

Window on the World

"Culture Shock"

By GRETCHEN MEYER

Culture Shock. It is experienced by almost every traveler who has spent an extended amount of time outside his own country. It is also a problem most St. Lawrence students face when they return to school after being abroad. Alienation, isolation and disillusion are only a few of the problems that make this adjustment to a former lifestyle a difficult experience.

Attitudes change, and after living amidst a new culture for a long period of time it's hard not to return a different person. We have opened up our minds, and our outlook on life has changed. We were made aware of new horizons and new ideas. We took on a more accepting nature and a broader point of view. Because of this, the readjustment to St. Lawrence is a difficult task.

Perhaps it is because as returning students we feel superior to many of our friends. We realize that our horizons have been widened and that our acceptance of others and of different cultures is higher than that of our peers. We come back with a broadened outlook on life and the first thing we see at St. Lawrence is people who are happy here. We wonder why. They don't know how the other half of the world lives, and they don't seem to care. This is frustrating and makes it hard for us to relate to our fellow students.

"Returning is hell," says Oliver Clode who spent his junior year in France. "It's impossible to speak on the same intellectual level here as I could in France. People can't talk about world affairs or culture. All they talk about is partying and getting laid."

Peter Bailey, who spent six months in Africa and three

months in Indonesia, also found it hard to converse with St. Lawrence students. "I especially had problems with everyone who asked questions. 'How was it?' 'Did you like it?' 'Was it fun?' They don't really care and they really aren't interested in your answer. They want a two minute synopsis of the most important aspect of your life," he said.

The superficial attitudes of most St. Lawrence students present the biggest adjustment problems for those returning from abroad. Most returnees cite this as their most painful and frustrating problem. The majority of St. Lawrence students seem to be interested in themselves; it is very much a me-oriented environment at Larryland. This kind of attitude becomes an obstacle for those of us who have just had our eyes opened to the real world. It is hard to deal with their lack of interest as well as their superficiality.

"The first thing I noticed when I got back to St. Lawrence were the narrow minded views of other students," said Tom Duffus. "They take everything for granted and all they care about is themselves and having a good time," he said. As a participant in the Semester at Sea program, Tom sailed around the world, visiting such countries as Taiwan, China and India. "I'm frustrated by the St. Lawrence attitude of party, party, party. It's a really superficial place here," Tom said.

Rick Miranda spent a semester in Madrid. Concerning his return to St. Lawrence he says, "It's like going back to the sixth grade; to prepubescent years...it's all old news. Things don't change. Everyone

looks the same and acts the same — there is no more breadth of experience. After seeing different attitudes, it is very disappointing to be back here," Rick said.

Another problem of readjustment is the return to the academic life. For students who went on academically challenging semesters, the work load at SLU seems easier and academic problems are minimal. However, for the students who participated in semester programs which were based on learning by experience, the return to structured academics was a big problem. Lecture material is not immediately applicable, nor is it quite as interesting as the experience of learning while you travel.

"Academics were not my major concern when I returned to St. Lawrence," said Bonnie Baker. Bonnie, who spent a semester in Vienna, said that her mind was on other things. "I concentrated on adjusting to people, not on academics," she said. "Besides, we didn't do that much work overseas, and that habit was hard to reverse."

For Steve Lazare, who spent a semester in London, an academically demanding program, learning comes much easier now. "The break from St. Lawrence made me more ambitious and serious about my work," he said.

Canton itself is yet another major readjustment for students returning from cosmopolitan cities. "In London I was able to go to the theater, to museums, and experience a wide variety of activities," says Sue Lindsay who travelled in Europe for eight months. "Canton lacks these opportunities and I find myself

bored and frustrated with the void of social and cultural options available," she adds.

Deirdre Collins took her junior year in France. She too found Canton to be a drastic adjustment problem. "I missed having different things to do, dealing with a variety of people, and most importantly different places to go," she said.

After being intellectually stimulated by your environment, it is a big let-down to come back to Canton," says Greg Brown who spent a semester in Kenya. "It's a tiny town with nothing to offer," he added.

Are there ways to facilitate this readjustment process at St. Lawrence? Oliver Clode and Peter Bailey agree that an institution such as the International House is the best way to help returning students.

"By dealing a lot with people who have been abroad, you can understand yourself better and relate to others better," says Oliver.

"You need people who are willing to really listen," says Peter. "An International House is a terrific thing to have," he adds.

"The only way to cure our adjustment problems," said Mary Ann Drayse who went to London, "is to send everyone else abroad!"

Foreign

Quotes

Il n'est si paltron sur la terre, qui ne puisse trouver un plus poltron qui soi.

La Fontaine

No man is so great a coward that he may not find another even more cowardly than himself.

Das Herz und nicht die Meinung ehit den Mann — Schiller

It is his own heart and not the opinions of others that honor a man.

Spesso men sa, chi troppo intender vuole.

—Guarini

He who would fair learn too much, often knows too little.

El amor es atrevido: el respeto medrosa.

—Antonio Perez

Love is bold; respect is timid

"Budgeting Abroad"

By KEN MAHON

Now is a time when many there, so many "extras" are people are considering going thrown in, that you can get by abroad for a semester or year on surprisingly low budget. program. The international First of all the groups usually page will print articles which go on two excursions, paid for will hopefully aid in this out of tuition. On the Vienna decision-making process, and program last fall we were perhaps serve to allay some taken to Poland on one trip and common misconceptions and to a town in Austria on the other trip. We were reimbursed for fears about going abroad.

It is often assumed that you attending operas, ballets, need an exorbitant amount of museums and other educational events. This gave money to go to Europe to study students on a limited budget programs. However, with the exception of the program in considerable entertainment at little or no cost and left their Kenya, costs are comparable to the amount you pay to attend personal needs and travel. If you St. Lawrence University normally. In fact, due to the room family as close to the center of and board set-ups and the city as possible to avoid monetary exchanges in some commuting costs which will be countries, it is sometimes even a steady drain on your a little cheaper.

The cost of airfare usually books, either one of which is raises the entire cost of a program. However, as Mr. Phil Bisselle, Director of Financial Aid, has noted, a student who must for you if you want to get the most out of your dollar and if you want to plan a budget around costs. They are Europe plans carefully and handles his or her money reasonably well on \$20 a Day (formerly known as Europe on \$15 a day) and can manage to derive maximum benefit from a program Lets Go Europe. They list costs of accomodations, travel, and on a limited budget and still sights to see and are broken down into chapters covering vacation and for a couple of weekend trips.

Students on financial aid already have personal expenses figured into their packages and when appropriate, these are adjusted by the financial aid office to enable the student to participate in the programs

Another word of advice is to ask at the informational sessions about the meal plan. They may vary from program to program. The meal plan on the Vienna program is tailored to the students needs. A total of three main meals per week

Once the student is over •cont. on p. 12



Katrine Otto (83), was enrolled in the Fall 1981 Semester at Sea program, sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh and the Institute for Shipboard Education. This semester's voyage left from Seattle, Washington on Sept. 3, aboard the SS Universe, and returned to Port Everglades, Florida on Dec. 17, 1981. The students visited 11 foreign ports on their around-the-world voyage. Left to right, Gardner Tucker (resident director), Katrine Otto, Paul Liebhardt, and John Tymitz (executive dean).