

THE BELLES OF ST. MARY'S

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UNITED FUND GOAL

EXCEEDED — 112%

St. Mary's Has Outstanding Scholars

Two members of the Sophomore Class have been named Semifinalists in the 1962-63 Merit Scholarship competition. They became Semifinalists through their outstanding performance on the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, the first step in the eighth annual Merit Program. Moya Jean Lavin and Alice Leone Stallings are among approximately 11,000 high school seniors throughout the country who attained Semifinalist status. Each Semifinalist now moves a step closer to winning a four-year Merit Scholarship to the college of her choice. The qualifying examination, a test of educational development, was given in more than 16,000 high schools last March. The Semifinalist group is composed of the highest scoring students in each state and in United States territories. John M. Stalaker, president of the nonprofit

Oxford . . . In Mississippi

The name "Oxford", as an institution of learning, connotes a dignified and sedate place where students devote themselves conscientiously to education—sacred learning. But the English Oxford has no relation to our American college town of Oxford, Mississippi.

A circus is in town: a circus featuring soldiers carrying real guns with real bullets in them. Since there are no actual wild animals, humans have exhibited primitive behavior and are locked in cages behind bars; perhaps the largest and most amazing catch was a Major General in the United States Army. Two human lives have been taken needlessly, quite a promotion for the circus, but the main attraction in the center ring is the sacrifice of education at the altar of prejudice.

The ringmaster of the Racial Equality Circus is James Meredith, a Negro who, motivated by one reason or another, desires to join those in Oxford also devoted to education. Whatever his reason for entering "Ole Miss" in Oxford, James Meredith has become the main center of attraction in what is really a nationwide sideshow. What can be so important about education if its devotees ignore the inevitable, drop everything but their prejudice, and go to see the circus which has come to town?

National Merit Scholarship Corporation, described the Semifinalists as "representative of the best of a new generation of young people who are increasingly conscious of the importance of intellectual achievement." The Semifinalists will take the College Entrance Examination Board Scholastic Aptitude Test on December 1, 1962. Students whose scores on the second test substantiate their performance on the qualifying test and who are endorsed by their schools will become Finalists in the competition. In past years, about 97 per cent of the Semifinalists have become Finalists. All Finalists receive a Certificate of Merit in recognition of their outstanding performance in the program. As Finalists, the students will be eligible for scholarship awards sponsored by National Merit Scholarship Corporation and about 150 business corporations, foundations, unions, professional associations, and individuals.

Members of our Freshman Class this year will be given an opportunity to take the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test here at St. Mary's on Saturday, March 9, 1963. Those interested in taking this test are asked to give their names to Mrs. Poole as soon as possible.

We are happy to have with us this year, in our Junior Class, five students who were awarded Letters of Commendation by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Receiving this high honor are Louise Gaither Albertson, of Portsmouth, Virginia, Harriet Thomson Williams, of Columbus, Ohio, Elizabeth Anderson Taylor of Chapel Hill, N. C.; Margaret Etheredge Graham of Durham, N. C.; and Lily Farley Ross of Opelika, Alabama.

Today we honor Christopher Columbus who crossed the Atlantic ocean in 74 days.

COFFEE GROUNDS

By Alice Calhoun

On September 20, 1962, the senior class at St. Mary's was subjected to a series of day-long tests. These tests covered material from six books which the seniors were assigned to read during the past summer. The books were Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*, Homer's *Iliad*, M. I. Finley's *The World of Odysseus*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The purpose of the objective quizzes was to test each student's reading of the texts. The essay-type questions, given in the afternoon, were for the purpose of testing the student's ability to relate the material in all the books. The overall purpose of the reading assignments was to give the seniors the background information necessary for a clear understanding of English 31-32.

The Summer Reading Program at St. Mary's is a good one. It is thorough, comprehensive, and of inestimable value to the senior throughout her final English course at St. Mary's. But objections have been raised on many sides as to the manner in which and the time at which the tests are given.

If it is necessary, financially or otherwise, for a girl to work during the summer in order to continue her education, her summer reading simply must take second place, at least for most of the summer. Any well-paying job is a demanding one, and one which takes most of any girl's supply of energy, industry, and time. No businessman wants a secretary with bags under her eyes from reading far into the night, who slouches on the job because of fatigue. And no employer wants a "helper" who is going to quit before his summer rush is over because she has to read books. He doesn't understand books. He understands dollars and cents and the

quality of help he thinks he should get from an employee he is paying.

Essentially, the same theories hold true if a girl, for some reason or another, finds it necessary to attend summer school. Whether she has had previous academic difficulty or whether she wants the benefits of some extra courses, in order to obtain the desired results from summer school, she is going to have to study and study hard on her school work. Mental labor is as hard as most physical labor, if not harder. If advanced algebra, psychology, and the most uninteresting love affairs of a certain Zeus are all swimming around in a girl's head at once, it is fairly certain that she is not going to be able to do her best work in any of these subjects. Added to that situation is the fact that most faculty members have a certain amount of loyalty to the school at which they teach. What kind of grade is any human instructor going to give a girl if he suspects that she is slighting his assignments for those of another school, especially a school which the girl is not even attending at the time?

Even if a girl has the rare good fortune of being released from job or summer school responsibilities one or two weeks before her return to St. Mary's, she probably needs a period of rest and respite at that time. And she certainly is going to be in no mood to sit down and do the quality of work on her summer reading that is necessary to pass the tests. College students are young and strong and durable, but they are not made of cast iron. Older people are not the only ones who get tired and cross and discouraged. They aren't alone in having full schedules, many responsibilities, and nagging worries. The privilege of having a point beyond which they cannot be pushed is by no means reserved for them. Students are capable of all of these feelings and many more. And above all, a student is not a machine which will go as long and hard and fast as desired.

The answer to these problems is not the discontinuation of the Summer Reading Program, but a change in the manner of testing. If the six books are so important to the course for which they are prerequisite, it seems that class time would not be wasted during the first week of school if it were used as review for summer reading. Discussion of two books per class hour would not be sufficient to induce students to forego reading the books. Summer reading tests are necessary to make sure that the student has gotten what she should out of the books, but the time element could stand improvement.

ED. NOTE: The BELLES welcomes letters to the editor concerning any phase of campus life. Put in BELLES box or bring to 100 West Rock.