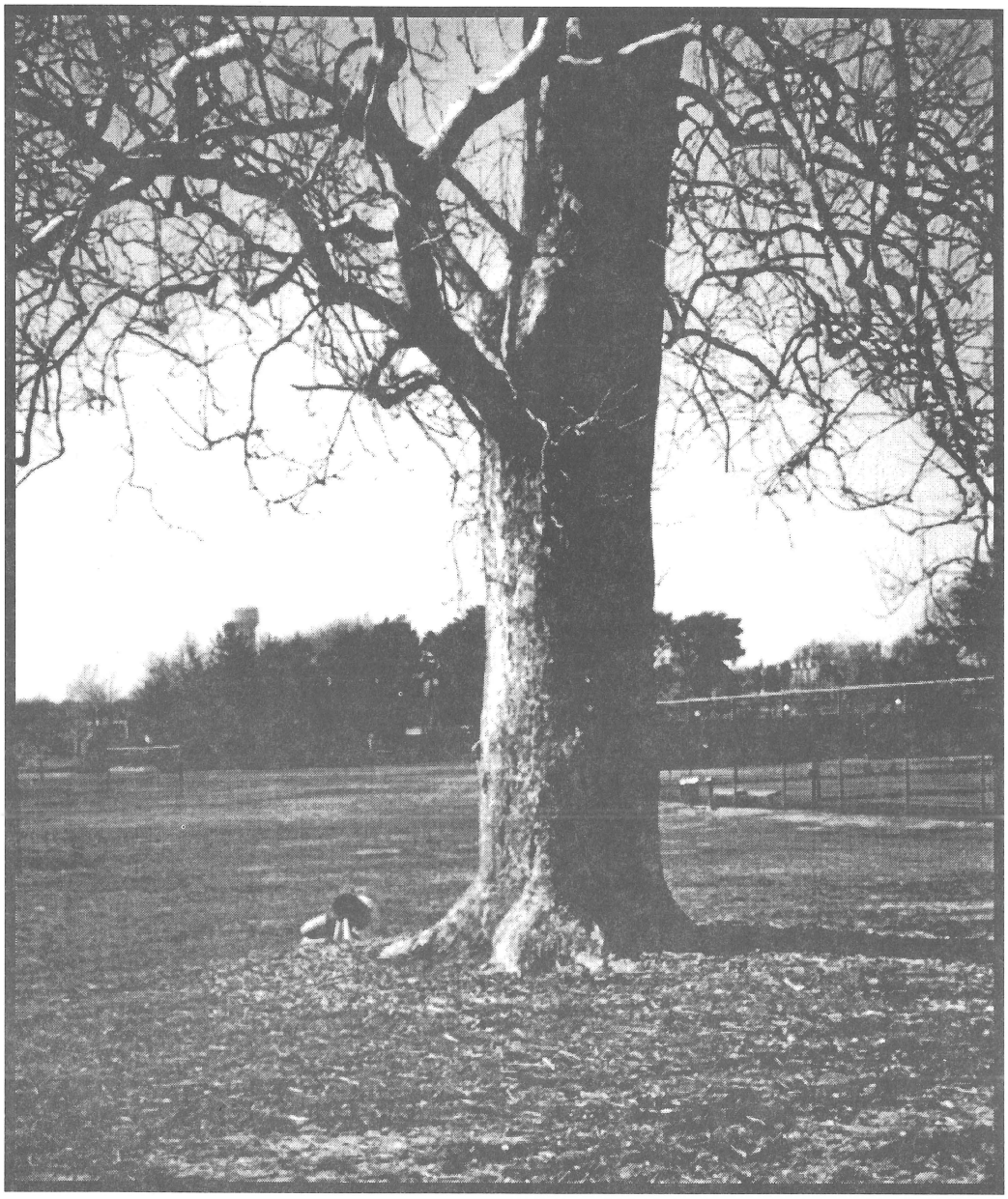
THE IDFLY

The St. John's College Student Weekly
Volume: 7 mL, Issue: Natural rights

Annapolis, Maryland
April 1, 1999



THE GADFLY STAFF

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cover photo by...Keep Wondering
Spring at St. John's

Letters of 200 words or less have a better chance of being published than those longer. Letters submitted will be edited for grammar, punctuation, and spelling in most cases. The *Gadfly* is not obligated to publish all submissions and will not print anonymous submissions except under special circumstances.

Founded in 1980, the *Gadfly* is the student weekly distributed free to over 600 students, faculty, and staff of the Annapolis campus as well as tutors emeriti, members of the Board of Visitors and Governors, and the offices at the St. John's Santa Fe campus. Opinions expressed within are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The *Gadfly* reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish the most professional, informative, and thought-provoking newspaper which circumstances at St. John's permit.

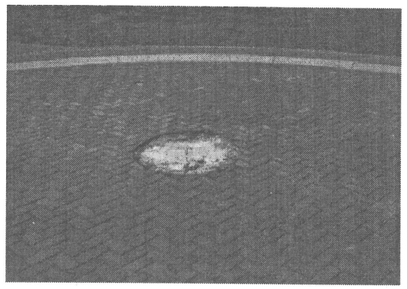
Yearly subscriptions are available for $30.00. Tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to the *Gadfly*. For display advertisement prices and information, call 410-263-2371, x 2212.

Deadline: Friday at 5:30 pm unless permission for a delay is granted in advance. Submissions will be accepted as long as they are legibly written, but typed copies or diskettes are greatly preferred.

The Case of the Missing Seal

by Anonymous

OK. I know you've all noticed it by now. You know, the big metal disk that *used* to lie on the stairs leading down from the quad to back campus. It's missing. But no one knows anything about it...maybe. We, being the eyes and ears on campus, can give you all the inside information you want. We can't tell you who has the seal, for fear of losing our precious lives, but we can tell you where it might be.



The sign of the Seal

Perhaps, now that they have been exposed, the perpetrators of this vile theft will come forward to return the Symbol of the St. John's Education. Perhaps, now that the administration knows that we have realized the absence, they will replace the seal as soon as it returns.

We have received photographs, anonymously, revealing the whereabouts of the seal. Unfortunately, we cannot share them with you, because the photographs self-destructed five minutes after we saw them. However, they outlined a strange and wondrous journey on which the seal-nappers have taken our monument.

In the few days since the seal was removed, it has traveled across the world, even beyond the limits of our atmosphere, but we have reason to believe that it is soon to be returned to us. The itinerary, as closely as we can follow it from the photographs, follows: first, the perpetrators took a photograph of the seal camouflaged amidst the mosaic tile floor of the Taj Mahal. They balanced it precariously among the scattered stones that mark the site of the Battle of Thermopylae. There is a picture of it among the ruins of the Parthenon. It has been in the courtyard of St. Peter's in Rome and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Apparently, however, the seal-nappers thought that such classical sites would be the first place for people to search for the runaway Seal of St. John's College, so they headed north. We can only hope that they did not journey through Kosovo, but flew or sailed to their next destination: the British Isles. Arriving at Heathrow, as we suspect they did, they began their tour of London. We received photographs of the Seal at St. Paul's, Buckingham Palace, the Grand Meridian, and one of those bright red two-story tour buses. They began a pilgrimage to Canterbury but were apparently accosted and dissuaded from such religious nonsense and encouraged to more earthly pursuits. The next photograph we received from them showed the seal, suspended hundreds of feet above the earth, trying to kiss the Blarney Stone. Assuming that the seal had not developed lips between the time of its departure and its arrival in Ireland, it failed.

The next photograph we received seemed to have nothing to do with a linear path of travel around the world, as it had been taken in a spacecraft that was orbiting Mars at the time.

We have reason to believe, however, that the seal is making its way home. In a particularly blasphemous photograph, which we received not long ago, the seal was delicately balanced (obviously the work of a master engineer) atop the flagpole in front of Bancroft Hall on the Naval Academy grounds. We're not sure quite what to make of this, but we suspect that the perpetrators are attempting to reenact a Warner Brothers' cartoon, snickering behind the bushes as the metaphorical anvil falls on some unsuspecting midshipman's head, driving him six feet vertically into the ground.

Marvellous Things Heard

by Anonymous

Welcome to another sporadically-published *Idfly*. After looking over the Febbies, we at the *'Fly* decided that some of them might enjoy spurious rumors spread via pompously-written tripe, so we've decided to add two January frosh to our elite audience. Therefore, for the benefit of our new members, I'm going to remind you all of the purpose of my column.

Everyone knows that life at SJC is governed by one basic principle: if you hear a rumor, it must be true, and if you think something's a conspiracy, you're damn right. What follows is my regular column of the latest absolutely accurate, but little known, truths. It's your Conspiracy Shortlist. Basically that's the only thing that ties these paragraphs together, but we at the *Idfly* value the non-sequitur as essential to good writing.

They Said I Couldn't Tape Record My Seminar...

...but they didn't say anything about faculty meetings. A source passed on a recording of the latest meeting to me.

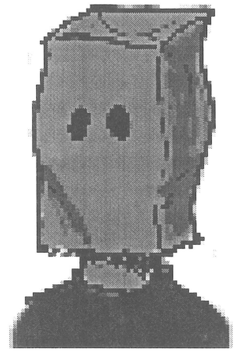
—The faculty and administration voted on a new school seal. The advancement office representative suggested something "fresh for the nineties," and, after looking at his copy of the school budget, added "cheap" to the criteria. Everyone was in favor of keeping orange as a school color, because who doesn't look great in orange? After much deliberation, a large orange and white traffic cone was selected to stand proudly at the base of the steps to the quad, sending out its message of liberal arts pride from atop the pile of dirt left by the old seal.

—Enabling decisions this year will be made by casting dice for each student's name. Cat's eyes means you're screwed.

—Several tutors voiced objections to the Buildings and Grounds office's proposed shower improvements. The tutors commented that the lightning-fast temperature changes in the bathrooms make students "more alert" during 9 am classes.

Job Opportunity

My sources inform me that several Johnnies now work at a brothel in New York. I was able to make contact with one such alumna; we'll call her Candy. I asked Candy why she had chosen the world's oldest profession and what role SJC played. She replied, "On how to be a prostitute, I learned nothing. On why I would want to be a prostitute, everything."



The unknown *Idfly* writer

Alum Seeks to Kill Students

A former Johnnie recently posted a sign on the door of the Campbell Common Room. The sign is brightly colored to lure in unsuspecting students. It invites Johnnies to camp out in Washington, DC for "several days" in front of a theatre in anticipation of the Star Wars premiere. Camp out in Washington? You mean, sit on the sidewalk of a dubious neighborhood in our nation's capital without some serious artillery or at least a bulletproof vest? That's a little somethin' I like to call Asking for Murder. More people get killed in DC every year than in nearly any other city.The alum designing this scheme also merits criticism for thinly disguising this plot. I mean, as if anybody is actually so hopelessly socially awkward that he would camp out waiting for a LucasFilms premiere; nobody's going to fall for that.

Paca-Carroll: Germ Refuge

There is a warm, dark, moist room on second-floor Paca labeled "T B Room." TB, for those of you who don't know, stands for "tuberculosis." Clearly, this is part of the administration's attempt to force everyone to buy St. John's health insurance.

Administration Votes In a New Expulsion Policy

Pleased by the success of the recent firings of certain college employees who had the gall to actually do their jobs, administrators now plan to begin expelling students who do their work. They plan to tell these students that they are not being expelled; it's just that their seminar seats have been eleminated.

Something to think about:

Flaumenhaft means "plumlike" in German.

Next issue:

That Dry Spot on the Quad: a mystery solved, and much more.

Happy Holidays from the Gadfly.
There will be no issue on Tuesday, April 6 because the editor and production manager are going home to celebrate Easter. The next Gadfly will be coming out on April 13. Have a lovely weekend.

How hard can it possibly be?

A rant by Josh Emmons

Pardon me while I go on for a bit about the computer lab. Some might consider this a touchy subject, but not I. I've bit my tongue and made both suggestions and excuses - I know many in the polity have as well. But today it became clear to me. Nothing is going to get done unless we all, simultaneously, demand change. I admit that I'm writing this letter because I *personally* can't take the poor state of the computer lab anymore. I hope that many of you feel the same way, because the condition it is in is really nothing short of a crying shame. To those of you who have no strong feelings one way or another, I suggest you ask yourself one simple question: *How hard can it possibly be to maintain a computer lab?* I'm here to tell you folks, it's not that hard.

Before you all flame me for making broad, unsubstantiated claims, take a look at the list below. There are all easy fixes that would not take more than an hour or two to complete. If you look at this list and say, "Yeah, that would make the lab/my life soooooooo much better if that happened," then *please* say something to the administration, the lab managers, anyone you can. You don't have to yell at them, just let them know. Because I'm convinced that, though they mean well, they are utterly disconnected from the problems going on in the lab. Let's not let this vital student resource rot because of ignorance.

Things that would make the lab a better place:

All of the PCs, apart from Grendel, have Microsoft Word viruses on them. If you have typed a paper on the PCs in the last month, your file is probably infected. No one is really sure what these viruses can or will do to your files. Right now all we know is that sometimes files won't load and other times Word locks up when you try to exit. The file I'm writing right now has a virus on it, so I must submit this to the *Gadfly* in printed form.

The fix? **Install anti-virus software!** That seems like a no brainer, yet of all the computers in the lab, only Grendel has a current enough virus list to detect this bug.

Total time to complete: maybe *30 min.*

Toner is always running out. Over the last week of senior essay writing there was no toner to be had. This happened again over freshman [and sophomore] paper writing.

The fix? **Check for toner!** The printer has a low toner warning light. Check the printer once even every two days (maybe once a day over essay writing).

Total time to complete: *15 min a week*

Get speakers for the PCs. I admit that I don't think this is necessary. I'm not sure why student would need to hear little beeps from the computers they are working on. **But the administration bought and installed six Sound Blaster sound cards for the computers**. You can see the boxes of them in the lab office. Why did they do it? You don't need a sound card to listen to your CDs (which is the only thing I see students listening to anyway). Still, it seems silly to make an expensive investment in hardware and then leave us with no way to utilize that investment.

The fix? **Get speakers or show the polity where to plug in headphones**. Sounds simple, right?

Total time: *as much time as it takes to plug in speakers*

How many times has it happened to you? You have a question or your essay gets wiped and you **can't find a lab manager anywhere**. I'd say it happens a lot, because anytime I go into the lab, people swamp me with questions, and I don't even work there. I wrote my essay in the lab because I knew no one would be there to help any poor souls who had trouble.

The fix? **Make the lab managers keep posted hours.** They did this once, at the beginning of the year. But the hours were obscure (before 7:00 am???), and the managers didn't stick to them anyway. The managers also whined (there's really no other word for it) that "they had lives too" and the polity shouldn't bother them outside of their posted hours (that they were never around during). I can sympathize. If doing your job is cramping your social life, then quit your job or demand more help. Hire more students. If students can't do it, I know of many people who wouldn't mind getting paid $7.00 or so to sit in a lab for an hour and answer questions.

Total time: If lab managers would show up *one hour a day* after sunrise and before sunset, I would be happy. They would get paid for it, too.

And oh, the **Macintoshes**. I'm not a big Mac fan, but even I feel sorry for those pieces of hardware. They're dirty. The lowly Mac in the corner doesn't know where the network is half the time. There is only one Mac in the lab that has a working disk drive. The keyboards sssssssssstick, making the machine annoying at best and unusable at worst.

The fix? **Replace bad drives. Buy handiwipes and apply them.** Replace bogus network cables or whatever is ailing the PowerBase 240. **Swap and/or replace keys/keyboards.**

Total time: I can put a drive in a Mac in *under 10 min.* Keyboards just plug into the side. Cleaning them will probably take the most time.

On any random day that I walk into the lab, **at least one machine is locked solid**. This is an easy thing to fix, as most of the time it only requires a re-boot. But most users either lack the knowledge to do so or are afraid that they'll be whipped by the lab managers if they touch the computers in an odd way. The result: said frozen computer is unusable until someone who has the knowledge or fears not the lab managers re-boots the machine.

The fix? Have the **Lab Managers look for locked computers when they are in the lab during their "posted hours".**

The time: See above

I know of no fewer than **four people who lost their essays** because they stored their only copy on a disk. This is not surprising—*disks are not meant to be used as a permanent storage solution*. But what choice do the users have? They can't save their work on the local hard drive because it will either mysteriously disappear (if it's on the desktop), get erased by a malicious user, or (this is the best case scenario, if you can believe it) the file will only be accessible from that computer (how many times have *you* had to move for some person who wrote their paper on the machine they're using).

The fix: There are a few. First, the PCs should adopt a scheme like the one that is used on the Macs. **Have one file server store all files** and point all the computers to that server. That way all your files would be accessible on all the computers and Joe Meany couldn't erase them if he tried. Another solution would be to **give users access to their home directories on the email server** via Samba, IMAP, or the like. If password caching were disabled this would be secure, and users could access their files from *anywhere in the world!*

Total time: Of all my suggestions, this one would take the most time to implement. But there is a G3 fileserver running for the Macs already, so half the job would already be done. The other half would just be **setting up NT accounts,** which could be sync-ed with the existing email accounts, (and would fix the mysterious "account expired" bug that's been floating around the lab now and again) and **pointing them to a file server.** I'd say it would be a one-time investment of *two weeks*.

There are many more things that could be done to improve the lab, like adding user requested software, and keeping paper stocked in the printer. I would encourage any who think of other items to add them to this list by writing to the *Gadfly* or talking to someone in the Computer Department. I'd also like to point out that the people (I'm going to stick with the policy of this letter about not naming names, even though these people deserve recognition) responsible for networking all the dorm rooms and maintaining said network have, in my opinion, done an excellent job. I don't think that they are responsible for the lab in any way. If they are I hope they try to apply the same effort to the lab as they did to the wiring of the school.

In closing I'd just like to say that I am acutely aware that the small size of St. John's limits our ability to have the best cutting-edge computer lab and equipment, but nothing I have listed here is out of the reach of even the smallest computer department. One of the things at St. John's that ought to make up for our lack of supplies or equipment is the advantage of having a lab maneuverable and adaptable enough to respond to polity needs. It's not that hard, and it's the Right Thing to do.

—**Josh Emmons**, '99
(j-emmons@sjca.edu)

S. C. I. REPORT

by Ms. Jessica Reitz '01

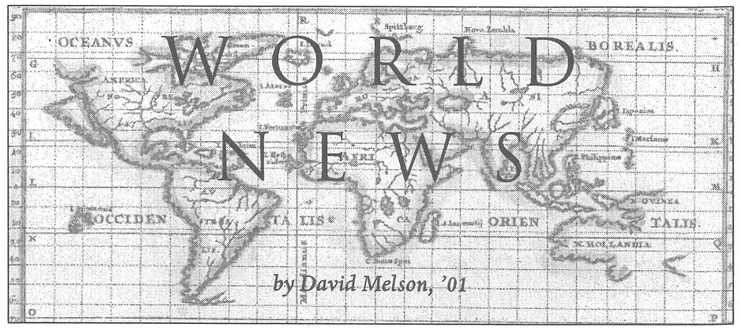
Members present at the Tuesday, March 23, 1999 meeting of the Student Committee on Instruction were freshman representatives Mr. Kovacik and Ms. Seay, sophomore representatives Mr. Dowling and Ms. Reitz, junior representatives Messrs. Carney and Glodek, senior representatives Messrs. Soejoto and Forrester, and chairman Mr. Davidoff.

PLATO IN THE SPRINGTIME begins just one week from today! These seminars are held Tuesday nights in April at 7 pm in Room 23, McDowell Hall. The first seminar will be led by Mr. Dink on the dialogue: *Alciabides*. All are invited to attend!

Our meeting opened with a discussion of the role of the Kutler Manual, *An Introduction to Calculus*, in the junior mathematics tutorial. This manual is the focus of the junior mathematics tutorial for four to six weeks in the fall. The most centered criticism of this manual is that it lacks the sense of a dialectic inquiry. In order to alleviate this dearth, two suggestions were made. The first is that papers and essays considered as context for the notation of calculus be included. The second suggestion is to increase the rigor of the aspects of calculus that are used in the senior laboratory and mathematics tutorials.

In the course of discussion, a significant contrast became apparent between the study of ancient and modern mathematics. A coherent progression is evident in our studies of geometry, astronomy, and conics that extends to the foundations of algebra. Through our disregard for number and other aspects of the notation of the more modern mathematics, the progression of the history of mathematics becomes unclear. This results in a disjointed inquiry into the modern mathematics which leaves ample space for the criticism of the junior mathematics tutorial.

The agenda for our next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, March 30,1999, is posted; we will be discussing the junior mathematics tutorial with reference to the questions that will best serve the goals of the tutorial. We especially encourage members of the present junior class to attend. Please join us this Tuesday at 11:45 am in the private dining room.



BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Strikes Against Yugoslavia Continue

Following several days of airstrikes and planning, Serbia has settled down for a long struggle, preparing to hold out against NATO and American armed forces as long as possible. Friday, the Serbian government cut all diplomatic ties with the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Furthermore, all Western journalists and aid groups, with the exception of the Red Cross, were expelled from Serbian territory. Accordingly, very little information passes out of the now besieged Balkan nation, and Western citizens and governments alike have found it hard to judge the veracity of what information has leaked out of Serbia. ABC Senior Vice President Bob Murphy explained the situation, saying, "Just because journalists have been expelled or detained doesn't mean that you're totally cutoff from first hand accounts of what's going on...still, this ranks up there as one of the scarier periods [due to the] confusion, almost approaching chaos."

The current situation in the Balkans remains complicated as NATO attempts to assess what damage the airstrikes inflicted and how to correlate future political plans with the military situation. Serbian officials reported that 10 civilians and one soldier died in the attacks; an additional 60 individuals were wounded. The airstrikes were aimed at airbases, command centers, air defense installations and other military compounds. According to President Clinton and various cabinet members, they are "very satisfied" with the strikes. The *Washington Post* reported that NATO aircraft shot down four Yugoslav Mig-29, while all of the 400 allied aircraft returned safely.

Reportedly the airstrikes caused Yugoslav troops to move from "offensive positions" to "defensive positions." Nonetheless, ground fighting in Kosovo appears to have intensified as a result of the airstrikes. Serbian offensives continued in north-central Kosovo and near the city of Pec, in the west. Detailed reports of the ground fighting, if they exist, have not appeared in public. General Wesley Clark, NATO's senior commander, gave a brief comment on the matter, announcing, "We do see the evidence of continued, and even intensifying, operations in [Kosovo]." He gave no explanation of what specifically he meant.

American military officials did release some information about future airstrikes. Surface to air missile (SAM) batteries will receive first priority, in order to pave the way for later strikes against Serbian ground forces operating in Kosovo. When criticized for not reacting to reports that the recent Serbian offensives are directed against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, a European official retorted, "We have a plan and we're executing the plan." Pentagon officials expressed similar sentiments, even though they predicted that Serbian forces would accelerate offensive actions against Kosovar forces.

If the Yugoslav air-defense network does not incur significant damage, NATO air forces will begin to receive damage, which will result in pilots killed or captured. So far, NATO pilots have not reported any antiaircraft missile launches, although they received sporadic gunfire. In addition, about a dozen Yugoslav Mig-29s attempted to intercept the striking aircraft. The lack of SAM launches could indicate that airstrikes damaged the Yugoslav air defense network beyond function or, much worse, Yugoslav planners intend to hold their SAMs in reserve, awaiting future airstrikes. Evidence indicates that the Yugoslav army has dispersed some SAM launchers, awaiting low-altitude airstrikes against ground forces in Kosovo. One Pentagon officer summed up the issue, by saying "we're still flying high, and not in a position to strike troops or tanks."

Mixed political reactions have greeted the airstrikes, in spite of greater unity on the part of NATO. A CBS News poll reported, before the airstrikes began that at least 37% of polled Americans supported military action. Furthermore, both Congress and the President generally support the actions. President Clinton described the Kosovo situation as a "conflict without borders" and expressed concerns that it could spread into neighboring countries like Greece and Turkey. He added "Kosovo is about...people...still killing each other out of primitive rages because they think what is different about them is more important that what they have in common." Congress examined proposals to send $25 million in military aid to the Kosovo Liberation Army. Furthermore, no government official has made a significant object to employing American ground forces.

Other Americans criticized the President, and to a lesser extent, Congress, one editorial to the *Washington Post* accused President Clinton of delivering a simplistic message that both misled and confused. The writer bluntly stated "there is a guerrilla army of Kosovar Albanians who want independence and are willing to kill to achieve it. And there is a Serb army that wants to keep Kosovo in Yugoslavia...they are willing to kill for that."

European reactions to the Kosovo situation appear equally mixed. The French government, surprisingly, contributed 40 aircraft to the strikes and plans on cooperating with NATO members. Many European politicians expressed discontent at the lack of any unified European leadership in the current Balkan situation. Mark Eyskens, a former Belgian foreign minister, voiced his disgust, stating "Europe is an economic giant, a political dwarf, and a military worm." Other Europeans worry what effect casualties will have on the American public's desire to continue military activity in Yugoslavia.

Finally, Serbians appear to have united against the U.S. A 36 year old engineer in Belgrade quipped, "[Before the bombing], I had a positive feeling about Americans. Now [look] at what they are doing to us...It's clear aggression..." Zeliko Razanotovic, known as "Arkan," leads a Serbian paramilitary organization called the "Tigers." He raged at detained Western journalists that he was angry about the bombings and is ready "to kick some ass."

HAPPENINGS

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Passover	Lecture "From Discourses to Novels: Rousseau's Literary Turn" by Christopher Kelly, Dept. of Political Science, Boston College		Happy Easter	Back to work!	Recruiter from Walker Digital 4 pm Mellon Conference Room

announcements

Political Forum

On April 7, at 8 pm in the Conversation Room, Anne Petermann, former President of Native Forest Network International and current Director of NFN's Eastern North American Resource Center, will speak about trends in radical environmentalism including Revolutionary Ecology, the intersection of radical environmentalism and anarchist ideals.

Recruiter on Campus

A recruiter from Walker Digital, an intellectual properties firm and inventors of Priceline.com, will be on campus on Wednesday, April 7, at 4 pm in the Mellon Conference Room.

THE BUZZ

I have nine tickets available to attend the Shakespeare Theatre's production of "The Trojan Women." Director JoAnne Akalaitis has just completed the New York run of "The Iphigenia Cycle," and promises to deliver what one reviewer described as "in your face Euripides" very visual, with loud sound effects and a soul-stirring underscore. The tickets are $14.00 a pop and the performance is Saturday, April 10 at 2:00 pm. The polity van will leave from the gym lot at 12:30 pm. To reserve a seat, drop cash or a check (made out to St. John's College) into campus mail to the attention of Student Activities/Taylor Waters. And another thing, from now on the polity van will meet its passengers on the other side of the gym lot, near the benches in front of the Carroll-Barrister House. Why should you have to schlep your luggage over grass and gravel or risk snagging your pantyhose when there's a perfectly respectable spot for you to await the arrival of your driver? **TW**.

Senior Oral Exams

Held in the King William Room of the Barr-Buchanan Center

THURSDAY, APRIL 1

11:32 **"Slim" Pickens**
Fat Birds Don't Fly: Newton's gravity as an obstacle to the equal rights movement
Schoener/Januszewski/Housley

3:57 **Reverdy Johnson**
Obscurity in Post-Colonial Architecture
F.L. Wright/P. Johnson/I. M. Pei

5:03 **Samuel Adams**
Entelechy in the context of ethanol: Aristotle's *On Drunkenness*
Killian/Daniels/Beam

FRIDAY, APRIL 2

11:11 **Echinus Blastopore**
On the necessity of the biological ontology of the hypostatic human
Winken/Blinken/Nod

SATURDAY, APRIL 3

11:48 **Patsy Klein**
Number theory in contemporary rustic composition
Zuckerkandl/Twain/Ono

9:54 **William Bard**
Who's Got a Bee in His Sonnet?: conflicting themes in Petrarch and Shakespeare
Milton/Jonson/Alighieri

SUNDAY, APRIL 4

12:45 **Thomasina Aquinas**
The fundamental irrationality of divinity as seen through Wagner's *Die Walküre*
Dionysius/Tertullian/Mark

6:66 **Larry Brutus**
Out of the mouth of Hell: Oral imagery in Dante
Iscariot/Ugolino/Geryon

THE GADFLY

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The 12 Stages of Paper-Writing

(written during Stage #8)

by &Shawn Otto&