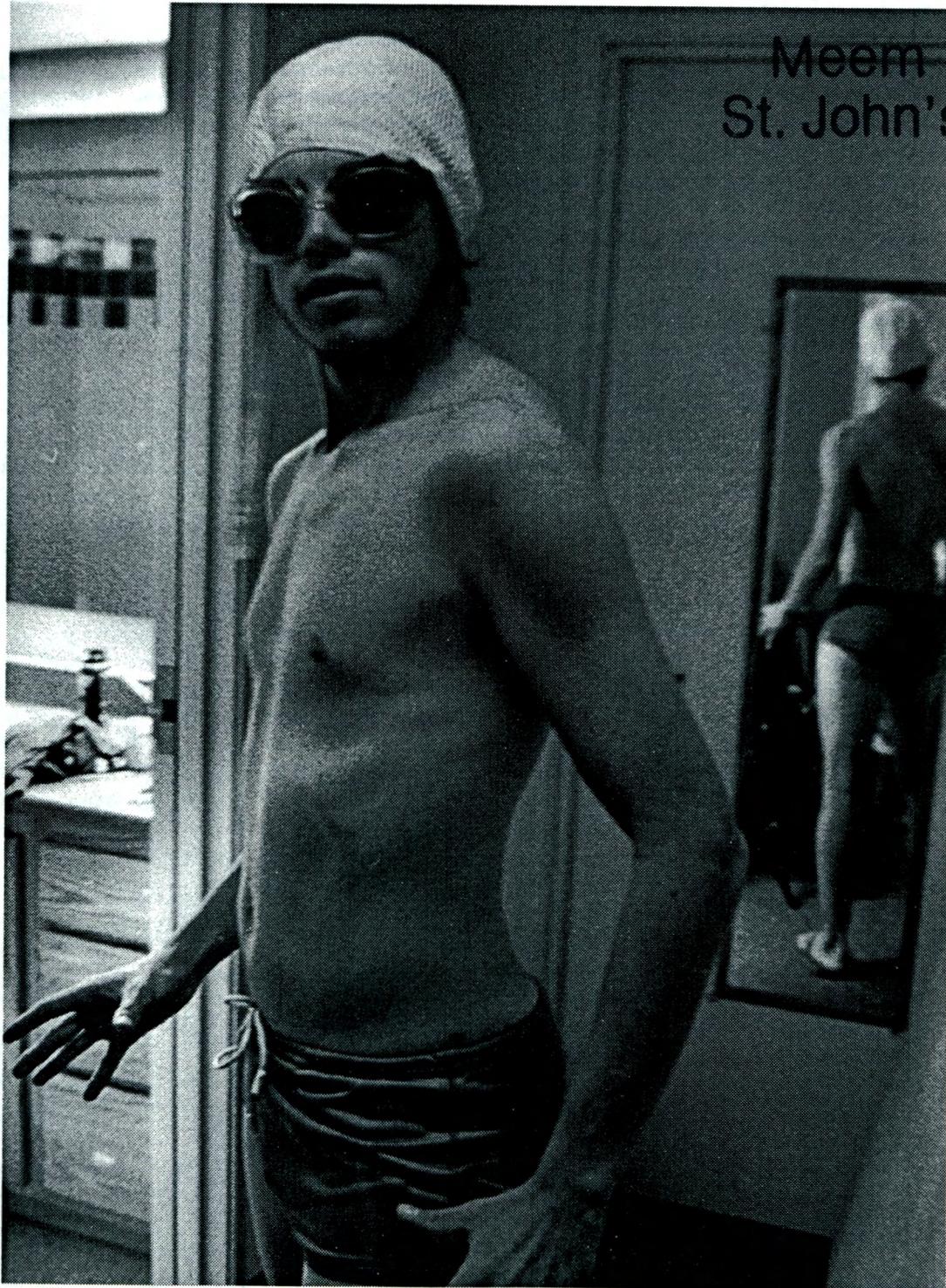


# The Moon

*St. John's College's Independent Bi-Monthly • Volume 3, Issue 9 • April 1, 1999*



Meem Library  
St. John's College

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# LETTERS to the moon

To the College Community:

The Campus Planning Committee is presently working with an architect on the remodeling of the food service area of the Dining Hall. The capital for this project will be loaned by Aramark, and the remodeling will probably take place for six weeks following Commencement. A major unresolved issue is where the access control point should be, and what should be controlled. Presently, the control point is located at the entrance to the food service area, and there is unlimited access to the Dining Hall itself. In most colleges and universities, including our sister campus, access to and egress from the dining hall is limited, and no dishes or food can be taken out of the area without permission. There is surveillance and control of both the entrance and exit. Everyone entering must either be on food service or buying a meal (probably with controlled exceptions). Our dining hall, in contrast, has several entrances and exits, and those not on food service are free to sit with their friends who are on food service during meals, whether or not they buy food. In addition, we were, for a time, free to take food out of the dining hall, using dining hall dishes, on the assumption that, as a small community, we would honor the implicit obligation to return all dishes and trays to the dining hall, and that we would not engage in significant cheating with respect to meals unpaid for.

I cannot judge the significance of food taken and not paid for. It does happen. But much worse is the loss of dishes. This year alone, three thousand dollars (\$3,000) worth of dishes have been taken out and not returned. That is an incredible amount of dishware (to be replaced by the College)!! It exceeds the loss in facilities serving ten times as many people. One can accuse the staff, but the most obvious suspects are students. There are unsubstantiated reports that students have stocked their off-campus kitchens with College-owned dishes... In any case, it is an unacceptable loss, and will affect how we control access to and egress from the Dining Hall.

We have already talked about the following options:

- (1) Do not modify access control and use only disposable plates, cups, and utensils throughout.
- (2) Maintain controlled access at the entrance, with a ready supply of disposables, with a strict policy of requiring use of disposables for any food going out. An enforcer will be necessary.
- (3) Limit egress to the main entrance door, closing off the south deck. (This would require alarms on the south doors for meaningful control.) Gate the west balcony.
- (4) Require everyone entering who is not buying food to sign in, as a modified form of accountability.

I am writing this letter, because whatever we do impinges upon our community habits, and will provoke reactions. An enforcer, as mentioned above, may be abused unless and until abusers are punished. I, for one, loved being able to take food on real dishes to noon tutors' meetings, but the privilege has been subverted, and it cannot continue. Our student member argues fiercely for access to the dining hall during meals by those not on food service.

So, measure up your reactions, and come up with some *constructive* criticism. Complaining won't do it—we all have complaints, even the most privileged. How can we best get on with it?

—Hans von Briesen

Dear St. John's,

If I may make one plea, it would be that we could all appreciate what each individual has to contribute. This is truly what makes up the character and integrity of the whole. What would a St. John's classroom be if everyone had the same arguments to make in the same manner? This would be the equivalent of growing in a dark closet. So I pray that we are all gracious enough to listen to each other and allow for our differences, and thus, create room to grow.

Amen.

—Anthe Aliferis Kelly, '01

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

In the Eastern European country of Yugoslavia, American-led NATO (does the "T" stand for "treaty" or "terror"?) forces have been carrying out a bombing campaign on military and communications targets (or so the Pentagon claims) since last Thursday. Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic has increased his persecution of Kosovan Albanians since the commencement of "Operation Allied Force," as the Associated Press / Reuters / the Pentagon / CNN—can we tell the difference between the military and the media anymore?—christens the arial attack.

The continued attack on Yugoslavia appears to us as a nearly imaginary event, so cinematic is its presentation to us via CNN, the New York Times, etc. No real human beings, the Pentagon avows, will be necessary for the glorious victory over the Serbian nationalists: cruise missiles, stealth bombers, infrared attacks from fighter jets in the darkness of the night. A computerized air force will win this battle, the White House contends, even as Milosevic's expulsion of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo intensifies proportionally to the number of bombs dropped on Yugoslavia. Apparently it is a virtual war, a mere simulation of combat; actually, both the NATO forces and the Serbian military inflict real violence upon their neighbors.

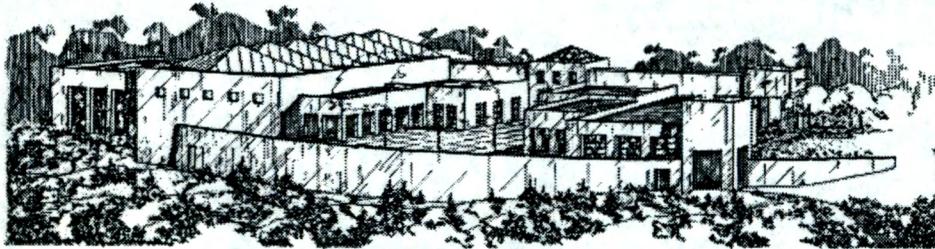
Hopefully, no one on this campus remains unaware of the crisis in Europe. Hopefully, students and tutors alike have considered the depth of the effects produced by the operation, the first military action by NATO on a sovereign nation and the largest allied attack since World War II. Hopefully, members of the College community will voice their impressions and opinions about the crisis publicly. A dialogue must be created not only in the Graduate Common Room, but in the coffee shop, on the fish pond placita, in the dining hall, and (surprise) in *The Moon*.

—Adrian Lucia

# ON THE NEW STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER

by Britta Riley, '00

At age 16, when he was a prospie visiting the college for the first time, Mark St. John sat in the Student Activities Office and listened as his older brothers and the activities director talked about the soon-to-be-built gym and assured Mark that student life would be more well-rounded by the time he became a Johnie because of it. That was over 25 years ago. Now Mr. St. John, 43, is himself the Director of Student activities and frequently talks about the soon-to-be-built Student Activities Center. We've all been hearing about the new gym for a long time. In fact, plans for a gym were included in the original charter for the college, drafted in 1964, and was supposed to be built even before the library.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER  
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Lloyd and Tryk  
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"In a way, it's just a Johnie idea. It's still sitting on the table after all these years," says Brendan O' Neill, the Assistant Director of Student Activities, "The day I see the construction crew, I will be dancing. We are ready to move. Let's turn potential into actuality."

President Agresto said last week that the construction of the first phase, the athletic center, of this long-awaited facility will be underway by graduation. If all goes as planned for the estimated 13-month construction project, those of you who are still at the college will have one less excuse to avoid carrying out your Year 2000 exercise resolutions.

Although the Campus planning committee had already formulated some plans, the serious discussion about the ways, means, and intricacies which put the project in motion arose in conjunction with the 1991 Capital Campaign, a fund-raising campaign with a goal of \$30 million to be allotted for the improvement of the long-term capital resources of both campuses. The cost estimate for the Student Activities Center was \$4.5 million, part of the \$30 million goal. However, when the campaign ended in 1996, it had not brought in \$30 million

and the Student Activities Center did not receive its \$4.5 million. (The Capital Campaign is something of a can-of-worms in itself when you consider that the larger part of the money raised went to the Annapolis campus, which was already much better off financially than our campus. "One college, two campuses," yeah, right. But we won't go there). Just about the only money the

Student Activities Center got out of the campaign came from individuals who specifically requested that their money go to that project, which amounted to about \$900,000.

Despite the inability to raise the necessary funds through the Capital Campaign, faculty, staff, the Board of Visitors and Governors, and students urged administrators to continue efforts to raise money for the center. Agresto solicited the support of large foundations. When the Rumsfeld Foundation gave \$500,000 for the project, other large-figure donors were more willing to contribute since it appeared then that the project might actually get underway.

The president explained the problems involved with fund-raising for something like SAC, "Philanthropy has changed over the past 10 to 15 years. The truth is, most people don't want to give money for buildings anymore. We have yet to find any donor who wants his name on the building. People are more self-effacing these days than self-promoting."

At this point, the college is \$350,000 shy of the \$3.8 million required for the first phase of the project, but will go ahead with

the project.

Agresto says he does not think it is a good idea to take out a loan for that money; he says he'll "get it by begging, pleading, and twisting arms." "I promised everybody I would get the college a debt-free building. I've been getting \$25,000 and \$50,000 pledges at lunches every week. I'm confident that we will have the money. We should get the construction documents from the architect in a week and then we will put the job up for bidding [by contractors]."

The second phase, which includes the extracurricular classrooms, lounge, and game room, may not happen while any of us are here. Agresto explains the delay, "We're going to have to sit for a while— build up the endowment, increase tutors' salaries, work on

the annual fund. Also, we have to wait a while before we can ask these people for money again." As far as the third phase, the pool, goes, Agresto says, "It may never happen, but if someone gives us \$2 million dollars specifically for a pool, of course, we will go ahead."

Explaining his participation in the project in general, the president says, "I was the right one to lead this campaign because I have absolutely no self-interest. My idea of exercise is thinking about fishing. I did promise myself that I would use the weight room, though."

## THE PLANS

The Campus Planning Committee, working with SAO and Lisa Carey, came up with the plans for the most part. Mrs. Carey compiled several extensive reports concerning the proposed facility and circulated surveys in the early '90s to solicit the ideas of undergraduates, graduate students, staff, faculty, and faculty spouses as to how the building could best serve the college community. The committee then

...continued on page 6

# The Fasching Ball



Three familiar (if not surly) senior women say "Cheers!"



Ming Fu goes in style (above) and Penelope Benekos shines her smile (right).



## SIGNS OF THE APOCALYPSE

by Adrian Lucia, '00

Like Newton's ratios of ultimate equality, which are diminished *in infinitum* and finally reach evanescence, the edge "personal technology" of the 1980's and 1990's strives towards a complete self-minification. The smaller the product, the the newer, and hence the more attractive, the cooler. Cellular telephones, laptop computers, mini disc players, DVD, Bose stereo speakers, pagers, digital day planners... All these examples suggest a progression of the technological towards the infinitesimal level, towards invisibility. In other words, personal technology approaches a size so small that a sensory distinction between it and the human body becomes impossible. The real, tactile experience of a technological device becomes mere idea and abstraction, unidentifiable by the sensorily aware human being.

Perhaps the best example of this invasion of the miniature robot into the daily happenings of the average first-world citizen is the *cellular telephone*. Why is it, indeed, that these portable demons, which keep their owners "connected to the world" at all times and all places (one is even rumored to have rung during a recent mathematics tutorial at the College), are called "cellular phones," or

simply "cell phones" colloquially? Why not "portable phone"? What do telephones have to do with cells? Perhaps those who named these instruments of torture had in mind their continually evanescent size. The newest of cellular phones are close to the size of the palm of an average male hand, and can easily fit in a coat or pant pocket, hardly noticeable, devoid of all the cumbersome bulkiness of the earliest portable telephones. To extend further the general observation explored above, we should notice the latest term for cellular phones: "body phones." The idea that lurks quietly behind this language is in itself terrifying, and the consumer's complacency to it is even more so. Body phone. Bodyphone. The mechanism which is made, supposedly, to serve me and to make my worldly life easier is no longer linguistically separated from my body. The telephone is my body; my body is a telephone; the telephone is inside my body.

*Microchip, microculture, microcosmos...*

# GEOFF ANGER

by Geoffery Petrie, '01

This may seem redundant but I believe it needs to be said: The Anger is angry. It's more than that, though, The Anger is outraged. Since this is a family paper I am going to refrain from using some choice words that I feel are quite appropriate to the subject that I am about to comment on, but let it be known, under all these niceties many a vulgarity is peering through the darkness of Hell.

Tuesday of the week before Spring Break I found out through a source that a donated statue that once stood in Schepp's Garden had been torn off its base and the destroyed remains of that beautiful piece of art were found in the lower dorms. This is clearly a repulsive act of disrespect toward the college community.

In my last article I questioned the ability of campus security (by the way I still have yet to hear from Ray) but this week my gripe is with the actual campus itself. This is not an article on my concern toward the politeness of the student body, it is not about whether or not you say hello to me when I walk by you waving frantically hoping to get some attention, no this is The Anger attacking the moral behavior of the student body at large.

Let's look at the facts. This was a clay statue, and it was connected to a concrete base with a metal rod that went straight through the middle of it for support. Obviously this was not a one jerk job. How many morons were there to help? How many imbeciles were there just to observe this brilliant act of maturity? How many worms viewed these magnificent vandals break the statue into pieces and then scattered them through lowers? Not to re-mention the fact that the statue was originally placed in Schepp's Garden, more or less the center of the campus, some windows of Peterson view where that statue once stood, the library placita is directly across from it, yet how could these fools get away with this without someone else seeing them? Then there is the noise. Maybe I am just as foolish as these freaks are, but to tear down the statue wouldn't you think, even if they were as quiet as the rats they are, that breaking three quarter inch clay would make enough noise to be heard around that area? Anyway, the point of this paragraph is to make it explicitly understood that there is no way on God's green earth that no one else knows about this atrocity.

So here is where The Anger's vehemence

comes forth. This statue was not the vandals to do with what they pleased. That statue was the campus' and was given to the campus with love and generosity, not with the thought that "Hey, maybe they'll like it, or maybe they'll have some scum-bag assholes (oops, the censors won't like that one) rip it down and smash it to pieces."

The Anger knows that this campus has personal opinions that often are against the social norm, I know that people have the right to their opinion, and if the occasion arises to have that opinion heard. This is not a case of someone attempting to have their opinion heard, this is not an attempt to make a statement a person's



offense toward that one statue. This was, without a doubt, an act of immature destruction that may well rank up to the level of grade school vandalism, i.e., egging of houses on Halloween, throwing a rock through a window, but on a grander scale. Do these people know that they have broken the law? That if found out they could end up with a criminal record? Theft of property over a thousand dollars is a crime, and let's not kid ourselves, this was theft and the statue was well over a thousand dollars in cost, not to mention the priceless emotional and historic value that it held.

I would assume that this action was taken under the influence of some sort of drug. Most likely alcohol but possibly in addition of other such lovely mind altering substances. Do these people understand that with the current movement toward drying out the campus that their act has also affected the student's movement to relax the current standard? If I was administration, I would not hesitate to suggest that the campus be free of all risque materials and come down on the campus with an iron fist. What reason should they have to think that

we are a campus of mature adults? What do we do when responsibility of moderation is given to us? We abuse it and then cry the holy cry when they begin to take away our privileges one by one.

The Anger is not blind, I know that the campus is made up of mainly good students whose interest is toward their studies, for the most part. There is, however, an unavoidable group of people, whom everyone knows, that partake in such events as destruction of campus property. I have a good idea who these people are, and if I find enough evidence to prove that they are the ones involved may the school have mercy on their souls, for I will make it my personal mission to see that these people are removed for this college and will forever have the challenge of getting into another. If I find the people who have information about the destruction of the statue and have not made it known to the proper people then they, too, are as guilty of the crime as the people who have accomplished the destruction themselves, and they, too, will be a victim of The Anger's wrath.

This campus is too small not to provide a community policing of sorts. Why is it that the common rooms need to be free of all furniture? Why are all the cabinets locked and keys must be signed out? The Anger knows why, as I am sure the majority of students do as well. What statement are the students making if they don't stand up for this disgusting act? Are we saying that we are better than the art we study? I wouldn't be surprised if that is what these vandals thought.

The Anger, as I said before, is angry. The Anger is out for blood. The Anger will have his dish served cold.

#### Prophetic Note:

No, it's true I didn't need to do this, but it makes me feel better. The day that I found out about the smashing of the sculpture I also found out that three cars had been broken into in a destructive manner (i.e., smashing of their rear window) and their stereos had been stolen. On Tuesday of this week I had the pleasure of seeing that those brilliant CSFers had struck again and sprayed more cars with their lovely initials. Hey, Ray, how about a little help here, we know your a *very* busy guy, but this just isn't funny any more. Get your act in gear. Ladies and Gentlemen, The Anger has left the building.

tailored these and other considerations with a view to the budget allotted for the project and practicalities suggested by the architect.

The first phase, to begin in May, is shown on the left side of the blueprint (but does not include the pool). It will include a gym, locker rooms, two racquetball/squash courts, a weight room, a new Student Activities Office with larger equipment storage rooms, and separate offices for the Director and Assistant Director of Student Activities.

The second phase, shown on the right of the blueprint, will some day include a pottery studio, photo lab, dance studio, game room, drawing/painting studio, lounge, student newspaper office, and Search and Rescue facility.

The third phase is the pool. The architect has designed the building so that a pool can be added at any time, but, like phase two, the likelihood of any current freshmen using a St. John's pool any time before he graduates is next to nothing. The college

does not anticipate the funds required for its construction, let alone the \$30,000 a year maintenance costs (more than SAO's entire expendable yearly budget). Although 121 people, out of the 188 total Mrs. Carey surveyed, listed the pool as the most desirable element of the new facility, the campus planning committee decided it was not practical to make it a priority for the funds currently available. One of the factors they took into consideration is that there are five public pools in Santa Fe at the moment and the cost of running a swim bus to them even several times a week is far more cost effective than building and maintaining one at the college.

The survey garnered as many suggestions for additions to the building as there are hobbies and interests among the diverse people on campus. Among these suggestions, a proposed childcare center was long-debated, but finally dropped because of the difficulties involved with increased liability to the college and extensive federal and

state-imposed regulations on childcare facilities.

The following are some general goals that were taken into account in the building's design:

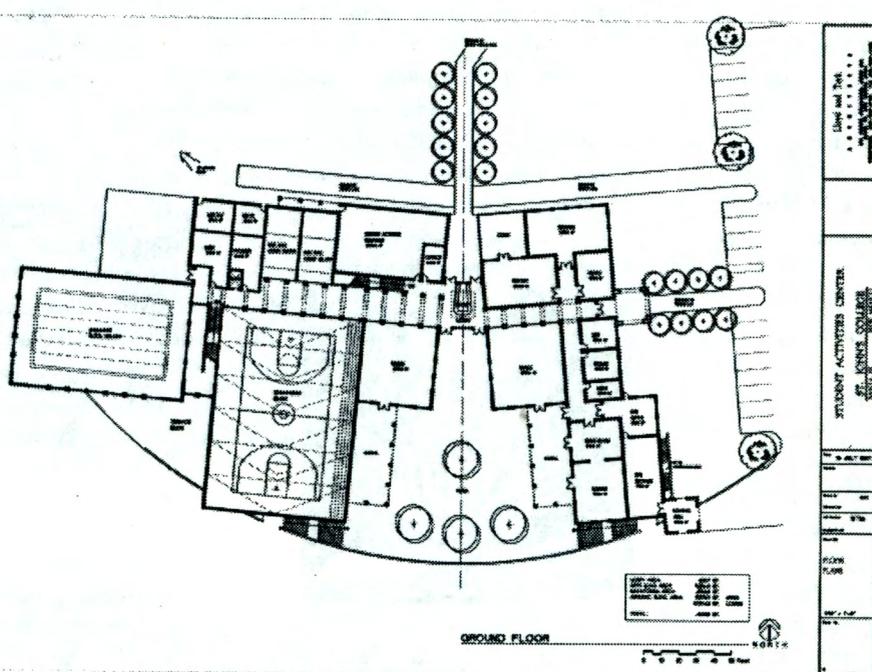
- reduce impact of overall size of building
- should easily adapt to future expansion
- entrance to building should be directed towards main campus, signaling an understanding that the building is intended

building project, seems to me to be irresponsible. 'Great books, no gym' — love it, or leave it."

A different survey wrote, "What a great idea; students would graduate from St. John's being well educated and less weird."

This issue has stirred strong feelings for years, brought up questions of what a Johnie really is or should be. Most colleges look for a well-rounded student, who has participated in a variety of activities. A St. John's admissions counselor said the

admissions office does not take extracurricular activities into account when considering an applicant. "We try to find students whose needs and interests match what the school has available." Does the lack of extracurricular activities at the college deter students who have interests other than just studying? "Sometimes. If we interview a star athlete who also has a good academic record, it is often difficult to assure him that the college is going to meet his needs," he said, "It will be nice to be able to show prospective students that we have a space carved



- for use of the St. John's community
- building should not appear isolated
- building facades directed towards neighbors and playing fields should be visually appealing
- minimize ambiance of health spa
- should allow for most possible safety in and around building
- emphasis should not be placed on competitive activities
- make building adaptable to events such as parties, theatrical presentations, and graduation

**WHY BUILD THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

"My suggestion is to stop planning," one student wrote at the bottom of the survey sheet, "The college has survived 25 years without a gym. Everyone came here knowing that there was no gym. To support yet another enormously expensive

out for athletics. I don't think that the facility is going to change the face of St. John's, though."

When a well-rounded student decides to come to St. John's, is it the mission of the college to turn him or her into a one-sided nerd? Outside experience used to be considered a plus, when the average Johnie was a little older and had lived life a little before coming to the college. Do Johnie's really disdain their bodies, disdain the physical life? Is that a doctrine with which we are expected to leave the college?

"I came back to work as the Director of Student Activities because I believe in the importance of athletics and extracurricular activities to balance out the rigors of the curriculum," says Mark St. John, "In fact, I believe that some form of athletic endeavor should be mandatory for all students.

Although she thinks extracurricular activities should remain optional, one student says, "If I have taken anything out of the

program so far it is that you need balance. We read all sorts of extreme ideas here. You have to be able to read them with an open mind and that means sticking to the middle ground. Why not take that idea into our lives as well. It sounds fruity, but we really need to maintain a balance between body and mind."

As the administration has learned from the strong outcry of students, faculty, and staff pushing the issue, the fact is that most people on campus want a recreational facility of some sort.

Another student phrased his objection, "I am of the opinion that the money should go to better salaries for the tutors and that having more dorms on campus is more important than having a gym."

St. John's tutors salaries are currently below the national average for college-level educators, which is an outrage considering the how exacting their job is. Those of us who were kicked off campus this year due to a lack of housing facilities would agree that there is an urgent need for more dorms on campus.

However, such issues are in a sense not related. One must consider that almost all the money raised for the Student Activities Center came either from people who specifically requested that their money go to this project, who wanted to support this cause, or from foundations who contribute only to projects like this. The money raised for SAC could not have gone anywhere else. One could say, though, that the fund-raising efforts spent on SAC could have gone to the annual fund drive and to bettering the Capital campaign, which do garner funds for such things as new dorms and increased tutor salaries.

Every soccer player who has shown up to five practices in a row only to find that 12-year old Prep school kids have priority dibs on our field, every fencer who has had practice shortened because the theater group hadn't finished their diaphragm exercises, and every ballroom dancer who has missed out on a Lindy lesson because of a townie "The Goddess in You" lecture has recognized the shortcomings of our current extracurricular facilities. The Director and Assistant Director of Student Activities, forced to share a 12 x 12 foot workspace with 18 workstudy students, find ketchup on their budget reports and several ears listening in on important phone calls. Where can the new indoor soccer team practice, in the Great Hall? There is no doubt that a

lack of space limits the quality and quantity of extracurricular activities, not to mention making a lot of people's jobs more stressful.

Stress runs rampant at the college, just ask the "Jan's"; it lurks in every office and every classroom. It turns to booze and then breaks the bottles. It makes tutors into hollow shells of men and women who students cannot entirely want to imitate.

Tutors expressed a feeling that the facility would reduce their own stress and give students an opportunity to release anxiety "in a manner that would be more healthy for the community as a whole." And, as one tutor put it, "Happy tutors tutor better."

Participants in the survey from all groups complained of a lack of community on campus and thought SAC would create more of one. One GI said, "This would be a tremendous asset to graduate students. GI's have a limited community among themselves and feel like almost complete outsiders with respect to the rest of the college. Most people don't even know who we are."

The strongest sense of outrage at the lack of community and support of the facility came from faculty spouses. One spouse said, "Right now I hate the college so much because of what it has done to our family. Maybe it would [SAC would make spouses feel more included in the college community and better college-family relations] . . ."

Another said, "Perhaps [the facility would help change my feelings toward the college]. This is something that would truly benefit spouses and families. The college tends to forget that its program is made possible by families who totally support the tutors effort."

And another said, "A family that plays together, stays together."

Some staff members suggested that they feel distanced from the students and would welcome the increased interaction with the students for which the facility would allow, so that they could better understand students' needs.

## SOME RELATED ISSUES STILL IN DEBATE

Who will be able to use the facility?

President Agresto gave his view on this issue:

"We're going to have to figure out our

[students', faculty's, staffs' and their families] use of the building before we open it to anyone else. I would find it difficult to say 'no' to close friends of the college. Our neighbors don't want it to be open to the community, nor does the City. The City does not want this to be a focal point [of city activities]. Alumni could use it, I think, but only at certain times."

It is generally agreed that the priority would go to current members of the college community and their families.

To what extent children, supervised or unsupervised, will be able to use it has not yet been decided.

One student responded to the question of family use as follows: "What? After incestuous dorm life and endless conversation in the dining hall about who's sleeping with whom, to actually witness something like responsible adult life: committed couples raising kids together. How wholesome, how un-St. John's, what a concept!"

A tutor wrote: "Having more family involvement at St. John's will make it a healthier happier place, and it might allow me to see more of my kids."

How will the college handle the inevitable costs another large building will generate? Look at what fluctuating weather has done to the tennis court. The same thing will happen to this building. After 5 years the building will probably need some repairs. After 10 years, it may have major problems. Basketball nets rot, exercise machines pop springs, locker room showers start leaking.

Although no one is yet sure what the hours for the new facility will be, Brendan O'Neill estimates that it will be open from 7 am to 11 pm, most nights, and until midnight on seminar nights. Mr. O'Neill and Mr. St. John will probably not be able to keep those hours, which means that SAO will have to hire probably two more supervisor position employees.

Since the administration does not have any immediate plans to increase SAO's working budget, from what budget is the money to pay for these costs going to come?

President Agresto says they will be covered by a \$45,000 endowment and budget-shifting. What's left over, he says, will be "a perfect use for the Student Activities Fees."

# LIMERICK challenge

Here are this issue's lucky (and talented) winners, chosen by our panel of experts out of thousands of contributions. Next issue's first line: "There once was terrible tutor..."

There once was a snail with no slime  
Who thought leaving a trail was a crime.  
So depleted of moisture  
Was his little cloister  
That he withered quite quickly with time.

There once was a snail with no slime  
Who deemed that grime to be sublime.  
Glancing always behind him,  
Never once did his hope dim  
That his slime would appear given time.

—Marinka Yossifon, '00

There once was a snail with no slime,  
But his trial was his measure of time.  
When he saw he had place  
But no relation to space  
He decided that station is sublime.  
—Joey Chernila, '01

There once was a snail with no slime  
Who was looking to have a good time  
But he could not crawl far  
Nor drink at a bar  
So he made up a supa phat rhyme.  
—Anthe Aliferis Kelly, '01

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# The Moon

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