

THE MOON

St. John's College's Independent Bi-Monthly • Volume 3, Issue 3 • October 15, 1998

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LETTERS

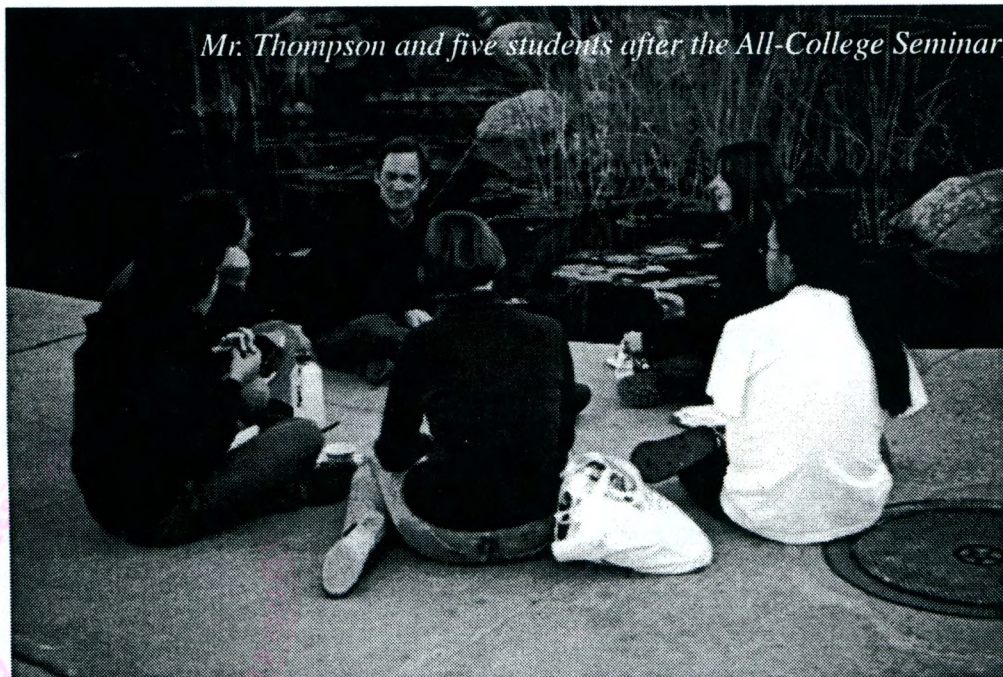
To the Editors:

I hardly mean to be "elusive" (as you put it) in the controversy over convocation. Indeed, I've discussed the matter in detail with the Student Review Board, at the last RA meeting, and met in person with everyone involved in the Dean's lecture prank. My hesitation in writing about the matter, especially convocation, has, rather, to do with not wishing to be any more public about matters that are not only distasteful but hurtful to individuals and harmful to the college. Nonetheless, since you have insisted, I will go on.

Let's take the two most egregious incidents at convocation. First, yelling comments on the character of freshmen women's breasts in public, before the whole community, before their parents and other parents, does not, in my opinion, help make this school "utterly meaningful and excellent." Indeed, it seems to have more of the ugly character of fraternity life than the kind of community that's praised here. And who will dare to defend the comment "Here come the quota kids" when a minority freshman walked up? That's a comment as humanly destructive as it is false. Perhaps we should ditch all our talk about what a wonderful and supportive "community" we have or how "welcoming" we are to all freshmen, lest we be accused of either hypocrisy or lack of self-knowledge.

Yes, I was obviously concerned about how others — parents, board members, friends of the college — view us on these occasions. But I was concerned less about the outside than the inside; less about them and more about us. If yelling and jeering and ugly comments about race get shrugged off as something we do here at St. John's, then what others think about us is the least of our problems.

—John Agresto, President



Mr. Thompson and five students after the All-College Seminar

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The editors of *The Moon* would like to remind the College community of the collective nature of our student-run newspaper. Each of the first three issues of *The Moon* have been a struggle to produce because of a disappointing dearth of compelling writing—*The Moon* has received very few submissions not directly solicited by the editors. While the student body has displayed an interest in *reading* the paper over the first month and a half of the school year, there nonetheless appears to be a lack of excitement in actually *writing* for *The Moon*. Case in point: we have received only one letter from the entire student body in three issues of the paper. It has not always been this way. Perhaps the editors have not made it sufficiently clear that everyone is welcome in the hallowed halls of St. John's College's version of "journalism". Otherwise, the community's lack of participation in *The Moon* can be attributed either to apathy—an apparently increasing characteristic of St. John's students—or to a general ignorance of the paper's cooperative character. Hopefully it's the latter. Please submit any at all pertinent non-literary writing, specific to the College or not.

Another issue that has troubled both editors is an undeniably offensive note posted across from the switchboard the night of S & C. The note attacked rather viciously one of *The Moon* editors. The disgusting and extremely immature graffiti was scrawled on a copy of the first issue of the paper, loudly declaring something we do not wish to print. The editors would like to invite the note's writer to voice his or her distaste publicly if he or she harbors a problem with *The Moon*. If, on the other hand, the note was written to criticize the editor of the paper instead of the paper itself, we advise an appointment with one of the Jans.

Cheerio!

Carisa Armendariz
Adrian Lucia

CONCERNING THE ALL-COLLEGE SEMINAR

by Justin Kray, '01

I am writing this article in the hopes of extending the first annual All College Seminar into a more regular event. There are several reasons why I support this action. First off, one of my biggest gripes about the curriculum as it is set up now is that it doesn't allow for a lot of interaction between grades. Basically, it feels like a class is put onto a coal cart together, and grows and moves with those people until they abandon the coal cart at graduation. Now, isn't there something to be said for seeing where we are going and where we have come from while we are on our pleasant voyage through the coal cave? For me, one of the most fascinating facets of my seminar was comparing the different systems of thought represented by my elder and younger classmates (I myself being a sophomore). I didn't have enough time to benefit from my comparisons, but I certainly feel that I could if given more opportunity.

Secondly, the All-College Seminar is unique insofar as it is now the sole activity in which all the elements of the college are brought together and forced to deal with each other. I admit, it is less painful for all of us to hide within our coal cart, growing in the systematic way as dictated by the curriculum.

However, I think, and I hope you will agree, that it is much to our advantage if everyone at the college learns to talk to and associate with people on a different gauge of thought. This would have a twofold benefit. The first would be for upperclassmen, who are forced to discard stale books from their mind and deal with the subject at hand when in presence of freshmen; and the second, for underclassmen who can observe the more mature approaches which the upperclassmen take to the text and integrate these methods into their own.

Along similar lines, the seminar is an ideal way for the college community to become more familiar with itself. With the campus being so small, I am often distressed that I can't place a personality or face to a given tutor who I hear about. In addition I am perturbed that I know so few people outside of my own class, and I feel that this is an ideal opportunity to brush up with people I've never met and to possibly develop further conversation with them.

Now some people may have had problems with the reading assignment (others, I know, think differently), and I have some proposals on this subject. Often I've heard that

freshman year is wasted on the freshman because of the density of the Greek material, and I think a return to some of the Greek material would be welcomed by many. Also, this would perhaps keep the freshman from feeling too estranged from the subject matter at hand. I personally would like to delve into eastern material to round out the "cannon" for a more worldly perspective. This seems like an ideal time to read such works.

In order to see the benefits of the All-College Seminar more clearly, it seems that they would have to be held more frequently—I would suggest monthly. There will be some hesitance among the college community to embrace it because many had bad experiences with the most recent seminar. But I hold that this is due to the unfamiliar relationship we all have with it. I think once a month would also keep from providing an obstacle to our standard curriculum and would allow for the seminar to maintain its integrity.

In sum, there is more to be learned from this experience. Although it may be painful and disagreeable at first—I think much benefit can be derived from it if pursued and continued more frequently.

QUOTES FROM THE ALL-COLLEGE SEMINAR AFTERGLOW

Compiled by Aaron Clewell, '01

A jaded freshman. . .

"I think it was a pretty good idea to have seminar with people you don't usually have seminar with. . . It breaks up the homeostasis."

—Matt Ward, '02

Diran tells it how it is. . .

"It was cool that they required it so people would show up."

—Maria Diran, '01

From the newlywed Mr. Merkle, that is, Culver. . .

"It was a wonderful opportunity to see attractive women I didn't know went

to school with me."

—Jason Culver, '01

A universal sentiment. . .

"All G.I.s should eat shit and die."

—Demming Ballentine, '01

The perspective that Seniority brings

"By senior year, I and my peers have agreed on certain definitions of things. It was refreshing to be in an environment of people with different definitions."

—Sara Elzerman, '99

A man without shoes. . .

"The mandation kind of sucked, but it

wasn't really any better or worse than my normal seminar.

A fortunately Non-Christian reading."

—Jesse Burson, '00

The self-proclaimed "Watz Party Archon". . .

"I felt weird about having class with non-seniors, but I thought it was great to watch the different personalities come out.

It was very interesting to see how four years at St. John's engenders a way of thinking."

—George Finney ('99)

OFF THE RECORD

"Mysticism and insanity are always bedfellows."

—Mr. Cornell

"Modernity is this mind game."

—Mr. Cornell

Homage to Grant Franks' Junior Mathematics tutorial...

"It's all flash and hyperbole."

—Mr. Franks on Archimedes

"The ratio of equality is death."

—Mr. Franks on Oresme

"Areas don't mean anything; they're just distraction."

—Jacob Blakesly

Dialogue between Mr. Franks and Andrew Burgard:

GF: Have we run into Guido Grande?

AB: Yeah, in Brooklyn.

"O, the sensuality of mathematics!"

—Mr. Franks

"The whole point of junior math is to get you to prostitute your values."

—Mr. Franks

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SIGNS OF THE APOCALYPSE

No corporation has adopted a more apparently harmless but arguably terrifying symbol than Wal-Mart. This is of course the well-known "smiley face", a perfect circle with small lines for its eyes and nose and a semi-circle for a smile. The critics will argue: What better an image of hollow consumer "happiness", stifled individualism, and capitalistic complacency can be imagined? The face's color and shape suggest an ominous contentment with uniformity. The color yellow, unlike the two other primary colors red and blue, allows for minimal variation, often appearing especially dull and flat when used as a backdrop. Here one is reminded of ABC television's recent advertising campaign, which also uses yellow as its background hue. The Wal-Mart corporation's obvious attempt to homogenize the American consumer's market cannot be disputed. The same products line the shelves of every American town's friendly "community" superstore...the same drab faces, the same organization of the merchandise, the same, the same, the same...

by Adrian Lucia, '00



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Submissions are accepted via the Moon or Adrian Lucia.

TWO REVIEWS

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST *Love Movement*

We have waited for nearly half a decade for A Tribe Called Quest to come out with a new album, but we never thought it would be their last as a united group. When I heard that *Love Movement* was coming out, I felt pure excitement. When the release date kept being put off till later, I felt frustration. When I heard the rumors that this would be their last album, I felt denial. Then, when I heard it straight from Q-Tip's own mouth at the Beastie Boy concert in Denver, I felt a real loss.

These boys (or men now, I should say) have helped build the rap community. Their lyrics are witty. Their beats are strong. Their voices melt my heart. But besides their obvious talent as lyricists and music makers, they have a strong moral background. They give rap integrity. Tribe gives a good name not only to rap, but to the entire music industry. They could care less about race, creed or color. When A Tribe Called Quest considers the person, they consider his or her character. These men of rap did not confine themselves to their own style of music. They explored the punk/rock/rap combinations of the Beastie Boys, they played with magical sounds of Deee-Lite, they moved beyond the sounds of the States and visited the dreamy world of Bjork... Their albums can be listened to over and over again, without complaint or boredom. Most importantly, A Tribe Called Quest never sold out. They stayed true to what they believed in. They gave us what we wanted, not what iThe Industryi or iBusinessi called for. They are all-around *great* musicians, unafraid of the new, the unknown or of doing what they feel is right.

Love Movement has gotten mixed reviews from the St. John's College Community. "Their beats are strong on this album, but the lyrics are weak." Or, "The beats are lacking. It ain't nothing like their previous albums." But when Q-Tip asks "Do you like it?", all I can say is "Hell yeah!". This album is an extremely appropriate way to end a fabulous group career while still continuing the legacy. The beats are beyond strong. They are smooth, not too hard, and not too fast. It is just enough to make the listener feel the love. The lyrics match the beats. Love resounds in all the songs.

On top of 16 fabulous new songs, there are six bonus tracks at the end of many versions. These are previously unreleased minutes of joy. I almost wonder as to how Tribe could have held these songs back for so long. One of the tracks is an amazing remix of Scenario, once again featuring Busta Rhymes. They seem to bring together the flavors of all the past albums, letting the listener remember all the good times, and ensuring more good times to come.

The price of this album was one disappointment—\$16.99 at Hastings. But, considering it is the last time I shall ever hear any new Tribe, and that there is a total of twenty one tracks, it is definitely a MUST purchase. For those few deprived folks that have never experienced the joy of Q-Tip, Phife and Muhammad, DO IT! You won't regret it. The second complaint is that there is still no Jeroby to be found among the Tribe. It would have been nice if he came back for the final album.

But these two faults are minor and easily overlooked. Now that I have heard the album, I feel good. If there ever was a fitting way to say good bye, this album is it. It is filled with great music. Filled with beats. Filled with the essence of A Tribe Called Quest. Filled with love.

—Alexis Brown, '00

CLAY PIGEONS

Clay Pigeons is basically about friendship, friendship with murderers. Along with this friendship theme comes sex, violence, and a fabulous story. The movie takes place in Mercer, Montana, a town of about 1,500 people where Clay Bidwell (Joaquin Phoenix, I had never seen this actor before but apparently he is coming out in a new movie starring Nicholas Cage called *8 Millimeter*) lives with several other interesting

folk. Among those interesting folk is a sheriff named Moony, with his deputy Barney (cute, ain't it?).

Clay Pigeons starts out with a couple of hicks, Clay and Earl, playing shoot-the-bottle out in the boonies (but who are you kidding, in a town of 1,500 the boonies are downtown). Anyway, Earl's pissed about Clay's swinging ability and decides to perform an elaborate scheme to place Clay in jail. Well Clay ends up finding himself in a world of hurt, but not so much because of Earl. There seems to have been a number of murders in the area and Clay has this fascinating habit of finding the bodies. Clay's ability in finding a number of these bodies and reporting them to the police has caught the attention of the FBI.

Enter Janeane Garofalo (*The Truth About Cats and Dogs*, and less notably *Matchmaker*) as the hardcore agent. Think of a pot smoking Jody Foster from *Silence of the Lambs* crossed with the pathetic nature of Garofalo's character in *The Truth About Cats and Dogs* and you have her character. Not saying that this is a bad thing, just kind of strange character for a FBI agent to have, but it could be my mind has been corrupted by Gillian Anderson's Agent Scully in the *X-Files*.

Meanwhile Clay is getting to be budsy palsy with Lester Long (Vince Vaughn, *Swingers*). Vaughn is very good in this film. Although his character seems to have been taken from a general case profile of a serial killer, he plays the role to a tee. A definite scene stealer, even though and his laugh really starts to get on your nerves. The buddy thing between Clay and Lester really ends up messing up Clay's life, but in an interesting way. Through the whole movie you continue to wonder how the hell he is going to get out of this situation. Many times through the movie I was really questioning what Clay was doing when he came up to possible solutions to his problems but the movie does seem to make you believe that he is doing the proper thing throughout.

Wise old Moony never lets you down in the film, but good ol' Barney started to drive me crazy and seemed like a poor attempt at a comic relief. *Clay Pigeons* really doesn't need comic relief, either. This is a very dark film, in a thematic sense, but it is quite humorous in many places. When Lester screams at Clay: "Some people just need a killin'!" I couldn't help but get a chuckle out of it, I just wished they would kill Barney and get him out of there.

As far as cinematography, in some spots it was exceptional. Those of you who go and see it, be sure to look for the cigarette lighting scene in the jail, I would go back and see the movie again simply for that shot. Speaking of cigarettes, something I am sure few Johnnies know much about, the film makes beautiful use of the smoke in many scenes, along with some interesting face close ups, some beautiful mountains, and random shots of clouds. Overall, nothing spectacular, except for the jail scene, but still made for some nice film.

Be warned, this is not a light and happy film. Don't go this movie expecting to be anything but frustrated, surprised, and appalled; but if you can stomach that you'll probably get some laughs out of it as well. The violence in *Clay Pigeons* is quite extraordinary as is the carnal knowledge we get of some of the characters. The film is lengthy but there did not feel to be any lagging parts. The plot continues to move at an acceptable rate of speed but not fast enough to leave you behind.

As far as a rating, *Clay Pigeons* does not deserve a Book I Proposition 47 of Euclid, but does have the appeal of Book IX and X of Ptolemy, especially with respect to the heliacal and zodiacal anomalies. It was a movie with an interesting plot, good actors, and nice cinematography. You really didn't know what was going to happen next.

Clay Pigeons is playing at the Lensic Theater. Call for show times.

—Geoffery Petrie, '01

INTERVIEWS WITH FIVE NEW TUTORS

Siobhan Boyer, '99, and Britta Riley, '00

We thought we'd introduce you to the people behind the credentials, so we spent hours tracking down our new tutors. Unfortunately, we were no match for Mr. Thomas, who managed to elude us. Ms. Otsuki mysteriously declined.

Peter Gilbert

Q: Who is your favorite rock star/group?

A: John Lennon.

Q: When you wake up in the middle of the night and you can't get back to sleep, what do you do?

A: I pray. Sometimes I read history—early Christian writings.

Q: What program authors put you to sleep?

A: Aquinas . . . I like him, but he puts me to sleep.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you think the St. John's community should be warned about?

A: I talk too much. Sometimes I can be boring.

Q: Did you become an academic by default, or on purpose?

A: By nature.

Q: Do you believe in God?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you believe in atoms?

A: Sure, but not in the same way. I wouldn't exactly call on atoms to help me.

Q: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: What do you mean by little? When I was about five or six, everyone said that I would become a hippy.

Q: Did you?

A: Well, by the time I was old enough, there weren't any left.

Q: What tape is in your car stereo right now?

A: I don't have a car.

Q: Please prove your existence in 25 words or less.

A: Well, I've got a St. John's tutor's I.D. in my wallet...

Mark Rollins

Q: Who is your favorite Rock star/group?

A: I really prefer Jazz and Classical music. But, through the history of Rock, I'm more a John Lennon fan than an Elvis fan. Of contemporary performers, I like the Cranberries, Tracy Chapman, the Grateful Dead . . .

Q: When you wake up in the middle of the night and you can't get back to sleep, what do you do?

A: A few years ago, I would imagine a beach scene, waves gently lapping against the shore. I would be walking

with a beautiful and intelligent woman. She breaks the silence by saying, "I really admire the way you think." But since I've met that woman and married her, I don't have trouble sleeping anymore.

Q: Does she still say that she admires the way you think?

A: [Laughs.] I'm not sure.

Q: What program authors put you to sleep?

A: That's a dangerous question. I like all the Greeks. Maybe the first time I read Hegel. Aquinas, I guess.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you think the St. John's community should be warned about?

A: Not that I can think of at the moment.



Q: Did you become an academic by default, or on purpose?

A: On purpose. I have done other things, but I always return to academia.

Q: Do you believe in God?

A: I'm at an even more basic level. I'm still wondering what it means to assert the existence of God. If you gave me different definitions of God, I would have different answers. If you are talking about a supernatural being who intervenes in human lives, I would have to respond as LaPlace did to Napoleon.

When Napoleon asked him why he made no mention of God in his writings on celestial mechanics, LaPlace replied, "I had no need for that hypothesis."

Q: Do you believe in atoms?

A: I have found a need for that hypothesis.

Q: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I went through the basic order: Cowboy, fireman . . . No, just kidding. At one point, I wanted to be a doctor. That was my first aspiration to academia. I always wanted to be different things at the same time, like a motorcycle gang member and an Oxford Don, to satisfy both my serious side and my fantasy side.

Q: What tape is in your car stereo right now?

A: It's empty.

Q: Please prove your existence in 25 words or less.

A: Do I have to use words? [Pushes the desk]. There. I kicked a rock.

Matthew Davis

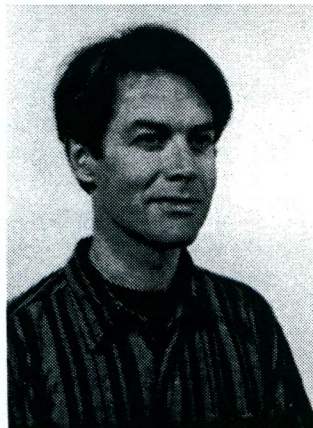
Q: Who is your favorite Rock star/group?

A: I like Country and Western music. Reba McEntyre sometimes. The only other singer- outside of classical singers- I can think of listening to right now is Roy Rogers (seriously).

Q: When you wake up in the middle of the night and you can't get back to sleep, what do you do?

A: Greek paradigms.

Q: What program authors put you to sleep?



A: Adam Smith. He's one of the authors I like the least and who I think has the least understanding of the world.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you think the St. John's community should be warned about?

A: 1) I am a terrible dancer, worse than Elaine on Seinfeld; 2) I know far more than anybody should about Hollywood movies of the 30's through the early 60's. I have seen "The Magnificent Seven" (as well as several other films) more than 40 times.

Q: Did you become an academic by default, or on purpose?

A: On purpose.

Q: Do you believe in God?

A: I think the best answer for right now is No Answer, since, ... the question is far too important and serious, (and complex) to discuss in a brief interview.

Q: Do you believe in atoms?

A: If you understand atoms (a la Lucretius, say) as the fundamental constituents or causes of the world of the world or our experience and this is how I understand your question, then I do not think they are knowable, since I do not think that knowledge of the fundamental cause or constituents of the world or experience is available to human beings. This is, by the way, one reason that the question of God is so complex.

Q: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

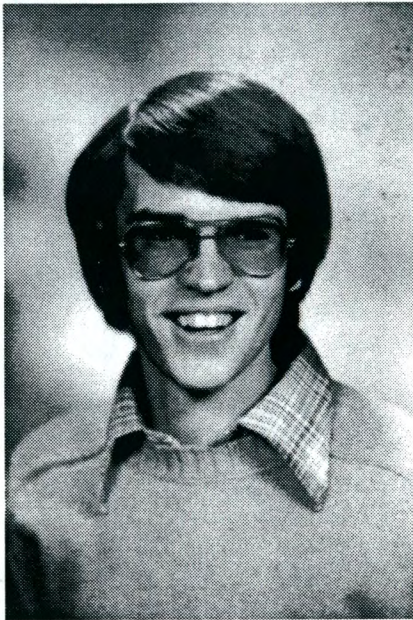
A: A policeman, a writer, and a lawyer. I probably also wanted to play baseball at some point.

Q: What tape is in your car stereo right now?

A: I don't have a car stereo. My radio is sometimes tuned in to a baseball game or a local talk radio. If there was a Country and Western station that didn't play annoying, modern Country, I might listen to it. Most often the radio is turned OFF. Quiet is sometimes good, too.

Q: Please prove your existence in 25 words or less.

A: I don't know if I can prove anything. Why is this a question, anyway? I seriously wonder about the grounds of Cartesian doubt.



Q: Do you believe in God?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you believe in atoms?

A: Yes, I haven't had quite the same evidence for the existence of atoms, but I will take them on faith.

Q: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I thought of becoming a pilot for a while. I even took some classes.

Q: What tape is in your car stereo right now?

A: Either Brazilian music, classical or 1930's jazz.

Q: Please prove your existence in 25 words or less.

A: Because I know I'm at St. John's.

George Lane

Q: Who is your favorite rock star/group?

A: The Grateful Dead.

Q: When you wake up in the middle of the night and you can't get back to sleep, what do you do?

A: Keep reading the mystery I was reading when I fell asleep.

Q: What program authors put you to sleep?

A: All of them are entirely stimulating.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you think the St. John's community should be warned about?

A: No.

Q: Did you become an academic by default, or on purpose?

A: By necessity.

Q: Do you believe in God?

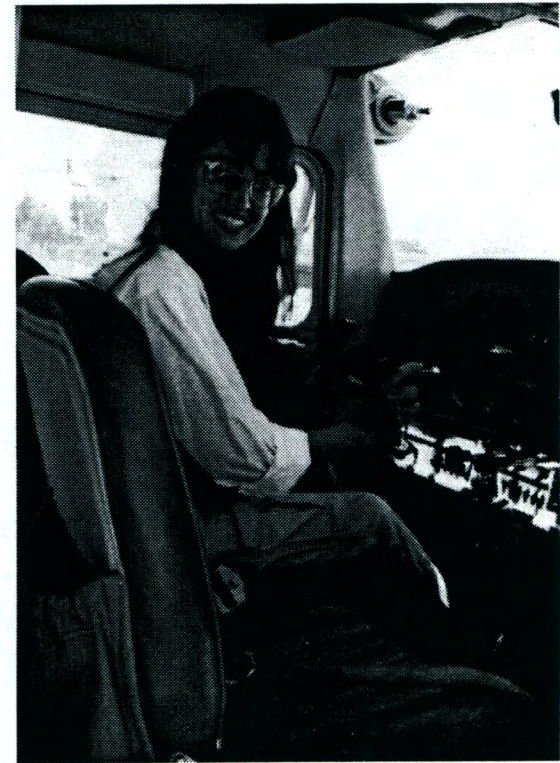
A: My degree is in Theology, but really, I don't think the notion of belief is appropriate to the notion of God.

Q: Do you believe in atoms?

A: I think I believe in atoms, for the time being. Someone could show me something else.

Q: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I had dreams of being an athlete. I thought of being a



psychologist or going to law school.

Q: What tape is in your car stereo right now?

A: My stereo is broken. I listen to the radio. Thelonius Monk is in my stereo at home.

Q: Please prove your existence in 25 words or less.

A: I am capable of telling you the story of my life. But then, I guess you could tell me the story of my life and that would not necessarily prove that you were me.

Louise Guenther

Q: Who is your favorite rock star/group?

A: Skank, a Brazilian group. They are a kind of fusion of rock, jazz, reggae, and traditional Brazilian rhythms.

Q: When you wake up in the middle of the night and you can't get back to sleep, what do you do?

A: I guess I get something to eat, listen to music, or play with my cat.

Q: What program authors put you to sleep?

A: None.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you think the St. John's community should be warned about?

A: No. I'll just surprise them.

Q: Did you become an academic by default, or on purpose?

A: It was inevitable.

ANOUNCEMENTS

On Wednesday, October 28, SAO brings the 12th tour around the United States of Theatre Roundabout with Sylvia Read and William Fry to the Great Hall. Ms. Read and Mr. Fry will present their own adaptation of *Shadowlands* by William Nicholson in celebration of the C.S. Lewis centenary.

Nicknamed "the apostle to the skeptics", C.S. Lewis, though a confirmed bachelor and a distinguished academic at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, had an extraordinary gift for presenting Christianity to the common man. In 1950 he received a letter from the American poet Joy Davidman Gresham. They met two years later and seemed to be led step by step into their brief and poignant marriage. In 1960 Joy died at the age of forty-five. After her death, Lewis wrote some of his finest work but survived her by little more than three years.

Bill Nicholson has dramatised their story, first for television, then for the stage in the West End and on Broadway, and finally as an outstanding film. Now he has generously given permission for this two-person adaptation by Sylvia Read and William Fry. Theatre Roundabout wishes to offer its gratitude to him and to Carnival Films Ltd.

This event is sponsored and subsidized by the Student Activities Office. Admission is free to all faculty, staff, and students.

SAO CALENDAR

SAT/17	SUN/18	WED/21
7p.m. Great Hall Students will present a series of one-act plays directed and produced by St. John's students. Waltz Party, 9:30pm in the Dining Hall	3p.m. Great Hall Second performance of one-act plays	7p.m. Great Hall French Film series continues with short <i>The Nose</i> and <i>La Ceremonie</i>
SAT/24	WED/28	
7p.m. Great Hall Films: Cartoons and <i>The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser</i> directed by Werner Herzog	7:30pm Great Hall Theatre Roundabout performs its adaptation of <i>Shadowlands</i> by William Nicholson	

The Moon

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THE MOON

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The Moon serves St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico as an independent bi-weekly student newspaper. Opinions expressed here represent the views of their authors rather than those of the College. Issues are distributed at no charge to students, faculty and staff on the Santa Fe campus, and yearly subscriptions can be obtained for \$35. Tax-deductible contributions are welcome. We solicit submissions from all members of the College community. Staff and contributors meet Tuesdays at noon in the SJC coffee shop. Material for the next issue should be submitted by 6 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 1998. We ***INSIST*** that work be submitted in text format on a 3.5" Macintosh disk (if you absolutely cannot use a Mac then save your file as a Rich Text File) along with a typed, double-spaced copy including the author's name and phone number. Hard copies without disks are acceptable in certain circumstances. *The Moon* reserves the right to edit and to reject any submission.

