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THE GADFLY

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Photo by Catherine White

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER
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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.

The *Gadfly* meets on the Lower Level of the BBC every Sunday at 7pm.

Articles should be submitted by Friday at 11:59 PM to sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

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From the Editors:

Our beloved Johnnies: This is to be our last normal (albeit fun sized) issue of the year, followed only by our special Farewell-Don't-Let-the-Bubble-Burst-on-Your-Way-Out-Seniors issue (Or the Seniors Issue, for short). It will be a time of great mourning when we burn the seniors at the stake—but great rejoicing when they are reborn from the ashes as freshmen. And this is our last chance, Johnnies, to tell these special people how much you love them... before it's too late. Yours in preemptive mourning,
-The *Gadfly*

Fifteen Years of Failure

The story of the Delegate Council

Joseph Garry A'18

This Wednesday (4/15), I was invited to a meeting of the Delegate Council. I was told that some important, or at least sensational legislation would be placed on the table. I was not disappointed. As it turns out, there has been an ongoing conflict in the DC about whether or not Reality needs to submit a charter immediately, or if it can wait, or if they even need to submit one at all. They have a number of archons who are operating as if there was a charter, but the fact remains that no charter has been submitted since 1999. The issue has been basically ignored as of late, owing to the DC spending all of its funds and generally having more pressing budget issues.

However the issue was finally discussed to a very full extent in the previous DC meeting when members of the DC who are adamant about Reality needing to be chartered submitted a charter for Reality, despite not being archons themselves, or intending to be. This was clearly a move that was considered by many members of the DC to be at the very least insulting to the existing archons of Reality, many of whom are members of the DC (whether or not members of the DC also being archons of Reality, which in terms of spending makes up somewhere around at least 30% of the DC spending, is a conflict of interest is up for the polity and the DC to decide).

This charter was inevitably shot down, and was regarded by those who had proposed it not so much a genuine attempt to charter Reality, but to motivate the Reality archons to finally submit a charter of their own, a feat which has not been accomplished for 15 years running. I had heard of all this information before coming to the meeting by talking to the members of the DC who had proposed this charter, but the real surprise for me didn't come until the vote for this charter.

I had of course expected the vote to be against the chartering of this new/fake Reality, and I was not incorrect, but the conduct of the members of the DC was rather disgusting. Once those who had proposed the charter had left the room, most members of the DC lost all sense of decorum. While none went as far as to openly mock the charter and those who proposed it, the conduct of those voting for the most part was incredibly rude, and I was personally astonished that those we have elected

to represent the polity would act in the manner they did, regardless of how absurd they thought a charter. In addition, during the discussion involving both this charter, and the theoretical one that current Reality archons would provide, a few members of the DC became very emotional and flippant to say the least.

Later in the meeting a Reality archon promised that the Reality charter would be submitted by Sunday, and from the next meeting onward the DC could work on finding issues in this new charter and fixing wording to their satisfaction. That being done, it was agreed upon by the DC that they would in fact not have a Sunday meeting, but rather push the meeting back 3 days, for another lunch time Wednesday meeting. On top of that, it was agreed that Reality could continue spending money, and have access to bank accounts, all without a charter.

One of the members of the DC was very fond of saying that Reality has 15 years of precedence, that despite Reality spending an amount of money that takes up a majority of the DC budget, it doesn't need a charter, because for 15 years the DC hasn't required them to have it. But during this same meeting, it seems that the DC has set another precedent by allowing Reality to continue to spend money without a charter, which violates DC budgeting policy. A moratorium failed to pass which would've prevented this unchartered club from spending money until a charter was passed. The main reason that was openly cited by opponents of this moratorium was the 15 years of precedence. But it seems to me that in this case of the 15 years of precedence that members of the DC have cited as a reason to allow Reality to continue to operate in the manner it has been, isn't so much 15 years of precedence, but rather 15 years of failure.

If you would like to witness the DC in action, or see if your presence might help in their conduct, come to their next meeting. Ask any DC member for date and time. Members of the polity are always allowed to attend and watch what happens, and after my recent visit, I encourage anyone who is at all curious to go and see for yourself what's happening in our student government. ♦

A Sophomore Perspective on B&G

Sebastian Barajas A'17

You know me. I'm the one you see sweeping the quad and snooping through your recycle bin at 7:30 in the morning. "Dang," you think to yourself, "This guy's had wall-to-wall community service the entire year." You wonder how I manage to get in just enough trouble to have perpetual community service, but not enough to get kicked out. You speculate that perhaps I constantly misbehave with an exponentially decaying level of seriousness, so that the proportionally increasing punishments (due to any repeat offender) cancel out the decreasing seriousness of my misbehavior, leaving the absolute amount of punishment constant.

Unfortunately, I must burst your mathematical Johnnie bubble: I do not have community service—at least, not yet. Rather, I work for B&G: the only campus job that is also used as a punishment. We B&G guys often ask ourselves, "What happens if one of us gets community service? Do we just keep working, but without getting paid?" So far this year, there has not been occasion to find out. And we're a little shy about asking, since anyone in a position to answer this question will immediately ask, "Why do you want to know? Are you planning on getting in trouble?"

So for us workers, punishment and work are separate. Nevertheless, we are acutely aware of the fact that no one is ever forced to work a library or switchboard shift as a punishment for wrongdoing. Why is this? Is it that one or two extra hands in the library won't make much of a difference, whereas one or two extra hands raking up leaves and spit shining the president's car will help? Or is it that there is something repentant about manual labor that desk jobs lack?

But even if there is something especially punitive about B&G, we voluntary workers can't exactly complain, since we have other options. Everybody knows this. And this is why people ask us (even if it's just with their eyes), "Why on earth would you work any campus job—let alone B&G—when there are so many better-paying jobs in town?" While I see these doubters' point, I make the following answers, in no particular order of importance:

- 1) We are never required to work on weekends.
- 2) B&G gives us the satisfaction of beautifying our campus, keeping pests at bay, and—when the ground is icy—saving people from horrible injury and death. We are the weeping Indians and the Rangers of the North: the silent, thankless guardians of the West. And while we are not quite Batman, we are the sorts of people Batman would help out.
- 3) Our commute is almost non-existent, saving us precious minutes of sleep or work or lunch. These are the most valuable commodities in college—second only to alcohol and closet space.
- 4) Only B&G is allowed to drive around campus, which feels really, really cool, even from the passenger seat. There is no sense of power like stepping out of a pickup in the middle of the quad, and closing the door loudly behind you.
- 5) B&G has knowledge of and access to all of the secret places you never knew existed. Have you seen where Johnnie chairs come from? Have you visited the Island of Lost Bikes? Did you ever wonder where all those chairs that were out in the courtyard last year went? We know. We are B&G.
- 6) Every day is different. Though most of our duties consist of trash duty and carting chairs and tables around campus, the routine gets mixed up enough to keep things interesting. Each task we perform is its own unique mixture of challenging, satisfying, bracing, and (more often than you'd think) even fun.
- 7) We get to work outside. Don't get me wrong—sometimes

this is awful, like early in the year, when there are still mosquitoes around (contrary to popular belief, these don't actually disappear until late October)—but most of the time, it's really quite pleasant.

I won't bother to make a list of the tough parts of the job, since B&G doubters see them plainly enough. However, it is worth noting the worst part of the job isn't carrying leaky bags of trash, or seeing the doubt in everyone's eyes about whether we're carrying the leaky bags of trash as a punishment or a job. No, the real worst part of working B&G is trying to fill the work orders of flaky, disorganized people (surprisingly, these are usually people who work at the college, not students). I can't tell you how many times I've hauled heavy objects up to the third floor of an elevator-less building, or some other exotic location, only to have the following exchange:

“And this is why people ask us (even if it's just with their eyes), 'Why on earth would you work any campus job—let alone B&G—when there are so many better-paying jobs in town?'”

Umm... can I help you?
We're here to deliver this refrigerator filled with sand.
Huh... No, we didn't order one. Who placed the order?
It just said to go to room 302.
Huh. Oh! You know what? That must've been Billy-Bob who ordered it. He's out of the country right now. But you know what? That was actually supposed to go over to Mellon.

And we—being toughened B&G veterans—take the inconvenience in a professional manner. We acknowledge that miscommunication is as essential to the St. John's experience as philosophy. In fact, in the old days (before B&G workers had to be treated humanely) the Polity would use us as lab rats to practice their sophistry:

Umm... can I help you?
We're here to deliver this refrigerator filled with sand.
Ah! Such is the human spirit: a refrigerator filled with the sands of sin. But can he ever truly find deliverance?
Is this the right room? 302?
That would depend on your definition of 'right.' All things aim at the Good, thus it was some good that brought you in here, thus its presence here is clearly 'right.'
Can you please just tell me where this needs to go?
Needs? It is at equilibrium: its downward tendency cancelled by the upward tendency of the floor.
You know what? You can deal with it. I'm leaving.
Oh, yes, I remember now. It's supposed to go to Mellon.

So the wheels of progress have lifted us from the indignity of sophisticated torture, and replaced it with its PC equivalent: passive aggressive flakiness. Of course, in this respect, B&G is hardly unique. The world is full of flaky work orders; no job is free of them. Neither is any job (at least in this country) entirely without its perks—since if there were not some perk, no one would choose it.

The point is that we have a good job, and we do a good job—in fact, we do more than our fair share of good for the campus. So the next time you see me or any other B&G worker sweeping on the quad, or rifling through your recycling at 7:30 in the morning, do not say to yourself, "That poor, unfortunate, confused person," but, "There goes a Ranger of the North, who handles trash that would freeze my heart if I were not guarded ceaselessly." ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 04/28

Crossfit

11:40 AM

Kunai

4 PM

Fencing

7:30 PM

Wednesday 04/29

Crossfit

11:40 AM

St. John's Chorus and
Orchestra Concer: W. A. Mo-
zart "Great Mass" in G Minor,
Great Hall

7 PM

Thursday 04/30

Crossfit

11:40 AM

Intramural Basketball
Championship Game

10 PM

REALITY WEEKEND!!!!!!!!!!!!

If you would like to see your event
on the weekly schedule, please
email sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.



Josh and Jordan

Book Review: Kwami Alexander, *The Crossover* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Eva Brann TUTOR

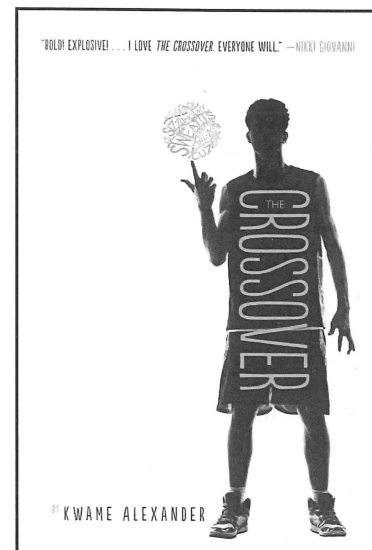
In the interests of full disclosure: This is a basketball story. Of our three national sports, I positively hate football, very much like baseball, and toward basketball I entertain the profoundest indifference.

I'm, however, a news junkie. On a recent Newshour (MPT) I saw the author talking about his book, and something said "find out more," so I bought it.

The protagonists, identical twins of thirteen, are almost magically good players, the sons of a retired basketball star, "Da Man." Their mother is the Assistant Principal at their – what used to be called – grammar school. So at home the Bell family talks Standard English.

Now imagine this: the story is in verse. It's supported by some fancy typography (an old device with many names in prosody: concrete or pattern poetry, calligrams or art chirography, etc.). The lead metaphor is the "crossover," some sort of dribbling trick dangerous to opponents' ankles – I have no notion.

The diction of the poetry is Black English, the assumed lingo of Josh, the narrator. It's full of sports fanatics' in-jokes and allusions. In all of the 237 pages I got only two: to Michael Jordan, of course, and a jokey version of Dr. Seuss: "eggs



and green ham."

No matter. It's been ages since I've read so hard-headed but good-hearted, so

pathos-infused but joyous a book. Albeit in a language I can't speak or even quite understand – hip-hopping, rapping or whatever – it took me only three pages to be captivated by its lovable spirit. Give it to someone you really like, half or fully grown-up. ♦

An Extremely Short Poem Containing A Very Simple and Feasible Request To The Tutors of St. John's College In Annapolis, Maryland During Multiple Senior Orals, Which Are Publicly Attended, And In Which—More Than Once—I Have Been Forced, Along With Several Classmates, To Lean Forward In My Chair Trying To Hear From A Quiet And Quite Thoughtful Person Some Probably Interesting Question Or Comment (Which I May Now Never Know The Content Of) That Is Lost In The Low Decibel Wasteland On Tiny Sine Waves Through A Cavernous King William's Room—Especially When Considering The Number Of Times These Same Tutors Request Their Students To Increase The Volume Of Voices In Tutorials And Seminars

♦ Erik G. Neave A'16

Please
Speak up
Please