

“I was attached to this city by the god—though it seems a ridiculous thing to say—as upon a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by a kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. I never cease to rouse each and every one of you, to persuade and reproach you all day long and everywhere I find myself in your company.”

- Plato, Apology

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

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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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Freshman Bodies, Freshman Souls

This reprinted article first appeared in the Gadfly on September 2, 1982, and appears annually in our first issue. Without a doubt our athletic director, Mr. Krueger, is willing to stand in for the first person voice used in this article—and to answer any questions about our athletic program. -Ed.

Bryce Jacobsen A '42

The reasons, both physical and metaphysical, why everyone ought to join in our sports program are many. I list a few:

1. We have the best athletic program of any college in the country.
2. Exercise is good for the body...unless you sprain an ankle or something like that.
3. Most of us feel better, are more alert, and can get more work done if our bodies are healthy and our souls are relaxed.
4. Friendly competition is one of the really fun things in life. It is good for your soul.
5. Your circle of acquaintances will be greatly enlarged. This is good for the soul, provided you can separate the wheat from the chaff.
6. You will learn to accept, and bear with, thousands of split-second decisions from the officials, a few of which are wrong. This is very good for the soul.
7. Do you like to strive for, and achieve, specific goals? If so, consider our college blazers. They are much sought after, and the pathway is clearly laid out. Striving for goals is good for your soul.
8. It is probably true that the more pure fun occurs in the athletic program than in any other area of the college. Fun is good for your soul.
9. If you get involved in team sports, and become a "good team player," you have realized that there are things in the universe that are more important than your own ego. This is a great good for your soul.
10. The benefits of exercise and friendly competition, learned while one is young, should be maintained for the rest of your life...i.e, they should become habitual. For virtue, as the Philosopher said, is a habit.
11. You will get to know numerous alumni, tutors, and staff members who participate in the program. This is good for your soul, or ought to be...provided that they are the proper sort of role models.
12. Our showers are the best at the college; always plenty of hot water.
13. Are you bothered by, or worried by, tobacco fumes in the air? Come to the gym. The whole building is a nicotine-free zone.
14. If you perform some sort of heroic deed on the athletic field, your name will be mentioned in our weekly column. Heroes are always acclaimed. But do not be carried away by this. Remember that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave."
15. A high percentage of our best students are active participants in our program.
16. Those who play, stay.
17. The gym is not particularly well-equipped, as gyms go. But it has washers and dryers, and a coke machine...and I will explain to you, if you ask me, how you can get yourself in tip-top physical shape, without any equipment at all.
18. You can sit in an old-time barber's chair in my office...you can pump yourself up and down, and adjust the slope high or low. Where else can you do that?
19. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
20. It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

So there you have it: twenty good reasons why you should participate in our athletic program. If you are not convinced by all of this, come and talk to me. I can probably think of some more good reasons. Or better yet, talk with the upperclassmen. They will tell you all sorts of strange, interesting, and wondrous things. ♦

From the Editors:

Welcome back! We here at the Gadfly want to provide you with quality articles and relevant reporting. This means covering the things that are near and dear to you—like the rising cost of tobacco. You can help us in this by submitting articles to us regularly, and also by submitting to us, in a literal sense.
- The Gadfly

An Appeal to Freshman

Kira Anderson A'18

Freshman,

St. John's has no guidebook. We have a handbook, yes, but that exists to tell you what is or is not appropriate behavior in our polity. A guidebook, however, tells you what things are of interest and how you may reach these interesting sites. St. John's has no guidebook, because truly everything here has a facet that will interest you. You may not yet know of your burning passion for improvisational acting or of your fiery dedication to your intramural basketball team. What interests you have now are limited to your experience outside of the college. Therefore, I am here to encourage you as a senior who knows that she has not experienced enough of the college in her three-going-on-four years; I address you as a student and as a club leader myself, as a lab assistant, and as someone who wants to see you succeed.

Coming to St. John's is a transformatory experience. You will learn many things here (and forget just as many perhaps), but I wish to impress upon you that this is a place of change. When you graduate, diploma in one hand and champagne in another, you will be a different person from the one who set foot at convocation and received a copy of Euclid. Of course, you will be older, because time waits for no one, but there will be a change of spirit as well. What you know and think you know before St. John's are merely stepping stones. Thusly, I encourage you to take a full survey of what St. John's has to offer, detailed to you by someone who has in fact already started panicking about a life outside of the Johnnie Bubble. I will present my solicitation in the form of a list, as pleases me and the average reader. "Listicles," though universally despised, should be given the commendation of at least being succinct.

1. Join a club. In fact, join four or five, and when you realize you can't balance them all with your class work and your burgeoning friend group and need for down-time away from people, drop your least favourite or least favourite.
2. Explore every building on campus (when they are open of course, not after hours.) I have personally discovered many of my favourite hiding spots by taking a Johnnie safari and trekking about for a while. Your dorm is interesting, I'm sure, but I dare you to try to find the illusive Gadfly office or determine the age of Temple Iglehart (the gym, for the uninitiated.)
3. Make friends with people who are different from yourself and your normal group of friends. This may be self-explanatory, but often the best friendships are forged in the celebration of differences.
4. Know your tutors. I did not have a meeting with a tutor of my own volition until the summer after my junior, perhaps sophomore year, and I know that now that was a mistake. I feared that tutors would think me stupid; I thought that I didn't deserve their time. I learned, however, that I could not have been more wrong. Tutors work at St. John's because they love discussion and teaching, and every tutor that I have asked to meet with has accepted the offer with grace and kindness.
5. Know your administration and do not be afraid to speak up. This is a lesson I learned only after much experience at the college, and I fear it may be the most important that I relay to you. Know who you can report things to. Get to know who the Title IX coordinator is. Get to know the assistant dean. Meet our new President. Know your RA, and if you don't feel comfortable with an RA, make sure to get to know one of our several (FREE) school counselors. If something occurs that you are uncomfortable with, report the incidents as soon as possible. College is a time for learning, and that cannot be done in an unsafe situation.
6. Enjoy yourself. You will hear from many upperclassman that freshman year is the easiest year at St. John's. It is, however, the hardest. Coursework is different from anything you have experienced in highschool, and adjusting will be tough. Balancing and managing one's life is also incredibly difficult. If someone belittles your problems with school work, saying that the year is easy, feel free to spit back some sort of biting comment like "Did you feel like being a freshman was easy when you were a freshman?" Or perhaps ask in a nice manner. My biased concept of communication is already quite evident.

Along with this article worthy of a mediocre buzzfeed link, I also extend something else to you: words by which to live perhaps. This quote is now on t-shirts, and bags, and leather bracelets (which I will neither confirm nor deny that I own), but I feel that it is nonetheless relevant.

"Not all those who wander are lost," JRR Tolkien reminds us. Freshman year is a year to wander, to discover and adventure. Ask questions and look stupid sometimes. Everyone does, even if they pretend they don't.

So, go out and wander, budding Johnnies. Try clubs and meet people and talk to leadership figures. Go and pour forth much. ♦

Ben Haas Answers

On Friendship and Homesickness

"How do I balance my workload with making friends?"

This is the age-old difficulty with starting your college career, since you now have complete control over your own schedule outside of classes. It's a little easier at St. John's than other colleges to make friend while still doing your work, mostly because everyone around you either has done or is currently doing the same thing you are. This is balanced out by how much work you have to do, though. A good early way to make friends is to have study sessions with people in your classes (especially your core!) where you can bond over memorizing Greek paradigms and demonstrating how to create isosceles triangles.

Other good ways are coming to sports events or joining a club or two — that way you can know you'll have a specific time slot for socialization, and you can aim to get your work done around when you've decided to take a break.

Now, I want to be very serious about this:

If you can't get your work done to your own personal (or to your tutors') satisfaction and still hang out all you want, you ought to prioritize studying. There will always be opportunities to meet new people and get to know the ones you've already met, but academics move quickly here. If you don't get the basics down well, you're going to have a much harder time of it as the year progresses.

Something a lot of new students (and some upperclassmen) do is decide to hang out with people while the sun's up and then do homework late into the night. I...don't recommend this and can't recommend it. It's just a bad idea. Please sleep more.

Take it from me, my future friends, you will find your group, and you'll be glad that you found them without sacrificing your study time or your mental health.

"I'm really homesick. Do you have any advice?"

Surely! To begin with, the feeling of homesickness may not readily present its root cause. That is to say, if you're feeling homesick, figure out what exactly it is that you miss. If you miss your parents, I'm sure they'd appreciate a call! Try to involve yourself in things that you're excited about, so you can tell them about all the cool things you've been doing at school. Writing letters back and forth is also a fun way to always have something around that reminds you of home.

If you miss your dog or cat, there are a couple people on campus who have animals! The cat people may be harder to find (unless they're out walking their cats), but you can always ask around!

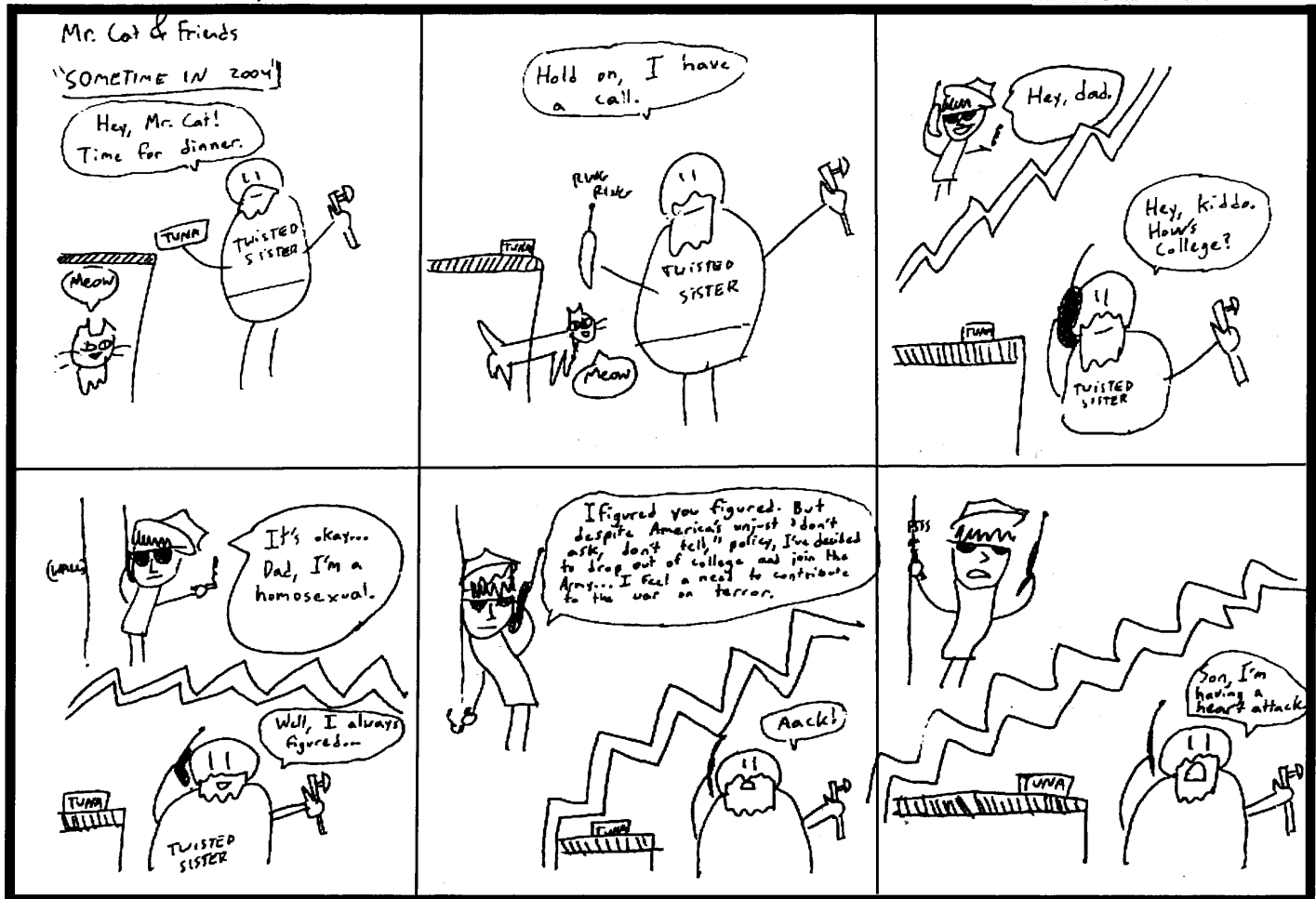
In general, having a supportive group of friends, people who understand that you may be sad sometimes and are willing to be there for you, will really help. There may be someplace in Annapolis that reminds you of home, or feels safe and comforting, so exploring town a bit might help too.

If it gets really bad, the school has counselors, and those counselors have walk-in hours to talk about whatever you want to talk about!

St. John's is a wonderful place, and I hope it can come to feel like a second home to all of you like it has to me. ♦

Mr. Cat & Friends, Vol. 1: "Sometime in 2004"

George Ward A'18



Touchstones

Jose Miura GI

To all my fellow students at St. John's: If you haven't gone to a Touchstones Discussion Project event yet, go. I went to one today with nineteen people (adults, not children), most of whom had never met. Before the discussion started we were given a few rules such as speak clearly, don't interrupt, and be respectful. The text was not known to us beforehand; instead, it was handed out and read aloud by the leader (the texts are very short). This was done on purpose for reasons explained in the meeting. We then thought of questions and began the discussion. Some twenty minutes in we stopped and the leader asked each of us to give a grade to the discussion from 1 - 10 (10 being the highest) and why. He then told us the grade he gave it and why. Finally, an observer of the group showed us a diagram of how the conversation went. It clearly showed the flow of the discussion from person to person as well as any dominance which may have occurred. Then the observer told us how much active listening she observed. It was a great experience because it gave a lot of clarity as to what a good discussion is like as opposed to the amorphous, freestyling that goes on at school where the students are not sure what is supposed to be going on. I left with the feeling of wanting to do it again. I also wondered why St. John's hasn't adopted this format (adapted to the school, of course.) ♦