

GADFLY

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OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

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Founded in 1980, the Gadfly is the student newsmagazine distributed to over 600 students, faculty, and staff of the Annapolis campus.

Opinions expressed within are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The Gadfly reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish a professional, informative, and thought-provoking newsmagazine.

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From the Editors:

Greetings Polity. How are you doing? I feel like we don't talk enough. We see each other all the time, and you send me articles, and yet I feel like I don't know you as well as I want to. Do you want to get coffee sometime? Maybe go to laser tag or minigolf? No? That's okay. I'm sure that you're busy with your Ptolemy reading and your intramural games. Yes, I understand. I'm busy too. I just sit in this office waiting for your articles to come in. It's very demanding. Well, I'll see you around.

-The Gadfly

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GREEN-FIELD LIBRARY

Elizabeth Akhvlediani A'42

Dear Polity,

I can't believe we are a month into the Fall semester and long weekend is just over a week away! Most likely everyone is back in the "Johnnie spirit" (with lots of reading and studying.) Are you looking for a quiet place to focus on writing your first paper of the semester, or maybe a little isolated area in the library for your translation or math study group? Maybe you want to discuss a book that you are reading with your friends, or maybe you need a nice space for your next club meeting? The Greenfield Library Staff recommends reserving the Group Study Room (on the 2nd floor of the Library).

The Group Study Room is a perfect place for groups of two to ten people to meet and study quietly, discuss books, draw out diagrams on the large white board (available in the room), or any other type of academic collaboration. The Group Study Room is available to current SJC students (Undergraduate and GI), faculty, and staff.

The Group Study Room has been reserved for events such as student and faculty study groups, Yearbook Club meetings, staff meetings, and interviews. Groups seeking to reserve the space do not have to be officially established clubs on campus.

The Group Study Room is available on a first-come first-served basis when there are no reservations. In order to secure the space, you can make reservations either in person at the Circulation Desk or by phone at 410-626-2548 for up to a maximum of three hours. Reservations must be made at least one day in advance. Keep in mind that reservations always take precedence over walk-ins.



St. John's Women in Sports

Mary Kate Eckles A'16

St. John's women have been involved in the St. John's athletic program since the very first co-educational class set foot on campus. There was a general uproar in the year 1950-1 when the students of St. John's College discovered the college would be admitting women the next academic year. One of the main sources of uproar among the students was the fact that they had not been consulted. Just two years previously, the Polity had been heavily involved in the racial integration of the college, but this year they had only found out because of a reporter asking questions around campus. Lots of changes were afoot and, as we all know, Johnnies don't like change. The school was trying to accommodate financially, now that they had fewer GIs coming in, and gain back their accreditation. The Polity called an all-college meeting with the dean where concerns, such as the distraction from studying that women would cause, were raised. Students who were genuinely against women in the college were in the minority and 24 women were admitted to the incoming freshman class (6/8 graduated).

The intramural program in which the first class of women was involved was divided into teams by year. The freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior teams played basketball, soccer, volleyball and football. Sarah Covington became the pitcher for the freshman softball team. Many of the other sports teams we enjoy today existed as clubs, such as sailing and crew. Elisabeth M. Chiera, from the first class of women, was an avid sailor. Women in general were a bit more involved in the Reality weekend event called the "Real Olympics." It used to include nonsensical games like chariot-racing with children's wagons and tossing the tabor. The last remnant of the event today is Spartan Madball.

With the first class of women also came the long held tradition of a female gym assistant specifically hired to help the athletic director with female students. In the 1960s when Bryce Jacobson became athletic director, the intramural program began to look like what we have today. He was not full-time, as he was also a tutor, but he revolutionized the program. Thus the draft and the teams we know were born, alongside the women's intramural programs which would eventually become Kunai.

As reported by Roberta Gable, the co-athletic director with Mr. Dink following Mr. Jacobson's retirement and specifically the female sports director, the first women's intramural teams were the Same and the Other. The Kunai teams mentioned on the plaques displayed around the elevated track of Iglehart gym were the second wave of

teams Ms. Gable mentioned: the Ancients, the Medievalls and the Moderns. The third wave of teams was the Amazons, the Maenads, The Daughters of Camilla (the DC's or Furies), and the Nymphs. As mentioned, when Mr. Jacobson retired, Ms. Gable and Mr. Dink had a short-lived run. Ms. Gable ran the bookstore

// There was a general uproar in the year 1950-1.

and Mr. Dink was a tutor like Mr. Jacobson before him, so there was never any full-time athletic director. Ms. Gable quit in protest and thus Leo Pickens was hired. Apparently, in the time between Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Pickens, the girls' locker room in the Iglehart gym was drastically improved upon. Our space used to only include what is on our right when we walk in. The door used to be where the water fountain is.

Mr. Pickens arrived on the scene in 1988. Everyone, male and female, was assigned a properly gendered team as a freshman and drafted in their league again as sophomores. Previously, the only women allowed to play on a men's team were two female gym assistants hired to referee women's games, so that they could stay unbiased. The bringing in of a new athletic director, however, brought in a lot of changes.

The women's teams started drafting every sport anew to balance the amount of skill and experience on each team, so already the four women's intramural teams were fading. The women's teams were also having general numbers problems at this time, with only enough people for one team of soccer. In the late '80s and '90s, however, women's club teams were popular among other colleges. Mr. Pickens felt that since the women had the numbers for one team, they could play as one team. This is the birth of Kunai Kthoniai (Bitches that guard the Gates of Hell). The year was 1992.

Mr. Pickens made up a schedule. We played Washington College, Hood College, St. Mary's College, the Naval Academy, and the Key School in soccer. We did this for one year of basketball as well, but it wasn't as popular. When we weren't playing other schools, we were practicing for the next game. The first semester was soccer and basketball and second semester was always more experimental and

pick-up style.

Our relationship with Washington College in the year 1995/1996 was so good that Mr. Pickens arranged the Smith-McDowell cup. The Washington College team never showed, but we had 40-something girls turn out and we played ourselves. He considered it the resurgence of women's sports at St. John's. This heyday of Kunai history lasted until about 2010.

We stopped playing other colleges as much, but the women's intramural program was generally known as Kunai. Apparently we can thank Abe Schoener, a tutor who was very involved in sports on campus, for our name. He helped Mr. Pickens run Kunai during our intercollegiate days. (He gave Mr. Pickens his blazer when he left the college to start wine-making, and the Hell Bitch blazer soon followed). One day, girls were running late for practice and Mr. Pickens called these late players a certain derogatory word under his breath and Mr. Schoener thought it would work perfectly as our team name.

The segregated intramural team system was still mostly in effect. The first steps for integration happened early on in Mr. Pickens' tenure, and it was almost accidental. They same year he came on, two girls were recruited to play on a men's team for March Madness basketball second semester and no one stopped them. The women's captains intervened afterwards.

They had the same concerns we do about the A-team/B-team comparison. It was agreed that any woman who wanted to play with the men's teams would have to be an active member and facilitator of the women's teams. This was basically in effect as long as Mr. Pickens was in charge. When he officially transferred over into being the Alumni director in 2012, he had already been easing himself out for some time.

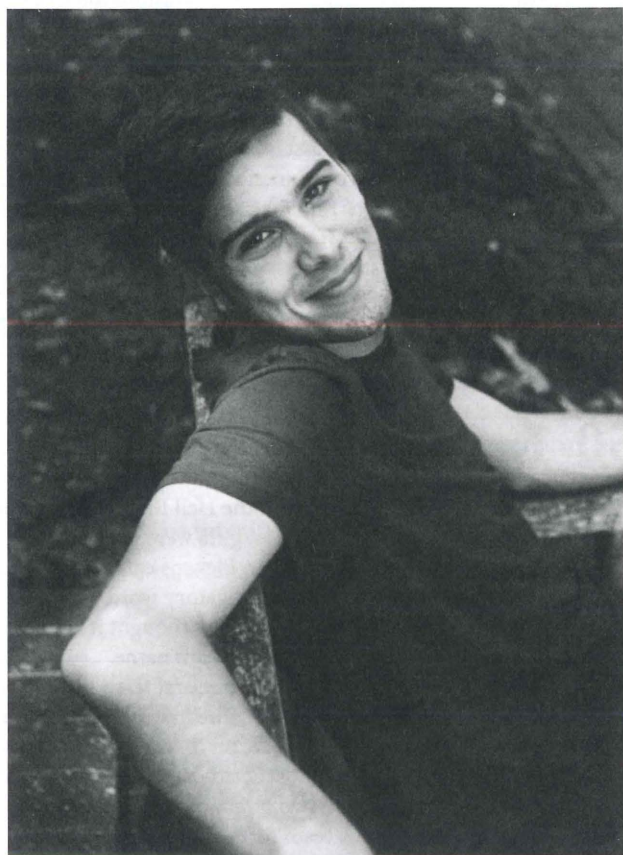
This means that Mike McQuarrie, the current athletic director, basically ushered in the completely co-ed intramural program. Not only is Grace the first girl drafted for intramurals as we know it, but Grace, Sueanna and Gina are also the first female captains.

Crew and fencing were all fairly casual extra sports that became clubs when Leo Pickens came along. He was the first full-time athletic director. They were both integrated from their inception, but for competitions had to split into girls' and guys' teams. Sailing started in the early 2000s and was the same. While croquet has been mostly male dominated due to practice being the same time as Kunai, there have been female imperial wickets. ♦

Humans of St. John's:

Chance's Story

Marie Divine A'20



"A lot of people have noticed that I wear makeup, I wear nail polish, I own heels.... They haven't arrived yet but they're coming. I didn't really start doing drag until the beginning of 2016 and I couldn't do drag, because first of all family, but also I was self harming a lot so my arms were really messed up. But I got a role in the musical 'Chicago' at my high school which was a drag role, a very regressive drag role, but something that I tried to come to terms with all the rather. You know, I had to wear a dress with short sleeves, so I had to stop that — stop self harming. Then I got into the habit. I've been to drag shows and I haven't actually performed yet because that's difficult to get into and they're further away now than they were in Nova. Point being: drag has done a tremendous amount for my mental health, and it still does. Wearing these things it's still almost like acting. It's still something that provides a tremendous amount of self-esteem and when you're putting on makeup you almost have to be yourself from an outside perspective and I don't mean like the male gay stuff--the BS male gay stuff you have to put up with--but you know, viewing yourself from a perspective. It gives you, I guess in my experience, a degree of self-awareness that I find helpful because self-awareness is always good, but a healthy amount of self awareness, which isn't anxiety inducing. 'Don't be a drag, just be a queen.' — Lady Gaga 2011, Chance Hogan 2016." ♦

Ben Haas Answers

On Stress and Frenemies

A friend of mine hasn't been eating or sleeping enough, and they've missed nearly two weeks of class due to anxiety. Is there anything I can/should do for them?

While St. John's can be very stressful, no one should ever be so anxious that it's disrupting their normal lives. The first step is to ask them about it indirectly; a "Hey, is there anything you'd like to talk about? Anything I can do?" often goes a long way. Altogether too frequently, people will either deny that there's anything wrong or won't want to talk about it. A lot of people feel that they're burdening others or that their problems are unimportant, so deliberately and clearly making yourself available may not always be enough.

This is not to say that you should force them to open up to you. If just asking doesn't do it, you can express specific concern about their well-being and offer to help them with tasks you know they're having difficulty with. You can also take them to Victoria Wick, the Student Services Coordinator, who is always happy to talk with and help out students in need.

As to the "should" in your question, it's important to remember that you are not responsible for the well-being of anyone but yourself. As much as you want to help your friends, you should always make sure you're taking care of yourself first and foremost. You can't help anyone if you're running yourself ragged trying to make other people's lives better!

What's one to do with friends made in previous years but whom one has grown to dislike (at least some of their aspects)? Should the friendship be maintained?

This is a broad and unfortunately difficult question to answer succinctly, I'm afraid, though it depends entirely on one thing: do you feel obligated to remain friends with them?

If so, I would first examine where that feeling is coming from. If someone is pressuring you into hanging out with them, you have a perfectly valid reason to end the friendship. Carrying on a friendship with someone you don't want to be friends with is the platonic version of stringing someone along romantically. It's going to end badly, most likely with you hitting a point where you just can't maintain a friendship anymore and dropping them in what will seem like a sudden manner. If you feel they are pressuring you to be their friend, address them directly about it, and if need be express that you don't really want to hang out anymore. I wouldn't offer a list of reasons unless specifically demanded; giving such a list unasked is just a punch to the gut.

If, on the other hand, you want to remain friends despite having come to dislike certain facets of them, communication is key. If you feel like you can't be friends because of how they're acting, you can always talk to them about their behavior. If they value the friendship as much as you do, maybe you can come to a compromise. If it just seems like being friends is not in your stars, through no fault of either of you, just keep trying! Sometimes the Fates take pity. Don't wear yourself out trying for a friendship that will never work, though. ♦

Study Abroad at St. John's College

Peter Kalkavage Tutor

Friends and fellow citizens,
It seems to me that the recent study abroad program has been both improperly named and insufficiently praised. To address these problems, I have devised what I consider to be the ideal announcement. It appears below.

Yours in endless possibility,

-Peter Kalkavage

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St. John's College proudly announces the inauguration of the college-wide World Travel Forum or WTF. Students and faculty who are selected to participate in the WTF will spend a semester in a foreign country or even a remote part of the United States, where they will still be at the college (make no mistake about it!) and do in that country or region what they would be doing on either campus — and so much more.

Students will be chosen on the basis of grade-point average and tutor favoritism, tutors on the basis of how aesthetic they are (or want to be) and how much they want to get away from their respective campuses in order to be relieved of faculty meetings, service on committees, archon meetings, and (in the spring session) senior oral examinations, while still getting paid the same amount as their over-worked colleagues back home. This is a wonderful opportunity for tutors and students alike to enjoy a small, intimate, and deliberately incestuous community that will expand their horizons and give them all a broader perspective on life.

Currently the WTF is limited to study in Greece and France but will in subsequent years be expanded to include Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia, the UK, Denmark, the Middle East, South America, China, Japan, India, Africa and the rural American South (for example, the Cahulawassee River valley in northern Georgia). Ideally, the WTF would be active in all eight semesters. It is our hope — indeed, our expectation — that the program will extend to an entire year for a single group of tutors and students.

The deans and instruction committees on both campuses are strongly in favor of the WTF and reject claims by some that it disrupts our sense of community, the continuity of student learning, and the integrity of a single year on a given campus. They are committed to the view that a semester in another country, or in some remote region of the United States, changes one's life in a way that being on either campus does not, and that reading great books in the settings they depict adds immeasurably to the understanding of those books. (Who would be foolish enough to believe that one can properly understand Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* except while sailing down the Congo?!) The deans and instruction committees also believe that the best way to get the most out

of being in another country is to combine the experience with the intense intellectual demands of the St. John's program. Second-semester juniors especially are sure to get the most out of a French adventure while reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Newton's *Principia*, the electromagnetic theories of Faraday and Maxwell, and writing a junior essay.

The deans and instruction committees also reject the view that the WTF privileges a certain small group of students and tutors chosen to participate. Since we are all members of One College, non-participating students should rejoice in the good fortune of their participating peers, who upon their return will enrich classes with their learning experience (that is, background information) and tales of travel. Think of how helpful these student-travelers will be in seminar! Similarly, non-participating tutors should rejoice in the good fortune of their participating colleagues, who will come back as if after a vacation, refreshed and all too happy to regale their stay-at-home counterparts with stories of how wonderful it was to be somewhere other than Annapolis or Santa Fe while reading great books and having discussions with fun-loving students in beautiful surroundings and with easy access to historic sites and local cuisine.

The WTF will enrich us all! It will also make up for our lamentable neglect of historical background, aesthetic appreciation of art and artifacts, and being cultured.

Student applicants should consider that although they will not reap the benefits of being on a campus that guards their personal safety and offers regular access to a library, music library, dining hall, coffee shop, bookstore, gym, music practice rooms with pianos, laboratories with reliable equipment, and classrooms with real blackboards, or have opportunities for conversations with students and tutors not in their classes, and for participation in college athletics, choral groups, orchestra and the King William Players, or be able to attend Friday night lectures, waltz and swing parties and other college social events, the benefits of the WTF far outweigh these minor inconveniences. Students

are encouraged to consider in particular the prospect of being fully at the college but free from the supervision and care of the dean, assistant dean, campus security, senior residents, college health personnel and the watchful eye of our fishbowl polity.

Applications are due by Friday in the last week of September and may be submitted to the dean's office. Student applicants should write a brief essay on why they are more eligible for the WTF than other students, emphasizing how much they would get out of the experience both personally and academically. Student applicants are encouraged to contact tutors they know who have applied or plan to apply to teach in the program and who can make suggestions for a strong essay (and put in a good word to the selection committee). Students should also submit two letters of recommendation from tutors who share the view that the WTF is not just a good thing for the college but vital to a real liberal education that changes one's life. ♦



SPQI

Ivan Syritsyn A'19

We the students of St. John's College, whose goal is the free pursuit of learning, recognize that this end must be sought under conditions of law and order. We deem it more just, more equitable, and more effective that the responsibility for the law and the maintenance of order reside in those who are governed. We therefore ordain and establish this Constitution for the Student Polity of St. John's College."

— Delegate Council, June 1960.

Among the oldest recorded student organizations on campus, the St. John's College Delegate Council (DC) serves as a reflection of the lives that we have lived and the examinations we have undergone. As St. John's has evolved through the decades in response to different challenges and realizations, the DC has followed suit. Gone are the days when there was a Polity Court which enforced discipline on campus by imposing fines and conducting trials. In its stead the modern DC serves more of a background role by acting as a liaison between the school administration and the Student Polity in order to sustain and improve Polity life.

Exactly what, however, is the role of the DC? The answer is rather simple and has been consistently repeated with the election of new Delegates. The first things that newly elected Delegates are taught are the ABCs of the DC, which are Auditing, Budgeting, and Chartering. These fiscal duties take up the bulk of the DC's time, along with making various appointments, such as those to the Student Committee on Instruction. Aware of the dangers of ossification present in the repetition of simple routines, the DC has recently focused on internal reform to improve the functioning of the Council and thus serve as a better steward for that with which it is entrusted. From this focus there arose our new DC Constitution. After months of effort,

the new Constitution was approved by a Polity-wide referendum and implemented to the joy of all who had invested themselves into it. It is the hope of all those involved that the new measures, clearer definitions, and an addition of responsibilities will bring about greater efficiency in the Council's procedures.

As I have wandered to and fro across the campus and have made observations up and down on it, I have often encountered the fact that many people are unaware that the DC even exists, much less what role it plays and who is in it. Even though it could be said that all members of the Polity should seek out the status of their public affairs, it absolutely must be said that the failure to disseminate the knowledge of itself in a more suitable manner lies with the Delegate Councils of the past. We, members of the DC, today bear on our shoulders the deeds of our forebears. It is ordained that we take up the mantle and do our best concerning the wellbeing and the *res publica*, the things of the Polity. The society of St. John's is so unique that it cannot be allowed to die out in any way. That is why the DC should be among the foremost of the advocates and examiners of the communal life with which it has been entrusted. The lethargy of ages past must be shed, for this lethargy is akin to death itself. The DC cannot be a hollow body waiting for the breeze which would cause it to implode. There is room to change and grow. And as has often been shown throughout history, that which doesn't evolve falls to make room for what does.

There is great potential in what the DC could do. That potential, however, has two factors which will guide and shape it. These factors are the interests of the Polity and the wishes of the Dean's administration. It is not without basis that these principles were recognized when the new Constitution was drafted. If the DC is to continue to serve as a

liaison between the Polity and the school administration, then it must recognize its role as a hand of the Dean in the interests of the Polity. It is only with the recognition of this role that the DC can ascertain its position within St. John's and have a natural way to develop and exercise its functions. For even though all members of the DC are elected by the Polity, it is the administration which decides what responsibilities the DC may or may not exercise. In a like fashion, although it is by the blessing of the administration that the DC has different duties and functions, it is the interests of the members of the Polity that the DC must honor. Naturally enough, the faculty and staff of St. John's wish to bring forth the best from and to all who pass through their classrooms. Therefore, it is this alignment of interests which speaks to the possibility of a greater role for the DC in the future.

Life is a fragile thing and often dashes wishes to the ground. It is thus impossible to tell whether indeed the DC will take on a more vital role in the future of the Polity. One thing, however, is for certain: those who are on the DC today have invested countless hours, in and outside of meetings, in the hopes of providing greater possibilities for fulfillment in the myriads of different activities that we Johnnies may share together. The newly passed Constitution was a labor, but a labor of care. From the furnaces which were the different meetings of the DC it sprung forth. Hopefully it will do the good that it was intended to do. At the very least, I know that the DC is only a representation of some who are willing to sacrifice their time within our Polity. As long as there are some who are willing to take up the *res publica*, then the unique life of the St. John's Polity won't be left to be, with time, forgotten. ♦

Safety Corner

Did you know that it is National Security Officer Appreciation Week? It was established in 2015 and is celebrated the third week of September. It was created as an opportunity to recognize security officers' contributions to our daily lives and to thank them for their work.

For higher education, security officers play a critical role in community caretaking responsibilities. They enhance safety and security while also serving as campus ambassadors. Here at St. John's College, it is no different. Officers are an integral part of our college's team of first responders whose presence is an everyday expectation.

Consider that our officers are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They work weekends, holidays, nights, and evenings, and are present at all special events. Public Safety usually plays a "behind the scenes" role, but it's an important role that deserves recognition.

Safety Tip:

October is National Crime Prevention Month. Have you thought of how you personally contribute to the safety of the college? If someone is seeking to enter a dorm and you don't recognize them as

a member of the polity, take the time to ask if you can help them. Research shows that doing something as simple as that can reduce the chance of crime. In fact, it's the original motivation behind the 'WalMart Greeter.' Don't let people 'tailgate' behind you into a dorm if you don't recognize them. And if you are not comfortable confronting someone, PLEASE call us in Public Safety. That's what we are here for. You can even use your LiveSafe app to take a picture and send it to us, or just send us information without having to make an obvious phone call. The one number you should call us at is 443-336-2348.

On Being Unattractive

R.M Goad

A'19

When I write about this, it is not a plea, nor is it remonstrance — it is simple observation. It is one account which I hope will be resonant. Most importantly, I hope that it is relatable. I've found that the writings most soothing to me have been the ones which non-demandingly make my isolation feel less singular. A simple moment, thought, or feeling you assumed — however naively — belonged only to you, somehow being articulated at you and not within you.

Somehow, I'm a likeable person. It's definitely not on purpose, as I'm a worrying wreck. I overthink, overanalyze, and sometimes I think I've never had a natural interaction in my life. To some extent I fear spontaneity, because I think if I can't be in control of every part of my personhood, then something irreparably repulsive will spill out, and whomever I'm sharing the moment with will know all at once what a sham I am.

Despite all of this, I manage to make friends and leave good impressions. People speak kindly of me, seem sincerely glad to see me, and encourage my self-loving thoughts while dismissing my destructive ones. And despite all of that, I've never been in a relationship. I don't mean to speak of relationships as something earned — some sort of natural consequence for behaving such-and-such a way — but I can't help feeling as though, at 24, it shouldn't be a looming novelty. *Shouldn't I have had my heart broken once or twice by now? Or broken someone else's heart? Shouldn't I have been foolish and reckless with love before halfway-to-thirty?* It's not as though I haven't had crushes, haven't chased anyone, haven't rapidly and verbosely stumbled around confessing my attraction. It's just that these haven't been instances of mutual relief. And neither have I been on the receiving end of such attempts. Being analysis-keen, I can't help but think it reinforces some tacit truths about me, which are all cinched by one uncomfortable conclusion: I'm unattractive.

Knowing my friends and colleagues, they'd immediately decry that statement as baseless. They'd tell me to nip the negativity before it's consumptive. They'd cover it with reassurances, compliments and reminders, and that would be that. But for me, it's important to explore the possibility that it's simply true. And further, to explore the repercussions. They could be devastating, but they could also be conquerable — either way, I ought to know how much power I have in the "do-something-about-it" department.

Being in that confusing place of liked-

but-not-romantically-pursued (which may very well be more of a mirage than any marked territory) has done peculiar things for my self-esteem, to say the least. With the pervasive, persistent cultural hullabaloo around the pursuit of love, one comes to expect frequent brushes with it. Successful ones turn into marriages and unsuccessful ones turn into drunken stories, poetry, or a little of both. But what do you do when the variable is notably absent from your tale? Resign yourself haplessness? Become a philosopher? Search Google for "nun habits in my size"?

In my case, you remain optimistic for a while, hoping you're too specific of a catch. Or you cling to the pernicious assumption

"Shouldn't I have had my heart broken once or twice by now? Or broken someone else's heart? Shouldn't I have been foolish and reckless with love before halfway-to-thirty?"

that you'll be complete after losing weight, and then you'll really be a stunner. Then all those other attractive attributes won't be so obscured. Or they'll be somehow refined in the "after you". You reassure yourself that eventually you'll be able to say: "My allure wasn't absent, just illegible for a while." All while trying to be realistic, trying to be fair to yourself, and trying to recognize that there's some impersonal reason that popular opinions arrange themselves the way that they do.

Frankly, the hardest part hasn't been rejection. It's been feeling like my personality is good practice. I'm the baseball bat you use before the big game: a reliable way to rehearse on your batting skills but not quite what you want for the real deal. Of course, the kind of batting I'm referring to involves more eyelashes (though, evidently, just as many bases). Particularly with men, I find that I'm good to flirt with, good for back-and-forth banter, but they can't or won't bring themselves to be formally sweet on me. The 'evidence' (people-watching, people-knowing and people-loving) suggests that this is because — drumroll — I'm not attractive. At least, not conventionally. But it isn't fair to be resentful; how can you blame someone for

wanting the full package? Even I've refused a whole banana when only part of it was bruised. It's just difficult to think that one part of you is unappetizing enough to spoil your whole appeal.

Of course, there are other reasons that a person won't pursue you. But isn't the simplest explanation usually true? And what could be simpler than sexual attraction (not the breakdown, mind you, but the occurrence)? Besides, if you accept physical attraction as one of the reasons you're unwanted, in some ways, it's relieving. Much of how you look is negotiable. Much of who you are isn't. The more ache inducing question is: is all of this just me refusing to look at something

deeper? Is this superficial preoccupation substituting for some less fixable part of me?

If lack of physical appeal is the culprit, and it's important to me to be appealing, then I can go about mimicking and modifying until I conform to some standard. So the question then becomes: how important is it to me to fit an attractive quo? What do I believe about the relationship between attractiveness and worth? What do I believe about the relationship between romance and worth? Maybe these beliefs, unbeknownst to me, have been advertising a person I didn't know I was. And truthfully, that prospect is much more terrifying than me being aesthetically inadequate. I already can't control enough of what I reveal

to someone, and some self-truth I haven't ceded is communicating to someone else with misdirected clarity? (Which class of irony does that belong to, again?)

If I've learned anything from this thought-sorting, it's that I shouldn't dwell on a problem if I don't intend on pursuing a solution. And dwell I have — I've kept myself wondering why the population at large has been steering clear of my heart. I've been filling in that silence with one-too-many sounds — vacancy set me into a fill-up frenzy. It's psychological, right? People fill, people finish. We'll spend more money on grocery trips when we begin with empty carts, and perhaps more time on self-wallowing in the absence of romantic interest. So if I'm going to fill, maybe I ought to take a vested interest in myself. Maybe I should court myself, be surprised by the beliefs I didn't know I had, and not dwell on who isn't interested, or what I'm not. If you want to understand something, it does help to figure out what it isn't. But only to the extent that it helps to uncover what it is. And since all I've harvested in my fixation is dormancy, I'm going to declare it, be done with it, and work on other parts of myself that've been caught in the priority queue. ♦

Is there Virtue in College?

Jonathan David White G.I.

You know, I've never really heard a reasoned defense of Creationism. I'd be really curious to hear the critique a Creationist might give regarding these ideas."

Those were the two sentences that made me decide to attend SJC. I was sitting in on a class on Euclid. Except they started discussing Darwin. And then ended with a lament that no one in the class understood the Creationist view of origins well enough to represent it fairly.

What kind of parallel universe had I stumbled upon?

Of the several institutions of higher learning that I've encountered, their claim of "open-mindedness" boils down to little more than entrenched and compulsory liberal jihadism (for the most part, at least). So this comment came as a breath of fresh air to someone who believes that sacred cow makes the best hamburger, especially when it comes to cows that are ideas and hamburgers that are genuinely new perspectives on life, the universe, and everything.

HOWEVER, I got a pretty stiff wakeup call during first-day orientation a couple weeks back.

"We can't really know virtue and you'd better all stop wasting your time trying to find it. But here at SJC, you'll learn how to have really interesting conversations!"

That's my ungracious, biased, poorly-remembered summary of the Associate Dean for the Graduate Program's comments on Plato's Meno — our first seminar. But while I can't vouch for that being exactly what the Dean was trying to say, I *can* assure you that I was very much alone in that room defending virtue as a concrete, knowable thing. This was not something that I had thought I would have to argue about (in this manner) at SJC.

What really stuck in my craw was that some of the things said in the room revealed presuppositions that undercut the reality of a hierarchical institution (like a college) with regulating documents (like a charter and polity) and punishments (like staff termination). Sooo ... I did a little digging and found the following description of the aim of liberal arts colleges in SJC's own charter: "institutions for the liberal education of youth in the principles of *virtue*, knowledge and useful literature..." [emphasis mine]. Further, the section of hiring of staff and faculty stipulates, "Nor shall any preference be given ... on account of his particular religious profession, having regard solely to his *moral* character and literary

abilities and other necessary qualifications" [emphasis, again, mine]. And finally, from the Polity of SJC Article VI, subheading 6a and 6a(ii): "A Tutor's appointment may be terminated by the Board of Visitors and Governors for one of the following reasons only: (ii) MORAL TURPITUDE" [emphasis still mine].

Now, rejecting initial, dogmatic knowledge of virtue at the purely intellectual level is all well and good, I guess, especially for a college that teaches Socratic ignorance as a foundation for acquiring knowledge. I think it's worth pointing out, however, that the rubber meets the road somewhere and clearly the college is not hiring Tutors who are serial rapists. Which means that the presupposition the college as an institution is working with is that there IS in fact virtue (which is stated in the Charter) and that it is *knowable* to such an extent of surety that the governing bodies of the college are willing to deprive an otherwise successful tutor of *employment* and *reputation* if moral failings were found in his personal life (which is stated in the Polity). So clearly the founding, grounding documents of the College presume that there is virtue

and that it is knowable.

So this is my encouragement to you my fellow Johnnies: the next time a tutor or fellow student disparages you for thinking something so pedestrian as virtue being knowable, just whip out your annotated copy of the Charter and Polity and invite them to brush up on a classic text that they apparently haven't read carefully enough. (I would provide a link to the downloadable pdf of these documents, except that the website refresh seems to have broken it. If interested, I have a copy of the charter on my desktop and could e-mail you one: "whitejd@mail.masters.edu".) Additionally, my esteemed colleagues, let me encourage you that being open minded about truth is like opening your hand in order to search for something of greatest worth: only a fool would refuse to close his hands upon the valued object once he has found it. Find the virtue, my friends! Grasp it! And never let it go!

Deo ac veritati



2

◆ Ivan Romanovich Syritsyn

A blazing comet crashing through the sky

Alit the world for everyone to see.

And though without a sound it passed by

All surely heard the sound of its glory.

As myriads gathered round to see its flight

Some cheered the beauty of mordacious flame.

They enjoined others to acclaim its plight

And honor it by mimicking the same.

So having vanished from entranced eyes

It was embedded in the hearts of men

Continuing on its course throughout their lives

Their ends being its beginning once again.

That is the flame which now resides in me,

The power of the reins of destiny.