

# MCATS and All That

BY: Kaberi Dasgupta

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" - Robert Browning

A worthy aspiration. Writers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, psychologists, social workers... determined to better the world (at least when they begin their careers), to have a tangible impact...

However, in order to attain his goal, even the most ambitious individual is compelled to be a little more short-sighted than Browning would suggest. It is then that one enters the world of MCATs, LSATs, OATs, EMATs, GREs, DATs...

For the uninitiated, the above probably appear to be meaningless combinations of the letters of the alphabet. Had anyone asked me in my freshman year when I was taking the MCATs, I would have replied that I had no particular fondness for cats and had no plans to take any anywhere! Little did I know that the MCAT, the Medical College Admissions Test, would become the sole focus of my life for two months a few years later.

The first step on the road to MCAT success involved a "How to" book. ("How to Prepare for the MCAT", "How to Prepare for the GRE" are the sorts of books that typically substitute for the "How to Repair Your Lawnmower" and "How to Get Rich" books on post-graduate shelves.) After a moderately-depressing completion of one of the diagnostic tests provided in the handbook, one proceeds to bring down introductory course material from the attic.

As I was working in Ottawa as a research assistant for the first three months of the summer, I became acquainted with a number of MCAT veterans from across Canada. Over the dinner table they would recount the MCAT written during a bout of mononucleosis, the MCAT written at 40 degrees Celcius, the MCAT written in the middle of examination week, and the MCAT the morning after a big party. Such anecdotes inevitably arose awe in pre-MCAT individuals.

My own adventure truly began, however, after my return

from Ottawa. Armed with some invaluable books given to me by an Ottawa friend, I was soon trapped in my room, emerging only for the occasional meal. (I only noticed that my family had deserted me for a two-week vacation when the meals stopped appearing automatically.) The days slowly merged with one another... breakfast... MCAT ... lunch ... MCAT ... supper ... MCAT ... sleep ... MCAT ... breakfast ... Finally... Saturday, 17 September - the day that would be the fourth year of Mulroony's term, the first day of the Seoul Olympics, the day of the MCAT.

The exam was scheduled to begin at 8:00 AM, Robertson 104. At 7:00 AM I decided to phone Security to find out when the library would open.

"Hello, I'm writing the MCAT at Robertson today. Could you tell me when the building will be opened?"

"Yeah, just a minute." Brief pause. "10:00 AM."

"10:00 AM!!!" Near-cardiac arrest. "The exam is supposed to begin at 8:00 AM all across North America!!! What do you mean..."

"Oh. All right. We'll open the library right now."

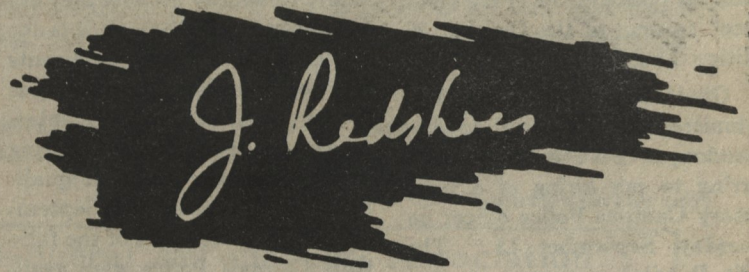
What if no one was in there to administer the exam? What if

the exams did not arrive? These were the questions that plagued me as I brushed my teeth with a nervous energy that threatened to undo my orthodontist's work. Of course, other people have written the exam here, I tried to reassure myself.

Fortunately, my fears were dissolved at 7:45 AM when I saw the sign "MCAT" on Robertson 104. All I had to do was write the test...

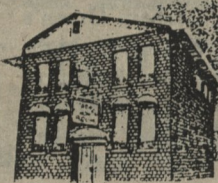
Eight and a half hours later, I emerged from the room- a post-MCAT person.

## For Shoes that make a Statement about Your Style



Queen Square Charlottetown 566-9245

Now Offering Student Saver Discounts



## Olde Dublin Pub

The Green of Ireland Extends  
a Warm Welcome to the Green of UPEI

Mon. & Tues. Buy 1st steak for \$4.95  
Receive 2nd for \$0.01  
A Roman Picture \$7.95

Wed. Bucket of Blue  
5 for the price of 4

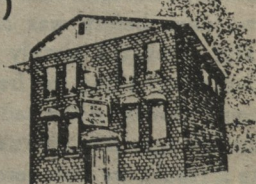
Thurs. Bucket of Blue  
5 for the price of 4

Thurs.- Sat. LIVE ENTERTAINMENT  
9:30-2:00 am

REPRESENTATIVE ON CAMPUS -  
ROBINSON SCOTT BROWN  
(Rob Brown)

## Olde Dublin Pub

131 Sydney Street  
Olde Charlottetown, P.E.I.  
892-6992



### DR. ZEE'S LAB TIPS:

GRAPHIC: THE PEAK

USE ZEE SINK FOR CONVENIENT DISPOSAL OF WASTE PRODUCTS!