

Controversy Will Result

... from the list of essential readings announced by the faculty committee. The list appears on the first page of the *Salemite*, and it has been stressed that this is the first list of a series to be released.

Later lists will doubtless include a wider selection of books varying in range of subjects and authors. Many *Salemites*, however, will quibble over both the omissions from this first list and the calibre of the books included.

Such controversy is a healthy indication and one of the primary purposes of the sponsors. No one can criticize the list or suggest additions without being familiar with the books included.

With this innovation, Salem will join in the pace set by the leading educational institutions of the nation. Some schools are requiring the readings; others are incorporating them in regular curricula. Salem is not insisting, only advising the list of readings.

The Program

... of studying the "Great Books" exclusively was initiated at St. John's College in Annapolis by Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, noted educators. Walter Lippman says that "Men will some day say that St. John's was the seedbed of the American Renaissance."

On June 3, 1941 the first graduates of the "New Program" at St. John's received an A. B. degree. Under the Great Books program, the students had learned mathematics from Euclid, Apollonius, Descartes, Newton, Russell; literature from the masters ranging from Homer and Aeschylus to Tolstoi, Ibsen and Lewis Carroll; philosophy from Plato, Aristotle, the Bible, etc. In each class they studied not about the masters, but with the masters.

The idea of the Barr-Buchanan plan is stated in an article, "Socrates Crosses the Delaware" in the June, 1939 issue of *Harper's* magazine: **There is no magic in books; no guarantee goes with them. Books are only teachers, and, as such, are only means to an end. The end is men who think for themselves.**

A Five Point Test

... was applied to the books chosen for the St. John's plan. Salem's list of "essential books" passes the test. Try it on the latest best sellers:

1. A great book is one that has been read by the greatest number of persons . . . from age to age.
2. A great book has the largest number of possible interpretations.
3. A great book raises questions about the great themes in human thought.
4. A great book must be a work of fine art—it must have an immediate intelligibility and style which will excite and discipline the ordinary mind by its form, alone.
5. A great book must be a master piece of the liberal arts, a work whose author was or is a master of thought and imagination, whose writing has been faithful to the ends of these arts.

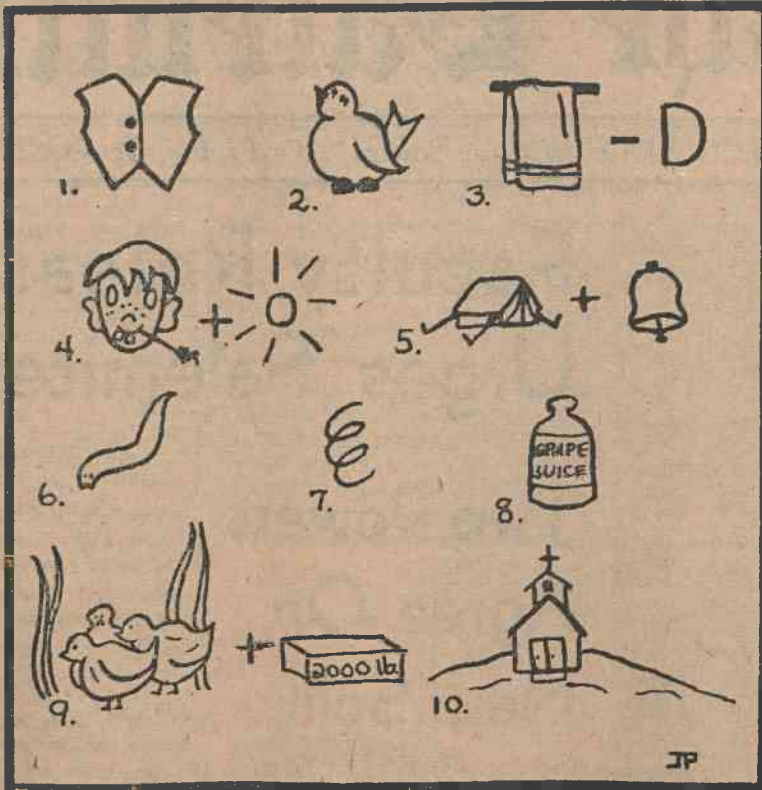
Open Letter

When asked if we have an honor system at Salem, many of us pass hurriedly over the question with a simple answer of yes. Do we really understand what is meant by an honor system? We, as a community, so to speak, have student self-government. This government has placed its trust in us through the honor system. Student Government places upon each individual the responsibility of showing her appreciation of that trust placed in her not only by her own conduct but also by using her influence to maintain the honesty of others.

Our rules are not made just for the purpose of restricting us, but our benefit is considered in every regulation whether we know it or not. New privileges are always being sought; yet do we actually show or appreciation for these privileges granted us and are we willing to accept the responsibilities that accompany the privilege or do we gripe about what we don't have? If we have to complain, why not do it in a constructive manner so that if there is some fallacy, it may be corrected.

The spirit in which we undertake things and the unity and co-operation of our entire student body leads toward the success of the honor system.

Mary Bryant



This picture is not a perverted cartoon, but a puzzle. If YOU can find the names of ten faculty members come rushing over to the *Salemite* office; you may be the lucky winner of a movie ticket. The winner and answers will be announced next week.

Good Luck's At Good Books

by Peirano Aiken

It jolted this warm philanthropic heart to come upon a man who says that he hates human nature "with a dreadful hatred." People just don't say such things—think of all the dreadful complexes they might give to those of us who habitually assert in raptures of benevolence, "I just love people". I was disconcerted—or in the word of the day, frustrated.

It startled me even more, however, to find a supposedly sane character whose intention is "always to tell the truth, henceforth, to all the human race". I immediately suspected jesting.

So it happened that after finishing Act 1, scene 1, of *Le Misanthrope*, visions of arrogant fops such as Algernon of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and that nifty cliché "comedy of manners" came simultaneously to mind; and, feeling that it had cleverly classified Moliere, said mind congratulated itself.

It became apparent, though, that Alceste, hero and titlebearer of *Le Misanthrope*, was deadly serious. He honestly believed in being honest; and it grieved him that Celimene, his charming lover who found six lovers of various natures more interesting than one misanthropic one, did not agree with him.

Out of this situation excitement arises—not only the usual suspense of plot but a philosophic suspense as well. One wonders just who Moliere is satirizing: life's misanthropists or its false flatterers. At first Celimene with her wit makes Alceste appear a moralizing fogey, but in the end he proves his superiority by remaining true to her when the other lovers leave her in disgust. She does not agree to marry him, however, and the play ends with Alceste, in tragic bitterness, declaring his intention to become a recluse. The only real happiness comes to the lovers Eliante, Celimene's cousin, and Philinte, Alceste's friend, who are middle-of-the-roads, inwardly sincere but tactful upon occasion.

One of the most interesting facts about *Le Misanthrope* is that it is the product of Moliere's own unhappy experience—he having married a young woman, Armande Bojart, who was the prototype of Celimene. And strangely enough at the first performance of *Le Misanthrope*, nearly a year after they had separated, Moliere and Bojart played opposite each other in the roles each had held in real life.

After reading a couple of acts one begins to sense the high seriousness which Moliere himself must have felt in writing the play. Although misanthropes are never likable, Alceste demands increasing respect by his complete honesty. Moliere's work is then not only a clever comic satire but is also a skillfully written tragedy for a man who fights for his integrity in a world that demands falseness.

by Frances Horne

War and Peace has been called the greatest novel ever written. Having read it, I can say with truthfulness that I haven't been able to enjoy another novel because of the embarrassing contrast between it and *War and Peace*.

The length of the book is awe-inspiring—something like 1361 pages divided into fifteen books. Fortunately, it is the sort of book that you can read for awhile, put away for weeks at a time, and start to read again without any feeling of having lost the thread of the story.

Tolstoy's style is splendid for its complete simplicity and naturalness. It just flows smoothly along—makes very easy reading.

The period of history *War and Peace* covers is the Napoleonic invasion of Russia—roughly speaking from 1805 to 1813. Actually *War and Peace* is two books; one dealing intimately with the lives of individual characters, the Rostovs, the Bolkonskis and the others; the other, an assortment of historical essays, inserted layer like into the first. These essays can be entirely omitted if you want to follow the story, but they are well worth reading.

The most enjoyable thing about Tolstoy is his amazing capacity for describing a person in a couple of sentences in such a way that you never forget it. For example his reference to the beautiful Helene as "the personification of that radiant, completely self-assured imbecility that is the special quality of merely beautiful women;" or what he says about the cynical old courtier, Prince Vasili "who, like a wound up clock, by force of habit, said things which he did not believe himself and which he did not want others to believe."

But what is best of all is Tolstoy's complete grasp of his subject, the people, the places and the incidents and his great breadth of vision that combine to give one of the finest books of all ages.

More Letters

Dear Editor:

Your editorial, "No United Nations", has the distinct aroma of a World Federalist supporter. Congratulations on initiating interest at Salem in such a vital issue. College students cannot awaken too soon to the crisis that is at hand. World government is the goal that the UN must seek in order to avoid world anarchy.

Bob Merritt
N. C. State College

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Dear Editor:

To make Cozy Corner a twenty-four hour smoke-and-study room was a realized dream of many *Salemites*. May we suggest further that a "Zone of Quiet" be observed at the top of the stairs for the benefit of those who are trying to study.

Eager Beavers

Seeing Things

by Cat Gregory

Her name was Little Microcephalic, but her friends called her Mike. Some of them called her Congo for a joke because, with her blonde hair, and her little head coming to a point the way it did, she looked like an animated native hut. There were diverse opinions about the cause of this condition. Some said it came from wearing a dunce cap in school during the early formative years of her bone structure. Others said that her forehead sloped because there was no brain underneath to pooh it out.

Be that as it may, Mike was at the moment the shining wonder of the English Department. She had, on an oral examination, just proved herself to be the most cultured and discerning student in the college. You see, the Faculty had recently decided that Great Books were the keystone of education.

"You cannot live adequately in this atomic age", they said, "unless you have read thirty, any thirty, of the 100 Greatest Books." (There had been some dissension among the faculty as to what the Greatest Hundred were. Several teachers bore bite marks, incidental to their scholarly debates on the subject).

Now they were quizzing the students to ascertain their reading standards. It was found that their reading ranged from philosophy (Lloyd C. Douglas and *Day by Day*) to humor (printed Corliss Archer scrips) to modern problems (the stories in *Seventeen*).

Then they called on Mike. "What are your favorite books?", they asked her.

"I read a book on how to write a best seller called *Grate on the Public*—"

"Plato's Republic!" screamed the faculty with joy.

"—and *Destry Rides Again*," she finished.

"*Destiny and Sin*," they chorused, whispering "it must be by Dostoevsky" to one another.

Then they cupped their hands and patted her little pin head approvingly. She made straight A's from then on, and in time became the head of the English Department.

Catherine Gregory

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