, before I can follow up on the reply, often someone abruptly speaks of something that has no pertinence to my question. This happened to me at least four times in my last seminar alone.

This does not happen with my questions alone. For instance, I recall two instances in the last two weeks where the opening questions of our seminar tutors were abandoned before they were addressed with any sufficient depth; I was able to salvage one of these questions, but the other one was abandoned just as the questions I mentioned above were, despite my efforts to forestall this occurrence.

How can we learn anything from one another in such circumstances? I find it nearly impossible to learn much at all when such things happen; just thinking about it makes me wish to tear my hair out.

In order to rectify this situation, I propose the following suggestions:

1. If someone asks a question, either the seminar participants should seek to *answer it as thoroughly as possible*, or *one or more persons should argue why the question should not be addressed at all or with great thoroughness* (for instance, if the question asked is not very pertinent to the text, or requires that something else be discussed first, such as the meaning of a term



*This is what can happen to a seminar when fed after midnight (illustration by Blake Hindley)*

used in the question), but in no case should it be simply ignored.

2. If this rule is broken, and someone tries to change the topic, the person whose question was derailed should have the right to ask: "May I follow up to what was just said first?" and, with permission from the seminar participants, ask a follow-up question. Otherwise, it is likely that the question will be completely swallowed up.

3. The person who seeks to answer a question posed by another person should end his response by asking something like, "Did that answer or help us to come to an answer to your question?" especially if the response is complicated. Not only does this help insure that the questioner is sufficiently satisfied, but this is also conducive to having us listen closely to one another, since we do not want to be embarrassed by having others think that we were not listening.

*Seminar / continued on page 26*

## Fullbright Competition Opens

*from the desk of Margaret Odell*

The competition for Fulbright grants opens May 1, 2006. These grants are available to graduating seniors, rising seniors, graduate students and recent graduates. Fulbrights are intended specifically to offer the chance to young Americans who have not had the opportunity for extensive overseas travel to spend a year in a foreign country and to use that experience as a springboard to future careers. (Students who spent a year studying overseas during high school would still be eligible to apply.) Approximately 1,200 awards are available for international study or research in over 140 countries world-wide, along with Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships in over 20 countries. Fulbright grants provide funding for round-trip travel, maintenance for one academic year, health and accident coverage, and full or partial tuition. Applicants to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program must be US citizens at the time they apply and must have obtained at least a bachelor's degree by the beginning of the grant.

The application consists of a project statement, an intellectual biography, letters of recommendation, and, in some cases, proof of language proficiency. Fulbright projects must be feasible for completion in one year, with the resources available in the host country. Some countries require Fulbright recipients to attend classes as part of their project or to be affiliated with an educational institution that will facilitate their research.

Current students must be nominated by the college. (Graduating seniors and recent graduates can apply as "At Large" candidates, but will not have the added endorsement from St. John's.) Those seeking the college's nomination must submit their applications to the Fellowship Committee here on campus by September 20, 2006. The committee reviews the applications, interviews the applicants, and works with those students who are to be nominated, to make sure their applications are as complete and compelling as possible. The nominated applications are then submitted to the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York by October 20, 2006. IIE considers the applications and forwards them to Fulbright committees in the relevant countries for final approval. Successful applicants will be notified of an award in the spring semester, with the grant period normally beginning in late summer or early fall, 2007.

Fulbright grants are extremely competitive and the application process is complex, so students should not wait until late August to start their applications. Margaret Odell, Director of Career Services, is the Fulbright Program Adviser for the Santa Fe campus. Students who are interested in applying for a Fulbright award should meet with her before the end of the spring semester. She has more information about the application process, statistics on the number of applications received

Approximately  
1,200 awards  
are available for  
international study  
or research in over  
140 countries world-  
wide...

*Fullbright / continued on page 26*

## Nonviolence

by Adam J. Braus

During the early 20th century, many people laid the foundations for modernity. Concurrently, Picasso invented cubism, Joyce wrote *Ulysses*, Edison made the electric light bulb, and Ford made the Model-T. The modern ideas, conveniences and problems that define how we now think and live were founded between Bloom's day and the afternoon Archduke Ferdinand was killed by an agent of the Black Hand. Man in the west began to manipulate his surroundings more than ever before. Though nature still overwhelms any meager human attempt to control destiny, humans can now have an effect on their globe and know about the expanses of the cosmos.

The realm of political knowledge also made leaps and bounds, along with the technological and artistic. The causes of the first World War will be the foundry of the modern nation state and even modern globalization. Indeed, Wilson's fourteen-point plan for continual peace, including the league of nations, is in its essence the precursor to the United Nations -- the future of international relations.

Along with the political advancements of modernity came advancements in the way man conducted conflict. The devastation and mutilation of the first World War instantly comes to mind. With machine guns, planes, tanks, bombs, and battleships man will do more evil to man than any natural disaster or famine ever could. Hope can disappear in the clouds of mustard gas, between the cooling tanks of machine gun barrels. But -- and there is a 'but' -- most people are unaware of a different view of conflict that also came out of the foundry of the time period of which I speak.

In South Africa during the first decade of the 20th century, the small Indian minority fought the repressive government headed by General Smuts. The leader of this conflict was a young lawyer, Mohandas K. Gandhiji. Born in the Punjab, a western region of India, he trained as a lawyer in London for three years, and then returned to India until taking an offer to represent some Indian merchants in South Africa. (For more on Gandhi's life, I recommend his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, but beware: his autobiography will give no insight into his political or religious views.) That fight would coalesce into a political movement based on the new principles of "Satyagraha" roughly translated as "nonviolence," but more reminiscent of a kind of political stoicism.

The term "Satyagraha" does not mean nonviolence. It is a compound of two words from Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language that shares common roots with ancient Greek and Latin and even some with English (brother, mother, and father for instance, which are common to all four of the above languages). "Satya" is the plural neuter participle of the verb "to be." Therefore, it means something like "those things that are," or "reality" or simply "truth." (Ironically, Plato's word for 'truth' or 'reality' is grammatically the same form as "Satya," namely 'eontos'). "Agraha" is an adjective meaning "being solid, persistent, hard, firm, forceful." Together they most literally mean "firmness in truth." Other translations run "soul power" or "soul force" or "truth force."

What is this "soul force" as Martin Luther King, Jr. called it in his famous speech "I have a dream"? What are

the practical applications? "Firmness in truth" can have very practical and profound political meanings or it can be rather insubstantial. I will ignore the insubstantial side (pacifism) of it because it often just destroys itself without even needing any help from an opponent.

As I have just insinuated, Satyagraha is not pacifism. Once, Gandhi's own son asked him what he ought to have done if he had been at Gandhi's side when an attempt was made on his life. Gandhi's response: it is better to take up violence than to be a coward. In a funny way, the real world is just like the playground. It takes more courage and defiance not to deign to lower one's self to violent conflict. If you wish to know more about Satyagraha there are few books on the topic.

Satyagraha is realistically an antiquated idea. A sort of Model-T of nonviolent struggle. In foundry of history and most recently at the Albert Einstein Institution, the idea of nonviolent struggle, as a concrete form of manipulating political power and history itself, has been greatly improved, standardized, consolidated, and most importantly, made imminently communicable.

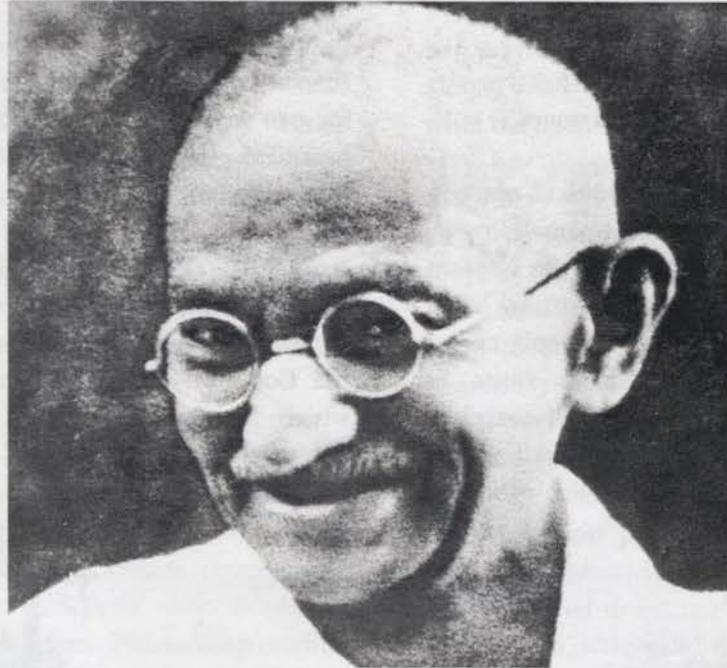
Nonviolent struggle, the modern form of Gandhi's Satyagraha, bases itself squarely on an axiom of political power theory. The power of government comes from the consent of the governed. At first glance this seems impossible but, when examined, exposes itself to be true. The government can coerce its citizens and threaten, punish and even kill, but they cannot 'make' you do anything without your consenting. This is the same between governments and people, businesses and people, between individuals, within families, everywhere this

# news & opinions

axiom of consent is present. With this truth locked firmly in mind the participants in a nonviolent struggle begin by examining their specific situation. They try to find the 'pillars of support' for the institution or individual they are trying to persuade to change, force to change, or dissolve completely as a contender for power. After the 'pillars of support' are accurately singled out and the goals of the campaign are delineated, a strategic plan is created in order to secure the goals of the nonviolent struggle. The whole process is very much like a war without violence.

Nonviolence wins by achieving its goals completely or partially. Victory is most often achieved by changing the mind of the opponent group, or forcing them through popular opinion or their own self-interest to submit to the demands or, possibly, by dissolving an opponent group by totally destroying their legitimacy and power base.

Nonviolent discipline must be maintained to bring into play one of the most powerful dynamics of nonviolent struggle: political ju-jitsu. Ju-jitsu is a striking grappling martial art that uses one's opponent's own force against them to throw them. In the case of nonviolent struggle, this is achieved by maintaining nonviolence in the face of violence. If a violent opponent uses violence against nonviolent people, many things happen. First, the opponent group loses unity because of the obvious injustice they are enacting. Second, the resistance group, the nonviolent resisters, gains in unity because they are practicing solidarity with one another against an outside oppressive group. Third, outside parties are likely to side with the resistance group, out of sympathy, against the oppressive group. All these things can, and have



many times before, lead to victory for the nonviolent resisters.

The opponents will often use agent provocateur to incite the nonviolent resisters to violence because **THEY WOULD PREFER A VIOLENT ENEMY**. This is very important to understand. Oppressors usually have the monopoly on brute force and violence. Even in antiquity, oppressors were aware of the power of the people when organized. Modern governments are even more aware. However, the power of the people can be violent or nonviolent. If organized in a violent manner, the oppressor's job is made that much easier, for the machinery of violence can be used, without guilt, to bring the blessings of order and stop the evil torch of anarchy. However, a nonviolent resistance organization will actually challenge the legitimacy of an opponent group's power. This hits them where it really hurts, and they will do all

in their already weakened power to slander and profane the just cause of the nonviolent resisters and try to provoke them to violence.

Nonviolent struggle is a weapon of the courageous—not of the coward. Nonviolent struggle is seen in increasingly wider circles in the hands of the disenfranchised to help bring about a more just world. The method of nonviolent struggle can also create injustice (for example, the boycotting of Jewish goods in Nazi Germany), but because nonviolent struggle bases much of its power on popular opinion, a blatant injustice will be weaker than a righteous cause. In essence, nonviolent struggle is a means towards revolution; it is a means towards upsetting the status quo. However, unlike the chaotic tool of violence, the tool of nonviolent struggle itself implies legality and political order.

## New Orleans Is Not a Poem

by Benjamin Gaddes

- Why do people love bullets?
- There is no synonym for tragedy: New Orleans is not a poem.
- Every time I look back at our trip to New Orleans, the smell creeps into my mind; sometimes I dream I am sweating and breathing hard, like I'm in the Tyvec suit again; sometimes my heart stops to think of the tyranny of ceaseless negligence and commotion that millions of Gulf Coast residents

suffer under every day: the tyranny which every last sense and sensibility of mine apprehended for two weeks, which most of our beautiful planet will suffer under for the rest of their lives.

- "H.O.P.E" stands for "Helping Other People in Every way." Project H.O.P.E. is a shoot-off of the Common Ground Collective, which has loose ties with E.C. (Emergency Communities), the organization that we stayed with.

What would it mean to Help Other People in Every way? Would this give hope to individuals, to all humanity, or to both? How can you effectively love your neighbor? How can there be a different welfare for the state and the individual if the state is comprised only of individuals?

- Back from New Orleans. First seminar. Machiavelli says that sometimes it is necessary to destroy a city in order to restore it. Bullshit. I haven't been talking very much in seminar lately. Something doesn't feel right.

- Many have labeled post-Katrina New Orleans the largest gentrification project in the history of the United States. For a long time, the majority of slaves to come to America came through New Orleans. Many families that still own property in New Orleans live in slave quarters that they inherited from their recent ancestors.

- Scene: the queue at the E.C. free store one afternoon. A man on crutches has most of his face bandaged. He explains to us that he was brutally assaulted by the police for re-entering his home. The police that beat him thought he was a looter. A few days later, a man with lockjaw hyperventilates through his sewn-up jaw like a Doberman, asking me where he can find a doctor. I was scared, and told him I had no answers.



*photo courtesy of Emergency Communities*

# new orleans

- The worst disease you can catch in New Orleans is paranoia. Our first night in New Orleans: four foreign vehicles with New Mexico plates pull up to a poorly lit convenience store. (We got lost trying to find E.C., or something.) Suspicious-looking men litter the parking lot. After driving for two days in a climate-controlled van, I am scared, to say the least. Several nights later, we pull into another convenience store parking lot. This time we plan to go inside. Before getting out of the vans, we remind each other to watch our backs, and stay with a buddy. Inside the store, there is a long line of residents, volunteers, and workers. Some are buying supplies; most are buying alcohol. A boy who appears to be about sixteen is approached by another younger boy with a cigarette behind each ear. The younger boy begs the older boy (the store owner) for a job, saying that he has nowhere else to go. "Are you old enough?" says the older one. Upon leaving the store, my fear suddenly turns to shame, remorse, and poverty. How could I have denied these struggling youths a place in my heart? What was I scared of? I must say, the first step to undoing any injustice is to recognize your own bigotry. I have struggled with this my entire life.
- Ezra and I are sitting in the Dome at E.C. one night, talking with a couple of residents. After reminding us that rock bands aren't what they used to be, one of the guys says, "Y'know, there have been a lot of attempts made to duplicate the 60s. Most don't come close. But let me tell you, this place is the 60s, in the best and worst ways."
- Since being in New Orleans, every time I am in a bathroom, a refrigerator, or a garbage heap, my olfactory system reminds me of the painfully toxic smells in New Orleans. Please keep reading – the stench of New Orleans is such an important part of the city's emotional infrastructure. If you haven't shoveled six-month-old meat from an abandoned supermarket, or pulled up a soggy carpet swamped with mold, floodwater, and feces, you simply don't know what I'm talking about.
- The smell will remain in New Orleans for many years, along with the forsaken people, their abandoned homes, and the love and hatred that they give and receive; they will continue to have rational fears and irrational desires; they will continue to try for a better life and accept others' charities with a bittersweet resentment; and, just like all of us, they will continue to defecate, smell, perish, rot, and pray.
- Most people who ask me about the trip want to know two things: most simply ask how it went; some ask what they can do to help (actually, very few people have asked me this). My response: the trip fucked us all up in many different ways. If you are willing to confront the paradox of humanity, and want to smell New Orleans for yourself, you should go and help. But, the truth is, whether or not you are brave or equipped, you must go; the pain and nausea of recollection prevent me from telling you otherwise. To any who are interested in going right after school ends, although I don't have any room in my car, we can form a caravan, or something. New Orleans needs you. Please contact me through campus mail, or at (516) 330 7078. And if you see me walking around campus, and want to know anything whatsoever, please confront me. I'm the smelly loser who hangs out in the library too much (no, the other one).
- This is my rhapsody: New Orleans is not a poem.
- Rilke: "You must change your life."

## Louisiana

by Dauren Velez

As I sit on the rocks by the calm Mississippi River, I wonder how I'll ever leave this place.

I came to St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana to spend my spring break in a way that I wouldn't regret. I'm usually all for a few weeks spent glued to my couch, relishing my remote privileges as the beloved college-student-turned-home. But for me, by the end of those weeks, the inevitable feeling of utter uselessness sets in. So this year I chose something a little different. I thought it would be a wonderful chance to put to use all of the vague, lofty ideals I have gained in my almost two year stint at St. John's. I'd put virtue into action; I'd translate the things I've learned into reality. Yet for about the millionth time in my life the situation delivered something entirely different than what I

expected. I'm really not quite sure why that surprises me anymore.

St. Bernard Parish isn't allowing me to practice anything theoretical that I have learned. This place and these people are teaching me. I watch residents slowly trickle back into this place, and do my best to feed and clothe them, but most of all to listen to them. They come back because this is home, and they teach me that I don't know what "home" means. They are allowed to come back partly by the work that volunteers do, and partly because they have a beautiful thing they call a community. Even before the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the residents of St. Bernard Parish were one big family. Now, instead of taking part in the strange, chaotic trend of blaming and division that Katrina has caused, they hold on to each other, their memories

and traditions, and hope. They tell me tales of individual heroism, rescues, and bravery, but I cannot help but be most affected by the tale of their community as a whole. The miracle of hope manifests itself in the banding together of individual human spirits. They've taught me this as well.

Today I worked at a station called the Distribution Tent. I spent the day handing out toiletries, milk, and cleaning supplies. And once again the residents of this amazing community surprised me. Their gratitude for these small items seemed almost disproportionate to me. I cannot imagine the pain they are in, and they still think to graciously and tearfully thank me for handing them a toothbrush. One woman stopped to talk to me, and asked where I was from. I explained that I was with a group of college students on spring break from Santa Fe. Without warning, this elderly woman began to cry. "We're just so grateful you would sacrifice your time to do this for us," she said through her tears, and then walked away before I had time to reply. I don't know if I could have. I was stunned that she would think to thank me for such a tiny sacrifice.

I gave two weeks of time that I would have spent on a couch, reveling in the fact that my little brother had to give up his remote. I would have placed this woman around seventy years old, and she has lost those seventy years in one horrific event. Two weeks are nothing; in



# new orleans



that moment I would have given my entire lifetime if it would have brought hers back. I can't imagine what it would take to go on without my home and my life, but through her tears she manages it. Emergency Communities, and the pre-existing and true home in St. Bernard Parish allow her to do so.

I sit here, watching boats lazily pass on the river, fighting off the mosquitoes that have come with the night, and I wonder: how am I going to leave? I've learned so much from this place, but most of all I've

learned that this disaster is not over. I'm surrounded by streets of houses torn in two, moved on top of cars, and unrecognizable as homes. The people trickle back in, and help clear the debris of their own wrecked houses. Much of the country has failed to realize that the end of the hurricane is not the end of the disaster. I had failed to realize that fully until it was staring me in the face. If you take anything from my experience, realize that. The storm has ended, but now the rebuilding has begun, and there is much to do.

Keeping these wonderful people in your thoughts and in your hearts would make for an excellent starting point. I know they will never leave mine.

I am so thankful for the experience that I've had here. I am also thankful for the friends who have sat with me on this night by the river, who journey with me through these two weeks and their lessons. Lastly, I am thankful for the opportunity to become a small part of this community, even if only for a short time.

## FEMA, in New Orleans

by Gretchen Oorthuys

One of the most highly publicized and concerning aspects of Hurricane Katrina is the Federal; Emergency Management Agency's handling of the situation, and where and how and why it failed to recognize and meet the needs of the people.

The free kitchen where the Johnnie group stayed over spring break just happened to be right across the street from a FEMA aid station, and several of us took the opportunity to walk over and see what was there.

To get there, we crossed a four-lane road that still has no traffic lights. There were no signs visible from the road indicating that the tents in the abandoned Wal-mart parking lot were distributing federal aid; the one sign was written with red spray-paint on a piece of scrap wood. It read "Disaster Relief Services."

Our initial visit happened after the Christian group that shared the parking lot had closed for the night, so there were a lot of abandoned tents and few people to tell us what we were looking at. Wandering around, we found the FEMA tent, a doublewide trailer serving as a pharmacy, and a series of trailers that were being made into a medical station. The FEMA tent was still open, so I tried to walk in and see what services were offered. Armed private security guards were standing at the front desk, and because I am not a resident of New Orleans, I was unable to enter the building or find out anything about what happened inside it. Later, we found out that

the security firm, Blackwater, that FEMA hired in New Orleans has sent a large number of guards to Iraq. It is commonly understood that the guards in New Orleans wish they were overseas, receiving hazard pay.

Looking around, we also managed to completely miss the barricades intended to keep the general public from the Christian tents, and were asked by lingering workers to leave. The workers were not particularly polite, and implied that they suspected us of trying to steal their supplies.

In general, the experience was far more tense and combative than any we had experienced. Granted, we were used to our little hippie commune and the sort of people who advertise that they serve love daily, but it was a very different atmosphere.

FEMA's hours are the same as those of any office. They open at 9 and close at 5, Monday through Friday. The next time I went over, I left at 8:30 so I could talk to people waiting outside. Chris Quinn came with me and, while I found out what actually happens inside the FEMA tent, he was accosted by private security guards. Fortunately, he met a man from the Christian group first, and was allowed to remain in the parking lot and be shown around their tent. The Christian group catered to the parish of one specific church, and even in that small community, Chris was met by some with hostility and suspicion.

Meanwhile, back in front of the FEMA tent, I was talking to a woman and a man sitting on the curb, waiting to apply for aid. The woman's voice broke just telling me that inside the tent, you could apply for a FEMA trailer, other forms of aid, and a small business loan. Once you got rejected for that loan, FEMA would accept your application for a different loan. She walked away from me after answering my questions, and sat in her car. The man was more willing to talk, but not about FEMA. He told the sort of story that everyone in New Orleans has heard or told a thousand times. He stayed behind while his parents and daughter evacuated, and didn't realize how bad it was going to get until the next morning, after the storm, when cars were floating down the street and a man ran into his house and told him a twenty-foot wave was coming. He spent the next three days on his roof after breaking out of his attic with the barbells he'd kept up there since the eighties.

At that point in his story, a security guard came and opened up the doors to the FEMA tent, and had the ten or twelve people who were waiting stand in line. Then he had the line move five feet to the left, and then five feet back to the right. The residents grumbled, but did as they were told. Five people were let into the tent at a time, so the security guards inside didn't get overwhelmed by people waiting to have their bags searched.

*FEMA / continued on page 26*

# new orleans

Police of a Hard Heart: What Was Seen in New Orleans  
by Tom Green

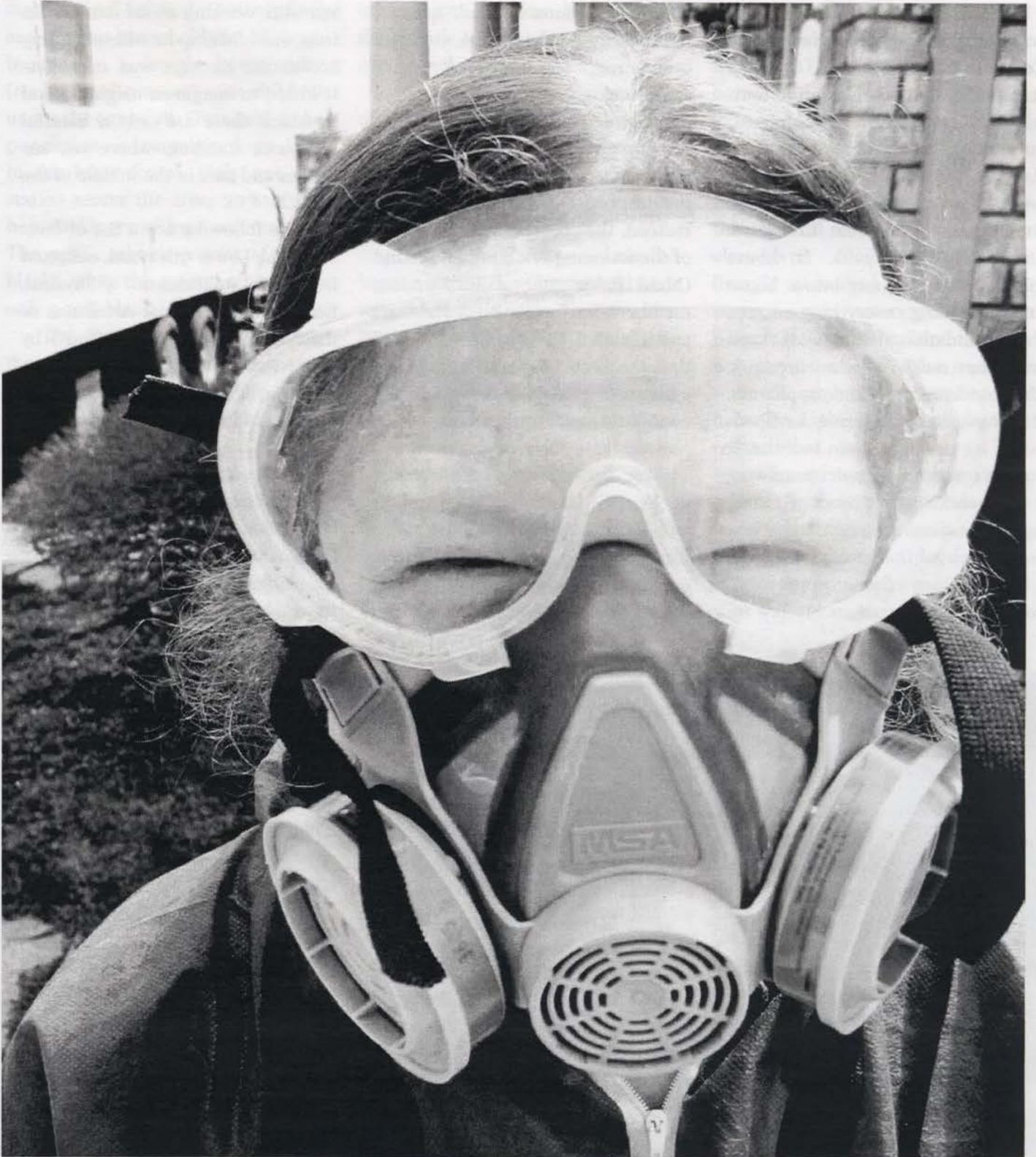


photo by Ilana Kirschbaum

## Politics of a Hard Heart: What Wotan Saw in New Orleans

by Dan Grimm

Our home-base in New Orleans was a place called Emergency Communities. EC is a friendly community that provides up to 1600 meals a day to locals and volunteers. In addition to working there on a daily basis, several of us chose to work for another organization called the Common Ground Collective. Ostensibly their work is house gutting, that is, going into a house and removing everything except the foundation, framework and roof: that means all the carpeting, clothes, furniture, and appliances that have been festering in flood-water for the past seven months. It wasn't a pleasant experience moving a refrigerator after the door swung open. One disadvantage to being big: you always got that job.

There are three words that come to mind when I try to

describe Common Ground: spartan, militaristic, ideological. Their orientation, an hour-long event, said nothing useful about the actual procedure of house-gutting -- nothing about safety, nothing about procedure, nothing about some of the difficulties involved in the work. Instead, the speakers gave a history of the founding of Common Ground (Malik Rahim, one of the founding members, is a former Black Panther) and detailed the "racist genocide" that the State, Federal, and Police systems were systematically committing against the black residents of New Orleans.

We worked in a small sector of the City, the Lower 9th Ward. It is a small neighborhood just a few minutes east of the New Orleans downtown area; St. Bernard Parish, where we lived, is just east of that.

We were working about four blocks from one of the spots where the levy broke: the damage was extensive. It's hard to imagine a neighborhood in which there are only a handful of houses standing, where you see houses and cars in the middle of the street.

The following are a list of facts about the Lower 9th Ward, collected from a publication ("Physical, Economic, and Social Attributes of the New Orleans Ninth Ward") by the New Orleans Planning Initiative at Cornell University. I have not bothered, in most cases, to use quotation marks, although the text is mostly verbatim.

The Lower 9th Ward (one of 17 Wards that comprise the City of New Orleans) was one of the last areas of the city to be fully developed, due to its swampy nature. In 1910 the city began a massive pumping operation (spearheaded by A. Baldwin Wood), where the groundwater from beneath the city was removed to allow for increased development and expansion. There were no houses to speak of in the area prior to 1920 ("most of the occupied dwellings were transient in nature and of the lean-to or shanty variety"); by 1950 only half of the Lower 9th had been developed. In 2000 the population consisted of 14,008 persons, 98.3% of whom were black. According to the 2000 US census, the Lower 9th had a poverty level of 36.4%. A quarter of households had an annual income of less than \$10,000, while half lived on less than \$20,000. 1,112



photo by Ilana Kirschbaum

families lived below the poverty line, and of those households 60.8% were headed by a female householder (no husband present) with children under the age of 18. Over half of the population is categorized as “not in the labor force”. Only one gas station serves the area; 30% of the households are without automobiles. The public schools consist of 100% blacks, while the private schools are only 5-12% black.

The City has determined that the Lower 9th is a “slow recovery zone”, which reads: we’re not going to put much money into this place right away. According to Wikipedia, the Lower 9th was, as of January, the last portion of the city not yet officially reopened to residents who wish to return to live, and the only area of the city still under a curfew. The people at Common Ground think that the lack of effort on the part of the State and Federal government to invest in this area is due simply to racism, to a desire to “clean up the neighborhood” and make it more successful. Their vision is that if enough people can move back in (or, at least, begin to make the first efforts of moving in) the government will be forced to acknowledge their effort and provide basic protection and utilities.

I can’t say much for the motivation of City Officials. Racism may or may not play a significant role in the decision making process of elected officials. Racism aside, however, there are lots of good reasons not to rebuild the Lower

9th, reasons that are hard on our democratic ears but that ought to be considered.

In order to evaluate the question of whether or not the Lower 9th should be rebuilt, we need to first understand what would realistically be involved in enabling residents to move back into their homes.

The first thing that would need to happen is the Army Corps would have to build an effective levy system. The levy system in place is remarkably unsophisticated (amounting to a large mound of dirt), not designed to withstand prolonged water pressure. A strong levy would be tremendously expensive and would take years to build – up to 10 years to obtain full strength, according to some estimates. (The February 23rd edition of *All Things Considered* gave an estimate of \$32 billion for a category 5 levy system.)

New Orleans is now entering hurricane season, and it is not unlikely that the area will be reflooded. There is a reason that the Lower 9th did not have houses until the 1920s: the area is below sea level and is a prime candidate for flooding. The technical innovations of the early 1900s enabled the city to pump the water out, thus giving the impression, I suppose, that the war against nature had been won, but this is clearly not the case. Any war against nature is expensive, requiring lots of hard work, commitment and money. It does not make sense to engage in this battle unless you have very good reasons for doing so:

either because your whole national character depends on it (consider the Dutch) or because there is an economic reason to justify the expense (consider the quake zones of California). What is the motivation for wanting to keep people in the Lower 9th as opposed to abandoning the area and resettling the residents elsewhere? Their “standard of living”, according to just about everyone, was not very high. Why perpetuate a neighborhood that was not very successful? The residents want to stay there because they have lived there all their lives. I respect that. But we have to look beyond sentiment and a warm heart and ask ourselves what reasons we have for wanting to preserve this neighborhood? If we do decide to rebuild the area, we’re going to need a lot more than warm feelings to do it.

Even supposing that the \$32 billion could be appropriated tomorrow, the area is not safe and will not be safe for a very long time. Now is not the time to rebuild; and ten years from now people will have already settled elsewhere. Why not encourage people to relocate and forge a better life for themselves?

I hope it has struck you as odd that I have phrased the question of whether or not to rebuild in terms of whether or not we want to do that. I speak this way because the residents cannot afford to do it themselves. That means you and I are going to have to pay for it. The Government

*Hard Heart / continued on page 22*

Hard Heart / continued from page 19

(City, State, or Federal) would have to massively subsidize the rebuilding of houses. The older residents I talked to (several in their 80s) spent their lives saving up to buy a house, and now having nothing left. Many residents (for whatever reason), even those in nicer neighborhoods, did not have flood insurance, and if they did they had very little. Given limited resources, we have to ask ourselves what our priorities are when it comes to spending. Is it best for the nation to secure this area instead of developing new, safer ones? Is it best for these people to

return to the status quo, or to move on to something higher? What kind of investment is the Lower 9th Ward for the nation as a whole? If we are going to rebuild there, we need to do a lot of thinking about how we're going to do it, and not just pump a lot of money into the area in order to assuage our conscience.

I do not know when the notion crept into our political thinking that

Government has an obligation to provide for our every need, to care for us in our distress. I do not think the idea that the Government has an obligation to pick you up when you're

dealt a bad hand is one that makes for strong, productive men and women. In fact, quite the opposite. This country was built on the notion of independence and resourcefulness, and it saddens me to see us moving away from those ideals.

I hope this essay has provoked your thinking a little. It is, admittedly, a little one sided, a little hard-hearted: I hope some people take the time to write a response in the next issue. The situation in New Orleans is a serious one that deserves a lot of hard thought.



## Some Musings on Tragedy

by Adam Willson

'You went on the New Orleans trip?'

'Yup.'

'And how was it?'

'It was an interesting experience.'

'Did you enjoy yourself?'

'Yes.'

'Did you learn a lot?'

'I did.'

'And was it a *life-changing* experience?'

Here, my dear conversant, is where our talk falls flat. For, you see, I have no clear idea of what you mean by *life-changing*. So far, I had followed you until the surfacing of that mysterious phrase. If you'll excuse me, I must repair to my room and set to ponder a while. Do you mind if I respond by letter, once I've refined my thoughts a bit?

\*\*

If by *life-changing* you mean 'Was I affected strongly,' then yes, I think I was – which is more or less what I meant when I said that I had learned a lot. Or maybe, you were asking for a second time if I enjoyed myself...Ahhh, but is this what most people mean when they ask if something is *life-changing*?

Granted, you may not know what you meant or perhaps you have a glimpse of it, but no well wrought reflection. Nonetheless, it seems that when most people ask if an experience is *life-changing*, they don't usually mean 'Was it enjoyable?'

Isn't *life-changing* often synonymous with 'stop-you-dead-in-your-tracks' or 'take-your-very-breath-away?' Even major changes that derive from positive causes usually pertain in some way to the tragic. A conversion to a specific religion, for example, cannot but involve some comparison of the emptiness of a former life with the promise of a future one. I seem to find some sense of tragedy anywhere I see a life being changed.

I expect that many of you who have not yet been to the devastated Louisiana coast might think that there is a lot of tragedy there and surely there is. But perhaps you think of an *uncanny* amount of it – that all is carrion and carnage there. Perhaps, you have in your mind's eye some ghost-town, an image of Ground Zero, or of the aftermath of the Athenian plague. New Orleans, you might think, is a place where life has stopped, and only forlorn and shriveled half-men now call it their home. When confronted with such an atrocity, the soft human heart stops as well. The lifelessness of the scene infects the spectator like a virus, and he cannot move or speak. Is this what you mean by *life-changing*?

If it is, I am worried that you don't have a very accurate idea of New Orleans. In truth, as you may have heard, most banks were closed, most grocery-stores and gas-stations, etc. were damaged, but there was

still a great deal of life. There were still the beating hearts, the tearing eyes, and that perseverance which few creatures but man can attest to.

For a lot of our time in New Orleans, we worked with Emergency Communities – a makeshift grass-roots soup-kitchen. In this capacity, I was able to converse with a good many locals who had lost their homes. There was an interesting man named Dennis who had only moved to New Orleans a few months before the hurricane. And, you ask, was he put out – crest-fallen to find his newfangled home now nothing more than a trash heap? No. Rather, he was very optimistic or at least he still carried himself with a measure of jollity. Quite possibly, this was because he was the sort of person who had been all around the world, had seen many strange things, had talked with many strange people. Perhaps, his trade as a ship repairman had taught him a thing or two about the human condition and the suffering it sometimes involves.

One of the most moving experiences for me was helping out at a Vietnamese Buddhist temple outside of town. I quickly learned how much the Vietnamese population (quite a large group in that area) had been blind-sighted by the local authorities and relief organizations. The language barrier

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Musings / continued from page 21



photo by Chris Quinn

posed some real problems for the quick and efficient evacuation of the Vietnamese in New Orleans. Also, it apparently took FEMA a long while to provide quality support for these people after the disaster – FEMA began installing temporary trailers at the temple a half-year after they were requested.

Despite all these difficulties, the Vietnamese were still fighting strong. In less than a year, many efforts arising from within the Vietnamese

community were seen to fruition.

One really captivating story of human survival involves a Vietnamese woman waiting out the hurricane in her house. She would go outside after the worst of the storm and fish from the flood-waters. She dried her catches on the roofs of cars. These fish were her only sustenance until the end of the hurricane. What's even more incredible – she was in her late eighties.

All around, I witnessed the general tenacity of the natives and volunteers alike. For some of my time in New Orleans, I worked with Common Ground, a pro-minority relief organization that organized the gutting of houses for impoverished victims (a majority of the population in the 9<sup>th</sup> ward, where we volunteered). Working with Common Ground were, at any given time, hundreds of college students on spring break. The general tempo-and-tenor of the labor there and at Emergency Communities was quite exhilarating. The work never stopped and our co-workers were more than enthusiastic to lend as much of a helping hand as possible. We were barely allowed to 'stop-dead-in-our-tracks.' Such a reaction would surely have been detrimental to all of our efforts. However much we could have gaped, we were kept alive by our simple desire to see the world made a better place. When I first arrived in New Orleans, I was looking for the tragedy. I searched for it in the shambles of houses, I looked deeply into the eyes of the locals. I endeavored to mine it from voices. To catch it in the wind. To see it floating in the rivers. But everywhere I looked, I saw people forever striving to shake it off. I saw them like industrious ants reclaiming an ant-hill knocked over by a wayward shoe. I soon discovered that there was no time for tragedy, nor a place for it.

What is it, after all, that makes tragedy so attractive to us? Surely, tragedy has its place. It reminds us of what we are. We can learn a great many things from the plays of Euripides, for example. But how much do we really learn? Often, we find ourselves going to heart-wrenching movies, just so we can feel that bitter-sweet pleasure of weeping. When the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked, it took our country a pretty long while to move on. This isn't only because the scope of the bombing was so vast (what of the many third-world countries that are bombed every year? – they frequently can't afford to mourn). If it weren't for our sense of tragedy, would we really have spent so long a time trying to convince ourselves that we were innocent victims and 'they were evil criminals? It seems that the tragic sense is often a certain luxury that stems out of an abused perspective of the world. Most of the time, we are not willing to learn from tragedy, we mean simply to be consoled by it...and I think this is pretty twisted.

Truthfully, I can only remember one occasion when my life truly changed – and yes it was somewhat tragic at the time. But ever since then, I've known more or less toward what my life should be directed. I have experienced a few losses since then, more than a few relocations, a couple of bouts of depression. But none of these events have ever changed my

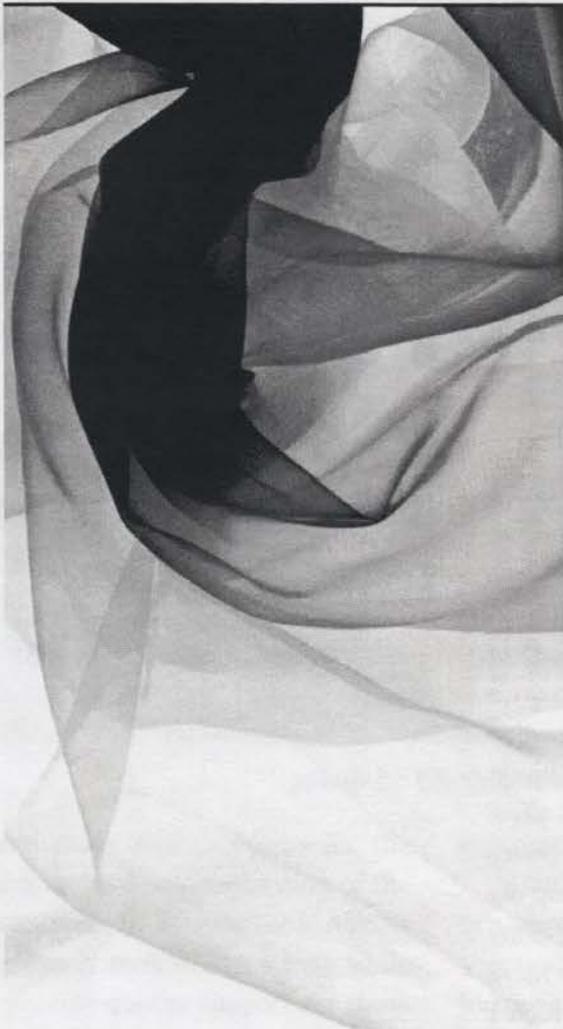
life. They've only reminded me of the means that I should employ to cultivate the life I've always known I've wanted (for myself and for my neighbors).

I cannot see why anyone would wish the tragic on anyone else. For, a life that is moved by one tragedy after another turns out to be a very unproductive life. Such a life stifles any real creativity or motivation in the victim. As productive humans, we should avoid the tragic sense as much as possible, and we should embrace what we can learn from tragedy as a potential reminder of what we must do.

It could well be that your question was not intended to evoke all these considerations. Nonetheless, I feel that these complexities are wrapped up in such a question. I must continue to remind myself of the means by which I can attain a rewarding life, this is all. Once this goal is firmly set in place, how should my experience in New Orleans affect it? Without a doubt, if my experience were to stop my heart or to drop my jaw, it would be very damaging to my purpose. Rather, I must gather more of an idea of the means by which I can see my purpose through.

Therefore, next time, if you want a much shorter answer to a way-too-short question, why not ask if my experience was *means-changing* instead of *life-changing*?

“When I first arrived in New Orleans, I was looking for the tragedy.”



*photo by Tristan Chambers*

## **Thread**

*by Nick Christou*

I tried to sleep before the sun,  
but night is day and both soon fly.  
I tried to think of what I'd done,  
but tears stung scars now my eyes.

Bliss it is to stand on air,  
but I am called to dine,  
to taste the bitter, self-prepared fare,  
not wrap my neck in line.

Why would I try to make a stand  
on shifting sands  
with dagger friends?  
While sons and daughters die  
then the words fade  
off all their graves  
and their thoughts lay buried with lies.

My throne is a spider's web,  
and the hand I hold,  
the hand of the dead,  
whose nails tear strips of flesh,  
as her floating hair whips out the rest  
and the servants who kneeled down  
arise,  
and with bloody smiles and thirsty cries,  
burn off my skin with flaming eyes,  
while I scream into the skies,  
I tried.

# calliope's corner

## Isbe

by James Bixler

man makes a lot in the dirt  
crunching clods beneath  
dusted pads  
little care  
for microscopic

his-focus-is 1 of-value

Absolute rarity  
a universe

neither small nor large,  
just right for the picking

am I a creature with choice  
preference  
freedom from dirty thoughts?

No, it say, he isa just man  
Wanting tobe animal  
naturally without false pressure  
in mind  
beating down  
dreamer components

-----  
No choice  
for perfection

with will  
that kills  
and makes.  
steals  
loves

I love isbe

Notelse  
will believe me

they-think-I-think they're all

## A Bee Sting Is Always Potentially Serious

by James Bixler

Veiled and smoky  
I beekeeper sweet lover  
See you honeybee  
tuning your drum  
of golden candied molecules

my debt is your life  
and I for it fear, so soon  
as you toil for love—an  
Ideal picture in my mind  
just prior to immunity's severe  
allergic reaction

Nectar pollen cohere,  
on your black band abdomen,  
succulently...lick and suck and  
crave  
hymenoptera's honey pot  
magnificently nimble,  
tiptoes on streams.

Hex a gone reflections  
Witch sweep away tension.  
Incantations speak of

Sweet honey pot love  
Magic mantra smoke  
mirror take a toke  
Encircle me and whisper  
champion honey bee  
Accidents conform  
compassion coalesced  
turbulent fate  
from vibratos breast

Frenzied rings with ripples  
ah, a reminisce on fragile flesh  
my body by de-sign  
desires rot and filth

but before all that, a tongue  
tango with  
promiscuity's proboscides!

stung fiercely  
logix dead  
throbbing and  
ripped from you  
remaining in imbed.

caricatures  
cooing at pigeon models.

-----  
and Isbe blames me

for her sad tears  
drying in the sand  
in between sobs she says  
"choose not to choose

is there not a  
fault, fool?!

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This is my most pressing concern. Here are some other, unrelated suggestions I have for improving seminar:

1. Make more of your statements *interrogative* rather than declarative, unless of course you are responding to a question. The former are more thought-provoking and keep the momentum of the seminar going; the latter often just create uncomfortable pauses.

2. Speak as *tersely* as possible: the more you speak, the easier it is for your point to get lost.

Does anyone have any objections or emendations to make to these precepts? If not, I at least will try to adhere to them as if I were compelled to followed them as I would a natural law governing me, and I exhort everyone else to do the same. Also, please write to the Moon with any suggestions you have about how to polish our seminar discussions.

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vs. grants available by country, and examples of project statements. For information about the countries where Fulbright grants are available and the specific application requirements for those countries, go to: [www.fulbrightonline.org](http://www.fulbrightonline.org). Click on "U.S. Student Program".

This is one of the few awards not based solely on extremely high academic achievement or great financial need. It also doesn't hinge on a particular major or specific career goals. In fact, Fulbright is one of the best competitions for St. John's students who have had little or no overseas experience and who have an interesting project that needs to be pursued in places such as Burkina Faso or Uzbekistan. There is no limit on the number of students that can be nominated by St. John's, so the Fellowship Committee is hoping to see many interesting proposals next September.

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I got into line, and was the last in my group of five to get into the tent. The security guards spent a good long while rummaging through my bag, and made an attempt at small talk. "I'm going to do a real thorough search; it isn't like you're going anywhere." I laughed, but wondered if I'd shrug this off as a mere pleasantry if I'd been standing in lines like this for the last seven months. The guard looked at me. "It's a good thing you reacted well to that. Otherwise, I would have leapt across the table and bitten your ear off." While I tried to decide how to react, the other guard nudged the one who was still examining my bag. "Hey, man. At least she's still smiling."

# quotations

“We’re like Shakespeare, just with potatoes.”  
-Trina Terry ‘05 on  
*Weapons of Mass Destruction*

“I need to stop looking at trees. I’m starting to find them too sexy.”  
-Mr. Harrison on  
*arborous affairs*

“I thought Francis Bacon invented the microwave.”  
-Mr. Bybee on  
*cooking Bacon*

“Sometimes we are sexy, sometimes we are not.”  
Mr. Levine  
*on the law of contradiction*

“Its like an onion that was a rutebega...”  
Mr. Houser on  
*equipotential surfaces in an electromagnetic field*

“I could engage in violent homoerotic behavior and I could even wish that such behavior were directed toward me, but I could never wish it a universal law.”

-Mr. Franks on the  
*Kantamination of our former values*

