

# Editorial

## Education Is Not A Spectator Sport

As much as I want to understand countries other than my own, the visits I take to foreign lands are often disappointing. When I travelled as a tourist through Russia and Africa and even the small nation of Haiti, I felt as if I had only experienced a slice of what the country had to offer. Only by living in a country and communicating with its people on a daily basis, as I did during a four-month stay in London, did I learn about the country's culture the way I wanted.

When I visited Tanzania and Kenya six months ago, I was constantly bothered by the fact that I was not living like the natives. I was there to learn about their culture and understand their ways of living, yet their reality was not my own.

While riding through the arid African plains in a comfortable tour bus, I watched sandstorms outside my window buffet against the natives' bare skin and fill their eyes with tiny bits of sand. Although I had a few grits of sand in my teeth, I no more knew the reality of standing in the middle of it than if I had seen it on television.

In the comfort of the bus I travelled through the sandstorm to a hotel situated beneath lush, green trees and surrounded by exotic flowers. In my hotel room I rinsed the grit from my mouth and washed the native soil from my skin. I washed away the

reality that the African people were forced to face daily.

I saw a great deal of Tanzania and Kenya as I travelled from airport to hotel to national park and so on, but I never knew what it was like to be a permanent inhabitant. Although I was fascinated by the strange African animals and enjoyed bartering for obscure souvenirs, I found myself wanting more.

Perhaps some people would be satisfied with the limited knowledge that they would gain from similar experiences. However to me, my trip to Africa was like a ride on a ferris wheel. I saw many scenes drift through my field of vision, always glimpsing but never knowing. I wanted so much to stop the ride long enough to understand what was going on in the fields and villages around me, but as a tourist I could not. I think only by living with these people would I have gained the knowledge I wanted.

My experiences in England were different. A year ago I studied and lived in London for four months. The English people were my next-door neighbors and my friends, not guides or objects of curiosity. All the comforts of home could not fit into my suitcase this time and I was forced to find pleasure in things this new culture offered.

Rather than watching the

natives through a window as I had done in Africa, I walked through the streets of London and watched the natives go about their daily business. I talked with a street musician and a beggar. I went fox hunting with my friends and drank beer with them in small, alley pubs. Positioned within the culture rather than on its fringes my understanding of the country was far more than superficial.

For one month during my stay, I did an internship with Greenpeace during which my understanding of British culture developed even more. Each day I stuffed envelopes and sorted mail with the people who I had previously thought of as "British," as emblems of a nationality. Through the weeks, they became individuals. The one man I remember in particular shared my love of writing. Before I left, he gave me a book of poems by which to remember England.

Even though I was still a foreigner in London, I felt I knew the country's people better than anyone I ever met in Africa. Both experiences were memorable and educational. However only by living and participating in others' lives, as I did in London, did I find the kind of knowledge I value.

Emily Adriance  
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## FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

By Caitlin Gross



### Won't You Be My Latex Valentine?

February 14, 1992. It's that time again when naked, winged boys with bows and arrows pierce our hearts. Well, at least some of our hearts. Whites Flowers and Park Florists combined will deliver an average of 3,200 roses to campus and town today, students will flock to the mailroom in hopes of receiving at least one red enveloped, gooey greeting from Hallmark, and the night's festivities will leave men and women in search of their desired Valentine.

Perhaps Cupid should be tossing condoms instead of shooting arrows this Valentine's Day. For those of you that dread yet another negative article about sex, keep reading. It's you I'm trying to reach. We can talk about it, we can joke about it, and we can do it, so why is it so difficult to talk about it?

Needless to say, there is a large amount of sexual activity going on at St. Lawrence. We know this by the number of students that depend on the health center for birth control. That's not my focus, however. We also know this, unfortunately, by the number of people, St. Lawrence students specifically, that are seen by the health center and Planned Parenthood of Canton for tests and/or treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

According to a representative of the University's health center, two to three different individuals a week come in with complaints characteristic of common STD's. That's about 45 people a semester or 90 people a year. Those include only health center cases, excluding those treated at home and cases that remain unreported. At our health center the prominent diagnosis is for chlamydia (a bacterial disease) or condyloma (a synonym for genital warts). Be warned that literature says 50-80% of women with chlamydia have no symptoms.

In order to find out how many students look to Planned Parenthood for help, I had to go and talk to some people. I drove through Axtell's parking lot searching for cars of people I knew, none. I pulled into the back near the office and bolted for the door. Fearing the stigma associated with entering, I pulled my hat over my face. From there I asked the secretary to let me go through her office to get to the clinic. Heaven forbid someone see me enter the "CLINIC" door of Planned Parenthood- there's one for the grapevine. What that says about me I'm not sure- or I don't want to know.

Anyway, I'm proud to announce that the office was incredibly clean and the people I came in contact with were friendly and helpful. They made me feel comfortable and answered all my questions as best they could. I found out that the majority of students have been going in for AIDS testing, which, by the way, is absolutely free. A representative said that after Magic Johnson's announcement, they saw at least 10 St. Lawrence students a week. They do treat a number of STDs similar to our health center as well.

For those with the "this doesn't affect me at all" mentality, I advise you smarten up. Love isn't all roses and Hallmark cards. There's a side as dark as the chocolate you devour today. It affects you, your friends, and the stranger who sits next to you in class.

If you have a permanent Valentine or you think you found one, be responsible. There's a problem on campus and your ignorance could make it an epidemic.

Note of the day: Drink champagne for no reason at all.

