



FROM THE
POLITY

“Seniors Manic in Mellon”

With winter’s chill lingering across campus, the ghosts of Humphreys drift soundlessly across the remnants of snow. So too do the living wraiths, seniors haunting the halls late into the night. The witching hour lulls almost everyone into silence. Underclassmen dream fitfully of Kant and Aquinas, or sigh themselves to sleep in the flattering belief that they would never fall prey to the Sophist’s argument. All is quiet.

That is, except for the frantic scratching of pen on paper and the furious click-clack of keyboards under shaking hands. In the words of graduated senior Chloe Steer, who endured the whirlwind of last year’s writing period, “Your RA is but a shell of a woman. If you see her, give her a hug.” Hope for a normal sleep schedule having vanished from view, the seniors subsist on 3am ramen, tea, coffee, and manna—I mean, Oreos and surprise pizza deliveries.

The writing lounge is a sacred place, a sanctuary for those losing their minds in pursuit of essay satisfaction. Without the structure of classes, a variety of readings, and ordinary social activities, the seniors enter into a state of writing intoxication. They gorge themselves on their chosen text, linking their souls to the generations of former Johnnies who have taken up this quest for knowledge. Poring over Plato, obsessing over Ovid, agonizing over Austen, and haggling with Hegel, the seniors reminisce and ruminate on their years exercising intelligence. Just a few more days remain for their time in limbo, caught between the land of the living and the world of their writing. They will not join the Humphreys ghosts, but will rather rise above the whirlwind of writing period through obtaining a better sense of their own selves. Read your books, tell your stories, and find reassurance in your contribution to the tomes of human memory through your very existence. Let yourself live on in legend.

Herschel Reuben

CATHLODOXY AND SJC STUDENT
GOVERNMENT

How does one communicate an experience to someone who wasn’t there? How can you defend a memory, when your hearer has only the faintest image of what you are recounting?

I attended Divine Liturgy at Holy Archangels’ Orthodox Church for the first time in November to celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I piled in the school van along with the usual crowd of Orthodox Johnnies, and we drove out across the Bay Bridge to Fr. Robert Miclean’s farm on the eastern shore. Since losing a rental property in downtown Annapolis, the parish has been relocated to a corrugated steel barn on Fr. Robert’s property, a stone’s throw from his family’s house. Altar, iconostasis, and dozens of icons have transformed the inside of this large garage into a place of beauty—a sanctuary, a holy place. As I entered (genuflecting from Catholic habit), the rich, deep base of Eastern psalm-chanting wafted to my ears like incense. At the front of the nave, kneeling before the icon of Christ on the iconostasis to the right of the holy doors, a friend was confessing his sins to Fr. Robert, and receiving absolution. Reader, if you have never attended the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, you will not understand the solemnity and beauty and fierce vitality which animates Eastern Christianity. You have not heard the singing—ah, the singing! Don’t say that you have listened to recordings of Orthodox chant—that is not what I am talking about. You have not been taken up into the music, been almost possessed by it, found yourself singing it, wanting nearly to shout it. One almost wishes one could sing ‘*Lord have mercy!*’ again and again until the very return of Christ.

The beauty of Holy Archangels’ is not limited to its liturgy. The parish really is a family business. At the altar, Fr. Robert led worship, while Matushka (his wife) directed the choir. The priest’s children were everywhere—two boys wearing vestments assisting their father, a little girl sleeping in the arms of my friend, Adora, and a handful of others, all finding different ways—reverent or rambunctious—of being adorable. After the final blessing, we all crossed the gravel driveway to Fr. Robert’s house, where Matushka

had prepared a feast. We ate and drank and laughed together—simple, hearty pleasures. I found the family piano, and the children and I took turns playing pieces we knew. When the festivities were come to an end, we piled back in the school van, and drove home to St. John’s.

My poor powers of expression prevent me from doing justice to what I experienced. That beautiful, holy evening lives in my memory; but I cannot give you my memory, only a crude sketch in words.

Why do I write this? Recently there was a kerfuffle in the Delegate Council regarding the OCF budget. Two freshman delegates, especially, objected to OCF’s request for gas-money to drive to Holy Archangels’. As I sat in the second budget hearing, last week, I felt as if I was about to burst. It made me so angry listening to Theodora and Lukas being grilled on why they had to attend a church so far away. If you had only *been there...* Afterwards, I reflected: what made me so angry? Of course, someone who’s never *been there* can’t possibly understand what this parish means to so many Johnnies—it’s unfair to expect them to. Even so, I hope that moving forward, the DC will give more deference to its constituents’ lived experience. As I said in the meeting last week, some things are not just about dollars and cents, but are about human beings and community. Fortunately, the St. John’s polity is small enough that prioritizing human relationships over cold, rigid legalism is actually possible.

I write this with a selfish motive: as the archon of the Catholic Student Fellowship, I have requested \$825 from the DC for four Sunday feasts this semester, including our biggest of the year, Easter. If you have ever enjoyed good food or drink, joyful friendship and rich community at a Catholic Student Fellowship brunch, I encourage you to come to our budget hearing to show your support (the date for the hearing is still TBD).

Thank you all, and may God bless you. *Benedictum Nomen Jesu.*

Jackson Green

This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- Thursday, February 6 : Plato: *Timaeus*; Beginning-57
- Monday, February 10: Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I

Sophomores:

- Thursday, February 6: Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*; General Prologue, Knight’s Tale
- Monday, February 10: Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*; Miller’s Prologue and Tale, Reeve’s Prologue and Tale

Juniors:

- Thursday, February 6: Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason* (selections)
- Monday, February 10: Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason* (selections)

Seniors:

- Thursday, February 6: Nietzsche: *Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*
- Monday, February 10: Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*; Preface, Books 1, 2, 3

Friday Night Lecture:

"On Written Speech" - Mary Elizabeth Halper

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, February 11

- SJC Supplemental Coursework Funding Program Information Session, Hodson Conference Room, 4:30 PM

REFLECTIONS ON DELEGATE COUNCIL

Here is a theoretical scenario to consider. Imagine you are the captain of a small ship, placed in the middle of the ocean. You had two air-inflated supports along the side of your vessel, but they both popped, and now the ship is beginning to sink. You have in your company, among others, an Orthodox Christian, a gamer, and a play director. The weight must be reduced, somehow, or people will die. If you cannot decide on what to do in order to stave off the impending disaster, the people will become restless and decide to throw others overboard in order to save themselves at the last minute. As the captain, you are the only person who knows how to control the boat. You must calm these pressures, and make the hard decisions in order to get everyone safely home.

You have in your ear an intercom system. People from the mainland are invested in the crisis, and some of their friends are on the boat. “Save the Orthodox Christian!” one of them pleads through the speaker. “She is a good, spiritual person!” It’s true. She is a good and spiritual person. But is the gamer thereby bad and unspiritual? Should you kill the gamer? Should you throw him overboard?

There is one option to save everyone, but it isn’t easy. It is to reduce the possessions of the people onboard. The Orthodox Christian must give up one of her shoes. It will be harder to walk, but she will at least live to walk. The gamer must give up his new video games. He will miss them, but there are video games he can play back home. The play director must toss out another actor’s wig from her knapsack, even though she’s already sacrificed far more than that. There are so many people on the boat, and they should each be given a chance to live.

If the captain is weak, people will die, but he may avoid the resentment associated with compelling people to give up their possessions (including their food). If the captain is strong, everyone will live, and hopefully - despite the passions of the moment - at the end of the day, the passengers must agree that it was better to live in a reduced state than to perish under the waves.

The requested club funding amount currently exceeds the available finances by \$17k+. The Delegate Council is not nearly on track to get that excess under control, and people are already feeling pressed.

Really, *we are not even close*. This is a matter of economy, just as the analogy of the boat is a matter of physics. We cannot pull money out of thin air, just as the captain cannot generate a floatation device from behind his ear. No matter how people feel, it does not change the reality, and I want to communicate that *this is a challenge that the entire community is facing*. It is not in any sense personal. It is a matter of inevitability.

Aphorism of the Week

Οὔτοι ἀληθῶς οἶει ὅτι, ἐάν πως τοῦ φωτός ἡ στιγμή ἐν τινὶ ἢ τοῦ κάλλους ἢ τοῦ βάρους εὐρετέα, σφόδρα χρή σε τοῦτο λαβεῖν δλώτατον καὶ μεγίστῳ ζήλῳ οὔτε λῦσαι;

Tarik Mahmud

To that end: *Every single club that has had their budget approved this semester received more money than is sustainable*.

The pain of this is not felt yet, but if we do not gather our commitment to avoiding the worst fate possible, some people will have to drown. Unless someone has started a “Murder Club,” a “Fentanyl Club,” or a “Tax-Evasion Club,” I do not think we will find an easy way out of this.

Will Pickering



”Burning Notes for Senior Papers in Common Room Fireplace”

From SJC Digital Archives

SCI UPDATES QUESTIONS AFTER SUCCESSFUL DEATH FORUM

Last week’s lunchtime forum drew an unusually large crowd when the Student Committee on Instruction posed the question, “how does the program prepare us for death?” Senior Representative Mr Domanski, asking the question, was his usual smiley and chatty self, while the conversation as a whole was unusually somber.

Many students were eager to get their voices heard:

Mr Green, a senior, opened up the conversation, saying, “All I see is death. I walk into the fishbowl and I see death. The dining hall is a mausoleum and Humphreys is a morgue.”

Mr Zitler, a junior, got right to the heart of the matter, asking questions like, “Where did Grandpa go? They said he was sleeping, but it’s been years. Where is he now? Can I see him?”

Pleased with the attendance and engagement, the SCI has decided to update some of their questions to maintain high engagement. The polity can look forward to upcoming forums addressing pressing program matters like, “Why are mom and dad fighting?” and, “Does the program inspire us to wait for Chuckie’s pasta bar even when the line is long?”

We hope to see you all there!

Nate Burke



“Tutor and Students Seated at Seminar Table”

From St. John’s College Archives

ABOUT THE ST. JOHN’S COLLEGIAN

The St. John’s Collegian is the weekly newspaper of St. John’s College Annapolis. We work to bring quick and timely coverage of important events going on, to help develop a more informed student body. If you’re searching for more in-depth investigations and reporting, as well as essays, art and culture, check out the Gadfly, our affiliated publication, which is published once every three weeks.

Want to submit an article? We always need more writers, whether for opinion or reporting! Submissions for news articles should be between 400-600 words, while opinion should be kept short at 350 words. Just email sjca.collegian@gmail.com with your article, and we will work to get it in print! Longer form articles and more in-depth exploration of ideas should go to the Gadfly, which accepts submissions at canicholskaufman@sjc.edu.

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