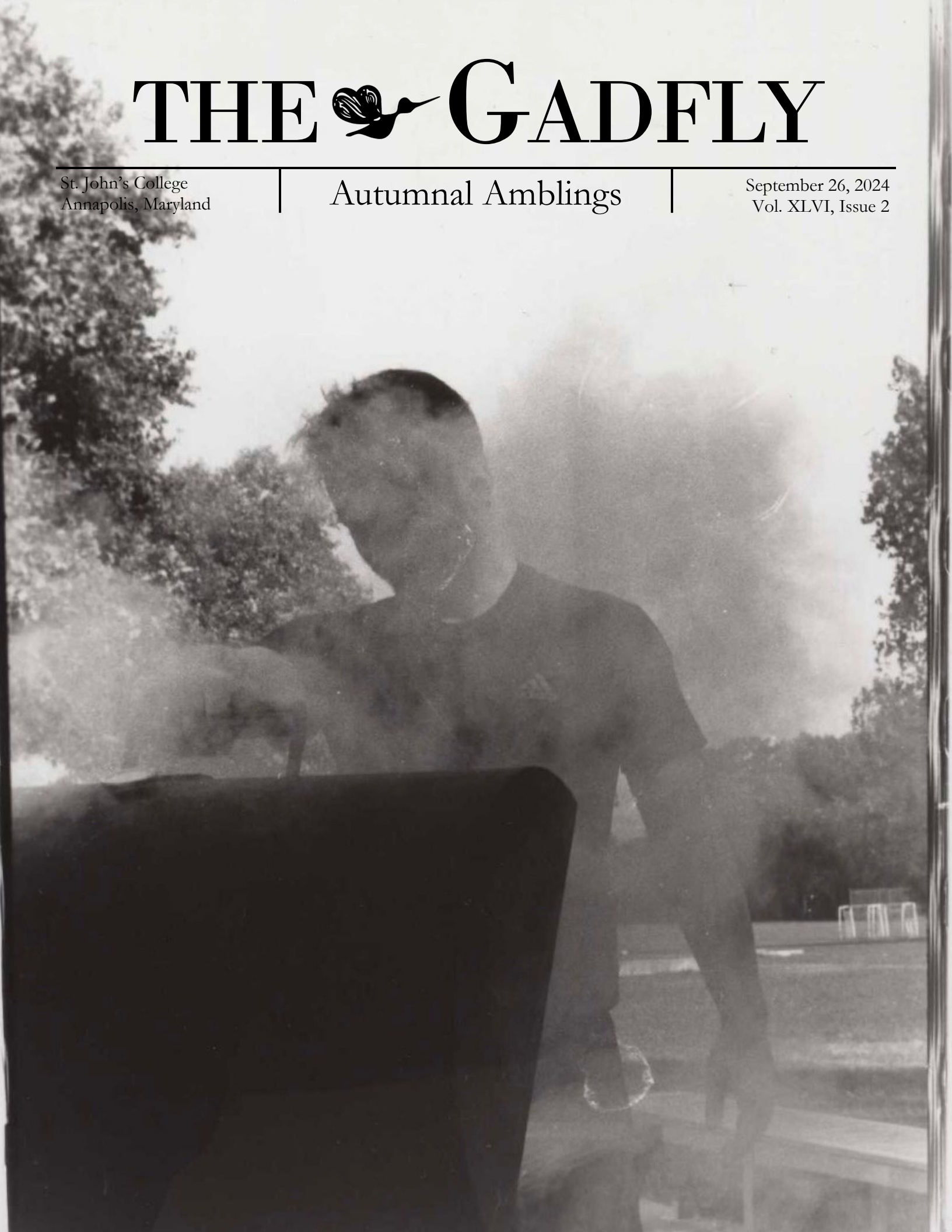


THE GADFLY

St. John's College
Annapolis, Maryland

Autumnal Amblings

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Letter from the Editor

September is coming to a close, and our campus is back in full swing! I've seen more reading groups, more parties, more club meetings, and more studying going on in the past few weeks than ever before, and the energy from that can be felt across campus, and in this Gadfly.

Within, you'll find news about the new Delegate Council members, opinions on the College TikTok, a review of the Mitchell Gallery's new exhibition, and more. I hope you can take a moment out of your busy days, which I am sure are busy regardless of whether you're a student, tutor, or staff member, and enjoy the fruits of the Polity's creativity and care for our community.

Always your faithful editor,

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

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Introduction to the Delegate Council

By Seohyun Lee, Student Politics Correspondent



St. John's College held a representative election for the Delegate Council (DC) on August 27th. A total of 16 student representatives, four in each grade, were elected. We have seven of them come to introduce themselves to us.

Hi! Could you introduce yourself?

- * My name is Raquel Thompson! I'm a freshman and I am from southern Virginia; I obviously enjoy reading but also anything civic engagement/politics-esque.
- * Hi everyone! My name is Adele Francis-Jones, and I am so excited to be representing the freshman class this semester in the delegate council! I'm a very outgoing person and I love meeting and talking to new people. If you see me around on campus, please stop and say hi! I love our ceramics room on campus so much and am very excited to get better at swing dancing over the course of this year.
- * My name's Jacob Sharpe, I'm from Mechanicsville, Maryland (about 1 hour southwest of Annapolis). I see myself as a person of many interests; my Freshman year I did KWP (the King William Players, a student run theater group) and this year I'm co-editing the Collegian (the campuses weekly newspaper), and KWP, where I'm playing Polonius in Hamlet. I love reading most of the program texts, but some of my favorite non-program ones include Catch-22 and Emma.
- * Hello. My name is Reagan Bottomley. I'm pretty outgoing, so you've probably met me at some event or other on campus. If not, feel free to stop me whenever you see me and introduce yourself! I'd love to meet you and learn what you want to see from the DC. You can usually find me at sailing or rowing practice down at College Creek, or caught up in conversation on the Quad.
- * Hello. My name is Nicholas Hoo. My primary hobbies include studying random subjects,

watching YouTube videos, playing video games, reading, and all things outdoors. Additionally, and perhaps more so than anything just mentioned, I very much love spending my time conversing with others, for I find most people incredibly fascinating. I always love meeting and getting to know fellow members of the St. John's community, so, if you ever see me out in the wild, feel free to say hi!

- * I'm Amado Garcia, I use they/them pronouns, and I am one of four senior representatives. When I'm not doing things directly related to the program, my free time is usually split between playing video games, doing my best to read the news, reading non-program books (currently The Left Hand of Darkness), preparing for a weekly GURPS game (It's like Dungeons and Dragons but not quite), and a bunch of other things.
- * My name is Colin Josler, I'm a senior and I've been Vice Archon of the Alexander Hamilton Society for a couple years now.

How do you view representative role? And can you share your commitment related to that role?

- * Raquel Thompson: I'd love to be a class representative that can cultivate a sense of community through clear communication and mutual respect. Effort to make open space for concerns from the student body can be pivotal in the role of the student government. Examples like frequent and easy to complete evaluation for certain projects, or ones regularly sent out.
- * Adele Francis-Jones: I want to be representative that people feel comfortable actually talking to. I know it can be intimidating, so I'm hoping that having someone on the Delegate Council, like me, who is really open to discussing with peers, will make that easier. I want to try to be active in a wide variety of clubs and extra curriculars so I can get a comprehensive understanding of what the polity wants more or less of, funding or otherwise.



St. John's College Student Council, 1916

- * Jacob Sharpe: As class representative, I hope to be a voice of reason (though I hope that's everyone's goal here), I want to be open-minded regarding the clubs we choose to fund. Obviously, there are many interests here on campus; I can't relate to all of them, but I feel it's my responsibility to foster a place where they can all exist. Otherwise, I want the DC to be a good representation of popular opinion, any disconnect there is undesirable. As CSL rep this year, my opinions are pretty much the same. I hope that I can be a person my classmates will come to with issues and be heard. Problems inhibiting learning or quality of life should be viewed as things to be solved, not things to be endured. I'm committed to using all my prudence and wisdom on issues as they come, and to be as impartial as possible.
- * Reagan Bottomley: I'm a representative for the junior class, and this is my third year on the DC. As a more experienced delegate, I hope to help others get accustomed to the ins and outs of the DC and provide a consistent, supportive council for archons to work with. I believe the DC exists to support and serve the Polity however is needed, and I'm excited to put that into action this year.
- * Nicholas Hoo: What such discussions with others on campus have taught me is the sheer diversity in interests, backgrounds, thoughts, and affairs held by those in our community. As a delegate, I want to serve as an aid for any and every member of the Polity who may have business with the Delegate Council. Whether it is informing someone of procedure, working to produce club charters or budgets, taking suggestions for Polity Law and Acts of Council (a severely underutilized capacity of the DC - ask me if you would like to know more), I want to be a present and open mediator for all who may desire my help. Ultimately, what student governance on this campus needs most is better attempts at outward engagement from its representatives, and that is what I will strive to institute. And for internal council affairs, I aim to hold the DC accountable to standard and orderly procedures, collaborative discussion, and fiscal responsibility. In addition, I seek to serve on (and hopefully improve) various subcommittees of the council, such as the Budget and Archives Committees.
- * Amado Garcia: I hope to be a representative whose comments, for those who read the DC's weekly minutes, are infrequent but helpful. In that vein, I will be committed to reading all the necessary documents closely and paying close attention to the conversation, making sure that details don't go overlooked and that issues are

tackled with many perspectives in mind.

- * Colin Josler: In my experience in that role, going in front of the DC can be a little intimidating. Sometimes your budget may get cut or edited for reasons that seem arbitrary, or the DC itself can feel generally unfriendly to you. Recently the DC has improved greatly in this regard, and I want to help continue this improvement by being as helpful, clear, and respectful as possible to club archons. I want to help make budget edits that are reasonable and are explained well to the club archons.

Is there anything you'd like to say to students who read the magazine?

- * Raquel Thompson: I love talking and getting to know anyone I meet! Please reach out even if you aren't a freshman or it's not about DC :)
- * Adele Francis-Jones: Thank you so much for taking the time to read my introduction! I am so grateful to have been chosen for this position and am excited to serve on the DC for this semester and beyond!
- * Jacob Sharpe: Reading magazines is good, but writing for them is even better!
- * Reagan Bottomley: Your delegates are eager to hear your thoughts! Sit with your representative at the dining hall, catch them on the quad, or shoot them an email (mine is rmbottomley@sjc.edu). We're happy to answer any questions you have about the DC or listen to what you think we should do.
- * Nicholas Hoo: Just as our seminar and tutorial readings help cultivate an understanding of the subtle and technical, student publications grant us invaluable information regarding the present community in which we live. In many ways, this knowledge is just as crucial to leading good lives as that professed by the philosophers, for it enables us to best engage with and serve our community. Even if what you learn is not immediately relevant to your life, it may be greatly beneficial to someone you know..... (Also, check your emails; they contain more helpful information than you might expect).
- * Amado Garcia: I'll leave off with two requests: One, submit to Gadfly (and Collegian if that's still happening), I read every issue and really enjoy seeing a long contributors list. Two, pay attention to local and state politics, at the very least look up what your state's ballot measures are this year (similar advice applies for international students with different political subdivisions, I hope).

Listening to the newly selected student representatives, I look forward to this year with them. Congratulations on your election!



St. John's College Student Polity Executive Committee, 1956

Bug Bulletin

Antheraea polyphemus:

Polyphemus Moth

By Louis Rosenberg, Creepy Crawly Correspondent



I was walking back to my apartment from campus a couple weeks ago when I noticed a large green caterpillar making its way leisurely across the bricks in front of me. I stopped to get a better look at the little guy and move him off the sidewalk. He was one of the biggest caterpillars I've seen — almost as large as the short side of a brick, with a body that looked charmingly overstuffed, his little head wobbling in and out as he barreled over the fallen pine needles that stood in his way. He was bright green, with yellow stripes running vertically down many of his body segments and scoli — wart-like bumps from which hair-like bristles (setae) sprout — were orderly aligned down the length of his body, yellow near his head and a silvery red further down his abdomen.

Later in the day, I decided to try to identify his species, and eventually concluded that he was an *A. polyphemus* caterpillar. Based on his size and coloration, he is likely in his fifth instar, which for this species means that he's nearly ready to pupate. This species changes dramatically over the course of their instars — during their first instar, they are white with black stripes and very prominent setae.¹ As larvae, they feed on a variety of broad-leaved plants, and while generally not considered agricultural pests, they often fall victim to parasitic wasps which were introduced to control the spongy moth, an invasive species in North America.²



Polyphemus Moth Caterpillar, Photo by the Author

As adults, polyphemus moths don't feed at all, and hence live short but majestic lives. As would be expected from their larval size, the moths are quite large, with a maximum wingspan of around 6 inches. Their wings vary in color but are usually shades of brown, pink, and tan, with large eyespots on their hindwings.³ Their common name, a reference to the legendary cyclops Polyphemus, comes from those eyespots,⁴ and the eyespots are also actively displayed by the moths in an attempt to scare off predators. Adults will begin mating overnight, with the females emitting a specific pheromone to attract males. Once two animals pair up, they will remain together during the subsequent day and then separate around sunset. The female will then lay eggs on leaves that the larvae will later consume.⁵

As for the caterpillar I found, I coaxed him onto a stick and carried him away from the sidewalk to a nearby tree. I hope that he survives the perilous transition from larva to pupa to adult — and that, unlike his namesake, his future eyespots stay undamaged.



¹ Donald Hall, "Polyphemus Moth," *University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science*, July 2012, https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/Creatures/MISC/MOTHS/polyphemus_moth.htm.

² "Polyphemus Moth," *Missouri Department of Conservation*, <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/polyphemus-moth>.

³ "Polyphemus Moth," *Butterflies and Moths of North America*, <https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Anthraea-polyphemus>.

⁴ "Species *Anthraea polyphemus*," September 9 2023, *Bugguide*, <https://bugguide.net/node/view/427>.

⁵ Hall, "Polyphemus Moth."

Reading Women Club Spotlight- An Interview with Elleanna Berthel

By Vivian Miyakawa, Club Correspondent

If there's one thing Johnnies seem to love, it's a seminar. If twice a week isn't enough, there's a plethora of clubs out there to give you that sweet satisfaction of more reading assignments and more riveting discussion. In all honesty, I wasn't planning on joining one of these clubs. I've never been a huge fan of seminars, but when Delaney Costello, archon of the Reading Women club, encouraged me to join one of her "feminars," I decided to give it a shot. To my delight, it was a breath of fresh air to be in such a relaxed and welcoming seminar environment. Everyone was so supportive, and Ms. Costello did an amazing job at facilitating a balanced discussion space. After such a lovely experience being part of the Reading Women club, I decided to reach out to the vice-archon, Elleanna Berthel, and ask her a couple questions about the club, which she answered beautifully in writing.



Vivian Miyakawa: What goes into making a safe space for women and non-cisgender people, and what steps will this club take to achieve that?

Elleanna Berthel: I think the most important thing to keep in mind...is simply allowing anyone to talk. Making space to hear out each idea is particularly important to making a safe space for women and gender minorities because unfortunately, our voices tend to get run over more during class than others. My biggest hope for our members is that they leave each seminar feeling like they were truly able to engage with the text and conversation.

Apart from our seminars, we're also hosting office hours and community events this year to offer a space for students to discuss any frustrations (or wins!) they

might be experiencing during class. We want to make sure people have a space to feel heard and encouraged by their peers, and sometimes the best way to do that is to simply listen to someone rant and offer any advice and encouragement that you can.

VM: What are your opinions on the curriculum in general, and what do we lack when studying these "great books" that are mostly written by men?

EB: I think we not only lack more texts written by or about women, but we also don't address female experiences or characters in seminar unless they are the main character, such as Antigone or Medea.

In texts like the Iliad, Herodotus, and Thucydides, we see women being directly oppressed by men at war, but sometimes it feels like seminars as a whole struggle to address this phenomenon apart from categorizing it as a "product of the time." The rape and kidnap of women during wartime feels like a glaring part of the text, yet it is easily overlooked.

I also wonder about the rigidity of the program. On one level, I can understand what the program is trying to achieve by being very particular about which



texts to layer upon each other, but how much does it mean when a large portion of your student body feels overlooked? I read texts written by men constantly, I am always looking at the world through their eyes, and I believe our student body is deprived of experiencing the opposite effect through the program. Austen, Woolf, and de Beauvoir are all incredible authors and deserve their spot on the list, but I think there should be room for more.

VM: Given your goal of supplementing the program with more female authors, what are some of the readings you've chosen, and why?

EB: We picked our readings to mimic the chronological order of the Program, beginning with older works and eventually reaching both modern feminist theory and contemporary literature by women. Although not all the texts on our reading list are written by female authors, they are all centered around female stories and experiences. I'm particularly excited for our next seminar over Plutarch's writings on historical female figures--I loved reading Solon and Lycurgus in freshman

seminar last year, so I'm excited to engage with more of his work.

VM: Thoughts on the year so far? Anything you want the Polity to know?

EB: No matter what time of the year it is, we're always happy to welcome new members to our seminars or have a chat during office hours. So far, we've read Sappho and Sor Juana and had fantastic seminars on both, and I think the conversations will only keep getting better from here on out.



Adult Education Seminar, 1948. At the time, there were two segregated adult education seminars. The College would not admit women as students for another four years.

Croquet for Dummies:

A Guide for New Johnnies

By Willa Rothenberg

When considering St. John's College in their college search, most students take interest in the Program of Instruction, not the sports offered. The exception to this rule might be if a student wants to learn croquet. This is because St. John's College sets such a high bar in American collegiate croquet. The College was the 2024 US Croquet Association Collegiate champions in both American Croquet and Golf croquet. St. John's also hosts the Annapolis Cup, the annual croquet match held between the United States Naval Academy and St. John's. In a unique way, the Polity has found a way to make sports part of its tradition.

Aside from being the most public facing Johnnie sport, what is croquet and how is it played? By the most basic definition, croquet is a field game played by hitting balls through metal wickets in the ground. There are many variations of the game, though over the years the school has created its own. Johnny Croquet is similar to backyard croquet, with rules added and adapted through oral tradition at the College. The course is made up of nine wickets with two stakes—one at each end of the field.

Johnny croquet is unique in that it involves more strategy than other varieties. The nature of the grounds is a large factor in this. Johnny croquet is played on an unmanicured lawn, unlike Association Croquet. This can result in uncontrollable variables like ant hills, rocks, and other impediments that can prevent a good shot from following through. For those skilled in the game, the type of lawn is simply a matter of preference. Magnus Oberg, Imperial Wicket (captain) of the SJC team prefers the difficulty that comes with an unmanicured lawn. Additionally, it is an advantage for those who learn on the St. John's lawn as the transition to a manicured lawn is simpler than going from a manicured lawn to an unmanicured

lawn.

Other forms of strategy come in the actual playing of the game. The rules allow for continuations after passing a wicket, and after hitting your ball into another ball. If one plays their wickets right, they may continue their turn for what seems like forever. Watching and playing games are the best ways of gaining an understanding of the game and strategy, though as soon as I felt I understood the game it got more complicated. Something unique to the strategy of the St. John's croquet team is how fine-tuned it is, because of the long-standing tradition.

The tried-and-true Johnny strategy is what makes the school so successful in the sport. Other schools, Oberg observes, are only just now implementing strategy as they start to take the game more seriously. It has been suggested that the Midshipmen's strategy lacks complexity. This is surprising considering the focus their school has on war strategy and games. On the other hand, St. John's has a frightfully unique fascination with a very obscure sport. To each their own, I suppose.

Looking forward, team leadership wants to play matches against other clubs, not just in Nationals. This was more common prior to COVID-19, when more collegiate clubs existed. Luckily, this year we should see some more croquet action. In preparation for the Annapolis Cup, both the Naval Academy and St. John's will play the Ginger Grove croquet team, a team from a retirement community in the greater Annapolis area. The Croquet Team is filled with history and tradition, but the future also holds so much.



Aerial view of the 1985 Annapolis cup

Voting Voices:

Civic Disengagement and The Underestimated Power of the Vote

By El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

A Tucson late afternoon in the summer is an eerie time. It is empty and quiet as the heat of a day's worth of stored sun radiating off the sidewalk gradually becomes sensible while the sun slips lower in the sky. In a few hours, after the sun sets, and the temperature descends from its 107 degree high, the streets will become alive again, but as evening slowly begins to settle, few are out except the stray mailperson, and me.

I was out knocking on doors in the blazing heat, interrupting people and their after work routines, not because of any personal desire for suffering, or a desire to irritate the general populace, but for that activity so long reviled and necessary for the function of our democracy: political canvassing. I found, as I walked, a few people with questions about the candidates I represented, a greater number of people eager to learn, and even one who wanted to talk about cologne. More than that I found closed doors or people who turned me away when I opened my mouth. In general, I found a very familiar kind of ignorance: many hadn't even heard of a primary election, telling me they planned to vote a straight party ticket, an absurd proposition in an election where only members of one party were on the ballot, as well as apathy: declaring that no election has ever made a difference in their life.

I call this ignorance and apathy familiar, because it exists, perhaps even more strongly, here at the College. When I first arrived here, I expected a community of politically engaged people. I made the, retrospectively naive, assumption that if you read Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Locke, not to mention the Constitution and Supreme Court Cases, you must naturally care about them in practice, and not only in abstract theory. However, I found that despite our insularity, the lack of feeling of connection with our

own political world that has a grip on so much of the United States impacts the College just as much as anywhere else. The most visible example of that is the number of Johnnies that do not vote.



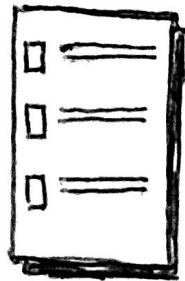
Given our contemporary national political climate, it is easy to see why so many people, including readers of this essay, may doubt the efficacy,

or even the merit, of voting. However, in dismissing democratic engagement entirely, many young people miss the broader picture of the working of our political system, and the ways in which a lack of voter engagement perpetuates and worsens the very problems that cause people not to vote, making their lack of a vote a tacit endorsement of the general direction the nation is currently headed in. Most importantly, they often do not see the power of their vote, a power which cannot necessarily be seen on the federal level, but that by looking at the more human-scale world of local politics, one that has a more immediate impact on day-to-day life, is easily seen. I hope that by sharing some of my personal experiences with local politics, I can provide a reason for Johnnies to recognize the power and importance of their vote, and of civic participation in general, which goes far beyond voting.

While there are occasionally noteworthy cases where a federal race is determined by a handful of votes, most Americans live in generally homogenous congressional districts, in safely red or blue states. However, when it comes to local elections, the issues at hand become much more immediate, and upset victories, won by razor thin margins. The first political

campaign I ever worked on was a prime example. I got involved in school board politics because of the troubles I saw in my public school district. The district, in inner-city Indianapolis, was mostly democratic, but when it came to the school board race, issues of privatization and funding did not align neatly to any party line. That race, which ended up reshaping my school, a big part of my world at the time, was won by a handful of votes in a low turnout election. Whether through having children going to the schools, working at the schools, or paying taxes to the district, hundreds of thousands of people were affected by this election, whose outcome was in no way predetermined by general trends of where people of certain political conviction live, or by partisan gerrymandering. Those few people who did vote, many of them mobilized by pro-privatization charter school groups, decided the quality of education, and the use of taxpayer funding, for the entire district.

This scales up, too, even to the state level. While state politics can be dominated by parties just as much as federal politics, and can also be manipulated by gerrymandering introduced by Republicans in 2010, the issues at the heart of state government, like roads, schools, and healthcare, mean that unexpected people can win elections and address long lasting problems, but only if voters actually bother to turn out. When voters pay attention, and do turn out, state politics become surprisingly volatile, and a Democrat like Andy Beshear can be elected in Kentucky, or Larry Hogan in Maryland. In both of those cases, every vote mattered when it came to their initial election, and things in both states might be very different, for better or worse, if they had not been elected. The fact these shifts can happen at a state level even in a deeply red or blue state, means that the power of each individual vote, even in scarlet Kentucky or azure Maryland, is always that powerful: if enough individual people thought the issues a federal politician was talking about were important, they



could cause the same kind of flips that happened at the state level.

At this point, many disengaged citizens might complain that although their vote is powerful, they have nowhere to use it since no candidate aligns with their political views. There is a level at which this concern can be dismissed off hand, in that a democracy necessarily needs to move towards beliefs of large numbers of their citizens, and it is selfish to believe that your opinions alone deserve to have candidates that stand behind them, it would be a mistake to dismiss it entirely. It is far too frequent that reasonable voices fall outside of the American political discourse. However, this lack of candidates representing positions comes partially from a lack of voter participation. Working with politicians, particularly locally in Arizona, I've seen how strong of a concern there is for the views of constituents. At the end of the day, a politician is not a machine operating according to the input of lobbyists and party, they are a human being who wants (ideally) two things: to improve the community they represent, or to keep their job. Both require listening to the concerns of individuals and coming closer to their views.

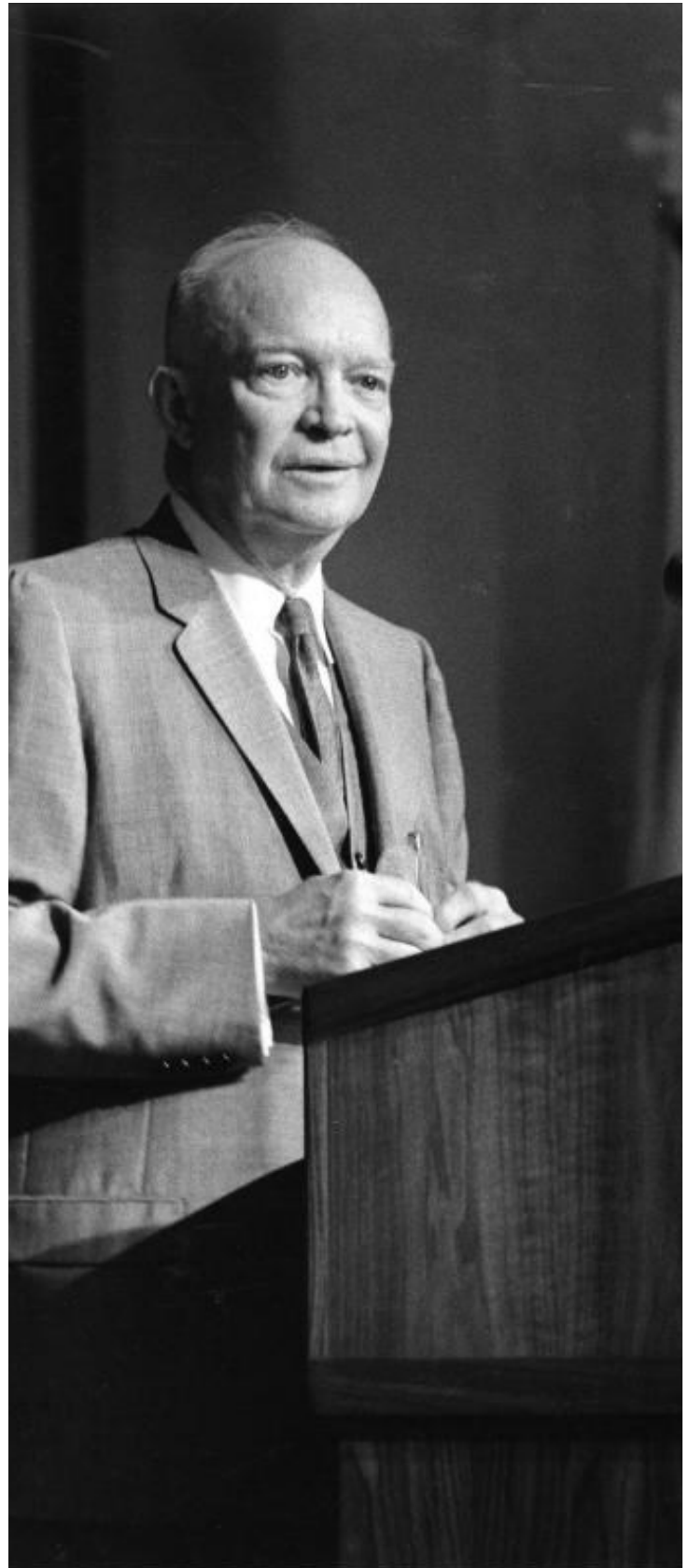
Politicians who are interested in bettering their communities, which I find most frequently in glory-less but powerful positions like county Boards of Supervisors, or state Corporation Commission, tend to be continually looking for what the needs of their constituents are. If you are engaged, and write letters, work on their campaigns, or even just show up at their meetings, you will at least have a voice at the table, and while you will not always get to vote for someone who believes exactly what you believe, what you believe will be fairly weighed against the beliefs and needs of all members of the community. Politicians concerned with winning reelection, which is all politicians, necessarily must listen to their constituents. Because, at the end of the day, every race might turn into an unexpected swing race, they do have some level of concern for your views. If the incumbent is dismissive of you, it is almost a guaranteed law that some challenger cares about your view.

Maybe that challenger is not always the one that wins their party's primary, but the only way to make sure that person who does care about your voice wins is to vote for them. By not voting, you indicate to politicians that you are merely a crank not worth listening to, since you cannot get them into office. The candidates who truly believe what you believe will never move beyond the fringes unless people like you vote, and mainstream candidates will never have any reason to listen to you unless you use your vote.



It is somewhat of a truism to say that if voting did not matter, there would not be so many people trying to get your vote. Nonetheless, we, as American citizens, cannot forget that. Likewise, we cannot forget that our lack of

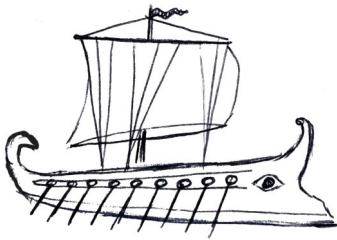
voting is equally as significant. A refusal to vote, which so many Johnnies practice, is not a refusal to endorse the political system; by working in the US, paying taxes, and simply living, you are endorsing its government. When you don't vote, you are instead casting away your voice. You tell politicians it does not matter and deny yourself any responsibility for governing yourself. If you prefer to be ruled over by a group of millions of strangers, you may choose to do so, but all of us young people should remember how many decisions that have changed our lives have happened in our short timespan. These range from concrete issues like suffering after the recession partially due to government decisions and people we know being affected by the loss of a woman's right to choice to more intangible ones like rising housing prices tied to planning policy or the problems caused by climate change. None of these issues are insignificant. If you are not perfectly happy with how these things have changed your life, as I suspect many of the readers of this article are not, then you must vote. Nothing will ever get better if you don't. If you do, things will not always be fixed, but your voice might just be the one that tips the scale, and the stakes are too high for you not to.



President Dwight D. Eisenhower speaking at the dedication of Mellon Hall, 1959

Let the Discussions Commence

By Avery Beaudette



Over the past few weeks, through opening new chapters of their lives and a rush of new beginnings, the freshmen of St. John's College have been diligently dissecting Homer's timeless

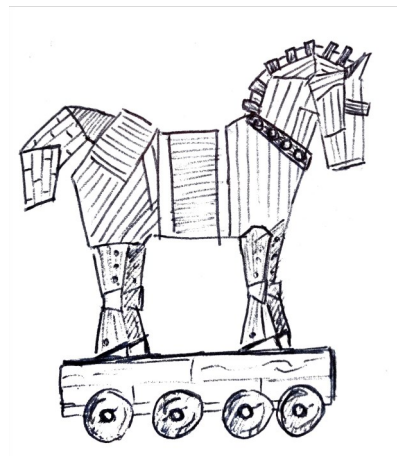
works, beginning with a classic that has stood the test of time, a story of sacrifice, perseverance, and hope; the *Iliad*. The newest members of our polity have officially taken on seminar and have begun their journey of discussion, learning more about themselves, their peers, and what it means to truly be a student here at St. John's. It is through the stories of heroes that we learn the most about ourselves, and there is certainly no shortage of heroic stories in the *Iliad*. Just like the Greeks and Trojans, Johnnies are being put to the test with many new challenges and choices. The themes of fate and friendship bleed from the pages of this epic to the fingertips of eager Johnnies learning to find their place among the strong comradery of the campus, as well as in the classroom.

Great conversations have been had over the past few weeks, and the energy of the campus after our bi-weekly seminars certainly reflects that. Walking around the quad as a rush of students comes filing out of the classrooms and getting to witness them carrying on the conversations and continuing to discuss the complexities of the *Iliad*, is truly something special. The loudest among the eager voices echoing through our campus' academic serenity are the newest members of our community. From talking about the thrill of collaborative learning, to discussing the joy of hyper analyzing the

Iliad, this year's freshman have bravely taken on the brunt of the Great Books program.

However exciting and engaging the first few seminars were for the majority, some freshmen have expressed disappointment about the lack of conversational awareness possessed by their fellow students. There is certainly a want for more passionate dialogue, and some Johnnie's have stated that it seems the cultivation of said dialogue is being stunted by half-formulated questions and some people's determination to be the smartest in the room.

With that being said, I would like to take the opportunity to instill a lesson into this year's freshman: Learn from those around you, some of the greatest snippets of knowledge you will come across in this life will be from the stranger sitting right next to you, but you will never know unless they are allowed a chance to share. Along that same note, to every new Johnnie finding it hard to share your thoughts, regardless of reason (maybe feeling mentally inadequate, or as if your thoughts are not substantial enough) there will always be a place for your voice in these conversations, and I wish you luck in the seminars to come.



TikTok Troubles

By Helen Felbek

For many of us at St. John's College, being "chronically online" is something we take pride in avoiding. Disconnecting from our digital existences by locking away our phones for an afternoon, like Mr. Abbott suggested last year, is socially acceptable here. In fact, students with flip phones—or no phones at all—are often admired for their commitment to simplicity and the real world.

But while many students might not see social media as essential to our daily lives, the college still has a notable online presence, both official and unofficial. Instagram, for example, is particularly popular among students. Here one can find the official St. John's College Annapolis account (@sjcannapolis), as well as the Greenfield Library (@sjcalibrary), the career development office (@sjcareers), the Mitchell Art Museum (@sjcmitchell), and the gym (@templeighart). There are also plenty of student run accounts: the intramural teams like to bring their team spirit to the internet as well as motivate students to come out to play. Other student groups such as Reality (@sjcreality), the Waltz Committee (@sjc_waltz), the Delegate Council (@sjcdelegatecouncil), the Art Studio (@artstudio.sjc), the Darkroom (@sjc_darkroom), the King Williams Players (@kingwilliamplayers), and Energeia (@energeiasjc) have Instagram accounts to advertise events and share student creations. And of course, we should not make the mistake and forget about Santa Fe. Our sister campus is not immune to creating a manifold of Instagram accounts for all possible aspects of student life either. All these accounts, often quirky and humorous, do in my opinion an excellent job of reflecting the creative and lighthearted aspects of campus culture.

While there is, of course, reason to question the point of having all these accounts, this is not the focus of

this article. If there is some sort of interest and demand, who am I to say that we should be Luddites and completely reject all social media presences? It could even be argued that there might be as subsection of students who use Instagram more regularly than their emails so perhaps just for campus internal communication, Instagram is an actual "social" medium helping to increase community and turn out to events.

However, while many of these accounts are in fact publicly accessible, the main target audience is current students. This probably wouldn't stop determined prospective students or parents from snooping around, but that is the beauty of the still somewhat transparent nature of the internet. But I would argue that curious prospective students, their parents and other people that might go through the effort to look for these unofficial pages would get a fairly authentic and innocuous impression of campus life. Of course, we should still think about how we would like to be perceived as a collective by the internet-using world who might stumble upon college associated internet presences.



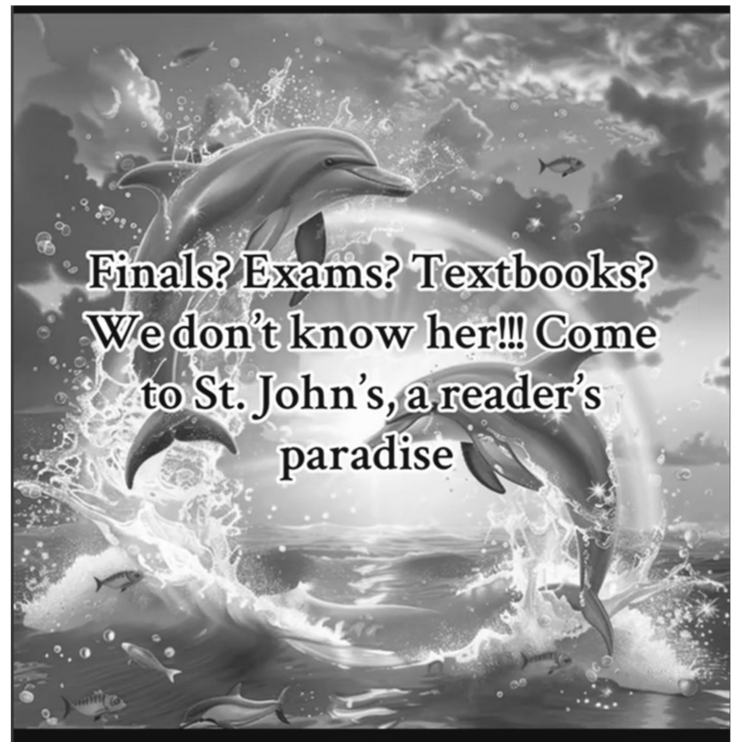
These general reflections lead me to the college's TikTok account, launched in May 2022. With just 202 followers as of September 8, 2024, its reach is far more limited than the official Instagram account which currently has 5,116 followers. Most TikTok posts are similar to the content uploaded to Instagram—waltz parties, dorm tours, and interviews with students. A couple of recent posts, however, have left many scratching their heads.

One video from September 3 features the message, “Finals? Exams? Textbooks? We don’t know her!!! Come to St. John’s, a reader’s paradise.” The video is accompanied by a cheesy, seemingly AI-generated graphic of two dolphins jumping at sunset and Clean Bandit’s “Symphony” playing in the background.

The caption reads: “Think about it Pookie 🐶💕☺ We are waiting for you #stjohns #annapolis #dolphins #books #symphony #johnnie #maryland.” Perhaps I am just out of the loop – not having TikTok myself – on what is considered funny or trendy, but to me this post seemed to be fundamentally at odds with my and perhaps many of my peers’ experience of St. John’s. The claim insinuates that the program is not rigorous, which I am sure most students and tutors would disagree with. Further it purports that being a reader is sufficient to be happy at St. John’s, a claim I would argue is misleading at best, considering the importance of class participation as well as our focus on very challenging math and lab tutorials.

Another post from August 21 shows members of the administration dancing (or “shimmying,” as the caption puts it) to welcome the Class of 2028. Although well-intentioned, it feels forced and awkward, lacking the irony or self-awareness that might make it funny. It’s not that these videos are inherently wrong, but they raise a more significant concern: What kind of image are we presenting to the world? When prospective students, grad school admissions committees, and potential employers stumble upon our TikTok, what will they think?

I, by no means, wish to disparage the hard work and dedication of the individuals who developed and executed these specific posts. My point of contention is pertaining to the endeavor in general. It is always easier to criticize than to suggest alternatives. One student I spoke to suggested that the idea of clickable and trendy videos is by nature at odds with an official college presence, independently of what kind of college we are talking about. This student suggested that an alternative might be to split the two strategies and have one official TikTok account very similar to the



The picture used on St. John’s official TikTok account @sjc.edu (<https://www.tiktok.com/@sjc.edu/video/7410425577758264618>) might be inspired by the colorful work of the contemporary US-American artist Lisa Frank (Screenshot 09/08/2024)

Instagram account even at the risk of not generating as much traffic as the college might want to, and have a second account run by students that would in a way “memeify” the college experience. This would, according to the student, be much more authentic.

According to Sara Luell, Senior Director of Communications and Operations, the college has been experimenting with a new TikTok strategy since August 20. The goal is to appeal to prospective students, specifically 16-year-olds who may be unfamiliar with St. John’s and its Great Books curriculum. As part of a collaboration between the Admissions Office and Communications Office, young Admissions counselors and student employees have been empowered to get creative and , trust their instincts on what might attract this demographic. Luell emphasizes that this is only a trial and that they “would pull back after a couple of months and assess.” Further, the posts still require approval from the communications team.

Interestingly enough, this strategy shift led to the creation of a wider gap between the online representation of the two campuses: In Annapolis, the focus has been on creating trendy, light-hearted content, whereas Santa Fe's TikToks are more subdued and thoughtful. One might argue that this experiment leads to inconsistent branding and could actually confuse prospective students. "The goal is for us all to learn from one another on how trends do and don't work for us, on when our brand needs to override trends due to potential brand damage," summarizes Luell. She and her team have noticed that the Annapolis content is getting more likes than the Santa Fe content, but she admits: "we do not know if these likes are the 'right likes.' For example, are they simply getting likes because the content is very popular and accessible, but those likes are not coming from prospective Johnnies?" Luell also shares the observation that while Santa Fe posts get fewer likes, they get "a decent number of 'Saves/Bookmarks' which might indicate more serious engagement from better prospects." However, Luell finds that currently "it is too early to tell what these results mean so we will continue to evaluate."

While this experiment may be innovative, it has also sparked conversations among current students. Many feel that the TikTok account's recent content is inconsistent with the college's identity and values. One student summed it up by saying, "Our social media reflects our values as an institution to the outside world, and based on some of our recent TikToks, those values seem inconsistent and frivolous."

This case also touches upon the bigger issue of college advertisement in general. Last year, the Committee on Student Life hosted a forum on how the college is advertising. Many participants voiced concern that the line between portraying the college in a fair but positive light and making unauthentic claims in the name of attracting as many students as possible, is blurred. This issue seems to carry over to the TikTok account as well. Perhaps the trendier posts are not actually as harmful as I think they are but I believe there should, at the very least, be a bigger con-

sideration for showing the rigor of the program. As Mr. Abbott reminds us in his recent Gadfly article: "Beautiful things are difficult." We should embrace these challenges as they are what makes the education we receive here so rewarding and enduring. Diminishing or hiding this is unfair—both to prospective students as well as the entire polity who is committed to the program, with all its challenges, every day.

Luell emphasizes that feedback from the student body is essential and that she is open to suggestions for improving the account. "The purpose of this experiment is learning, and that learning very much includes hearing feedback from current students on what does or does not appeal on the account, as well as ideas for future posts," she says, welcoming student contributions.

St. John's College faces the same challenge as many other institutions today: how to remain relevant in a rapidly changing (digital) world without losing touch with the core values that make us unique. How can we attract prospective students to counteract the negative effects of the demographic cliff on enrollment numbers? The question we need to ask ourselves is whether TikTok—or any social media platform—is the right place to convey the depth and richness of the St. John's experience.

While I do not claim to know the telos of the program, I think it is universally agreed upon that we are a college that values deep thinking, intellectual engagement, and meaningful connections. If our social media presence doesn't reflect that, we risk alienating both current and prospective students. The goal should not be to hop on the latest trends just to attract attention but to share an authentic version of St. John's with the world—one that reflects who we are and what we stand for.

In the end, it's not about whether we should have a TikTok account or not. It's about how we use it. And right now, we could use it a lot better.

My Government Education is Obsolete

By Pia Ibsen



As a high school senior in the great state of Texas, I was required to take a semester of a government course. I took the Advanced Placement (AP) government and politics class around six months ago, where we learned about how

our government operates and the different political and judicial issues that the United States has right now. With recent rulings by the Supreme Court, the AP government class must rethink the content they're teaching.

The major ruling, which was released on July 1st, stated that the President has near full immunity from prosecution when acting in an official capacity. This is a complete change from what's been upheld in the past, with this ruling also encompassing criminal prosecution, the precedent before only protecting the commander and Chief from civil prosecution. But with this new precedent via the Supreme Court, it now seems that our Chief Executive is now immune from any sort of prosecution when acting in an official capacity.

This is an extremely dangerous precedent set by our aging Supreme Court, with the looming 2024 election in less than two months. This ruthless battle between a prosecutor and a convicted felon has broken many historical precedents for behavior in presidential campaigns. I've seen a stark contrast in debates from even four years ago. The new ruling on presidential immunity has shaken up the way that President Trump has looked at his indictments and criminal trials, in Georgia and the District of Colombia, his once flouting legal team now has a new defensive strategy in both.

This new ruling has turned the presidency from an office of the people to a monarchical one. With complete immunity, which puts the president above the law, the president could do anything and claim immunity. Preventing this is exactly why our Founding Fathers included three branches of the government: the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive. Article 1, Sections 2, 8, and 9 of the Constitution lay out the different checks the Legislative branch gets on the executive, put in place to assuage the concerns of the Anti-Federalists. They were worried that the executive would get too big, becoming monarchical. Unfortunately, just shy of 250 years later, that has nearly been realized.

One could pinpoint this unraveling of our democracy about 20 years ago, 45 days after the horrific events of 9/11. A bill called the "Patriot Act" was hastily passed, which allowed for the judicial and executive branches to "sneak and peak" into any American's life that they wished, without probable cause. This was said to help capture "terrorists" before they attacked, but this unconstitutional act only helped lead to one conviction after looking and bugging over 200,000 Americans. This was a fundamental intrusion of not just Americans' lives, but also violated the 4th Amendment. This unprecedented breach of American privacy has led to a steady overreach of executive power, which has amalgamated into a gross misuse of executive privilege.

The United States was founded on the notion that we are a representative democracy, not letting any branch have too much power over the others. In my government class, we were taught that all three branches have equal say in how the government is not just run, but what laws are made, but now just six months later that has proven false. The executive branch is overreaching its power, which is exactly what our founders feared. The upcoming election could prove fatal not just for us, but for our American democracy.

Commentary on The Adventures of Frog and Toad; Bk. I Ch. II: The Story

By Tarik Mahmud



When I was but a wee Tarkling I was, as many who know me are aware, greatly taken by nature documentaries.

The countless hours I spent as a mere sapling of consciousness watching these, or otherwise passively receiving them as my puerile mind was elsewhere distracted, were so numerous that in my brain they have mixed into a smooth drone of constant involvement. But not only to the primary content of these programs was my germinating soul attracted, but also vehemently to the “Making-Ofs”; I was greatly interested in how these shows were produced, to the point where I could remember such latter programs at least as precisely as I could the former.

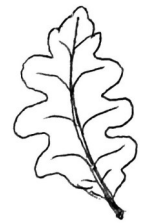
It is with this past experience that I approach a commentary on the second chapter of the first book of the *Adventures*, whereon Mr. Lobel bestowed the uniquely abstract title “The Story”.

Invalid Frog requests a story from Toad whilst the former rests his weary frame. Toad, not being a spurting fount of poetry, despairs in this endeavor to invent a story for his friend. He first paces up and down the porch—as any sensible man in the midst of concentrated thought does in such a situation—then stands atop his head after returning indoors, which signals the onset of his aporetic madness. He pours water on top of his head when this works not, before finally resorting to bludgeoning his own cranium on the wall of his house. Whereupon concerned Frog forgets his sickness out of worry for his friend and tells Toad that he need not think of a story anymore, as he has recovered his health, thus affording Toad the opportunity to rest from his



self-inflicted wounds in Frog’s place. When Frog volunteers to tell Toad a story (which mirrors Toad’s acceptance of the same duty in relation to Frog previously in the story), he recounts Toad’s foolish methods for coming up with one. Toad is fast asleep by the time he finishes.

The most eminent theme encounterable in this story is the frustration of Toad in inventing a story. This is an intimately familiar obstacle for us Johnnies, who several times a semester must confront the umbrous caverns of Writer’s Block. The belly of the earth is huge, and we have no way to speak of: yet we simply must take a path and follow it. The not-taking-a-path is here demonstrated to be an indecision of the utmost harm, rendering Toad so poorly that he must to bed, thus exchanging the ill being with the narrator. In his anti-manic ravings, Toad has himself become the passive receiver of the story, rather than the creator. Furthermore, his head hurts like hell. So let this be the first bit of wisdom to take from this: that we ought not to resort to such mad means of generating content.



But although these means are wholly and incontestably evil in their outcome, we must notice also Frog’s position here. For Toad has become so uniquely and interestingly deranged that from his barren tongue sprouts a novel germ. For having changed places with Frog, to Frog is now given the poet’s space, that the misfortunes of the fallen hero be recounted to him in his slumber and such is the great paradox of this chapter: Toad’s inability to invent a story is itself the story. Thus the absence of object, that is to say the absolute negation of object, has itself become object. But it is a tragic object; as the verses of Aeschylus

and the rest turn the evils of the heroes into good lessons for their audience, so Toad suffers inadvertently for our benefit, that we may reap what he has himself sown.

Cohabiting in this apartment of the account (lógos) of this chapter is the “Making-Of” this chapter. We see painted in the ink of the page the inner machinations of the author, and possibly Mr. Lobel’s own grievous toil in making a story: he came to the same solution as Frog, though in this case the twain amphibia are synthesized in the author’s singular consciousness. It is this point (along with the all-too-familiar Writer’s Block) that particularly attracted me to this chapter, since in it I found echos of my previous condition, sunny memories of my fore-years watching the behind-the-scenes specials of my favorite nature documentaries. It is in this unexpected coincidence that I find my own childhood synthesized, at least in part: my favorite picture-book; and the incessant peeling-back of something to uncover its hidden causes, which I believe is among the greatest virtues of childhood. Not to mention the self-referential nature of this peeling-back, so that the exposition exposes itself—a good toy for thought.

I would like to close this commentary with a final exhortation that is manifest from this chapter. Seek not to please those around you in hurting yourself! See Toad’s folly: how it grieves Frog so much that it quickly outhurts his sickness. Consider whether Toad has ameliorated Frog’s illness, or has conversely made his own pains worse than the latter’s. Take care and hold fast in your minds that the health of the one is the health of the other, and that the pleasing of friends is in direct proportion to the pleasing of the self.



Trees Near Pinkney Hall, ca. 1910

American Dream, Madison Square Garden, and the Legacy of LCD Soundsystem Seven Years Later

By Isaac Strauss

I'm of the humble opinion that no party is complete without some version of LCD Soundsystem's *Dance Yrself Clean*. Specifically, when the night is drawing to a close, the song is made not for the start of a party but for the early morning, when the crowd has thinned and sobered, leaving only the devotees who are happy to populate a gathering that should have ended hours ago. However, *Dance Yrself Clean* is now a fourteen year old song, an eternity in the fast paced alternative world that LCD helped build. It was released on their third and allegedly final 2010 album, *This is Happening*, which debuted to greater commercial success than the band had ever attained. In 2014, LCD took to Madison Square Garden for what was to be their last ever show before dispersion and retirement. In 2017, they were back with *American Dream*, which - *Electric Lady* sessions notwithstanding - appears to be the true last release of the project. The circumstances surrounding its release make *American Dream* worth a close read: what was so important that it needed to be said after the intense finality of 2014?

In an attempt to answer this question, I want to defer to the title track. It's undoubtedly the most symphonic song on the album, lyrically bearing its heart on its sleeve over lush, timeless synthscapes. The radical vulnerability on display is nothing new for LDC, but the song *American Dream* is suspiciously devoid of the ironic and self-effacing twists writer and frontman James Murphy uses in spades throughout most of his discography when his writing turns inwards. Sonically, it's the most accessible track on the album. Lyrically, it feels like reading someone's tell all memoir. However, much unlike the *All My Friends* and *I Can Change* of albums past, *American Dream* faces the ever present subject of youth's fleeting nature head on and manages to find a resigned sort of com-

fort in the loss of the manic neo punk scene of 2000s NYC to time. And, also unlike previous tracks of a similar nature, it does so without a hint of insecurity.

Tracks five and ten, *how do you sleep?* and *black screen* are two of the most charged on the album: both ask for emotional catharsis in vastly different ways. The first is a pointed takedown of Murphy's estranged production partner Tim Goldsworthy: their mutual hatred of each other was as intense as it was public when Goldsworthy split from the band in 2011. Written six years later, *how do you sleep?* is still incredibly vitriolic, purporting closure that's only half convincing over a bass line that's so powerful it's almost painful. The second is an incredibly personal reflection on the limited time Murphy was able to spend with friend and collaborator David Bowie, whose death hangs heavily over the latter half of album *American Dream*. Murphy lays much of the blame at his own feet for being "bad with people things" and confesses regret for the distance between the two that, again, only feels partially resolved by the end of the twelve minute track.

American Dream isn't an album interested in wasting time. It says everything it needs to in only eleven songs, one of which is an instrumental outro. And it would seem that what it needs to say is thus: the scene is dead, the band members are tired, and while not all old wounds have healed, the process is well underway. It's for this reason that it doesn't feel all that bad that this "comeback" flew relatively under the cultural radar. It reached number one on Billboard's rock charts and was well received by critics, but *American Dream* didn't have any hits on the level of *Dance Yrself Clean* or *Daft Punk is Playing At My House*. It was too moody, too introspective for that. There's a touch of tragedy in the idea that a band so

obsessed with parties had grown out of making music for dancing and drinking, but to return to the same persona that had governed LCD for their last three albums would make *American Dream* a meaningless project. If I were to be deliberately reductive, I'd call it an album about change, about closure, about acceptance. But it's not quite so cut and dry, *American Dream* is just as messy, strange, and open ended as anything that came before it. What I can say for certain is that it's the most mature album in the LCD catalog, answering the questions that bubbled to the surface when the band formally debuted in 2002.



Waltz Party, 1981

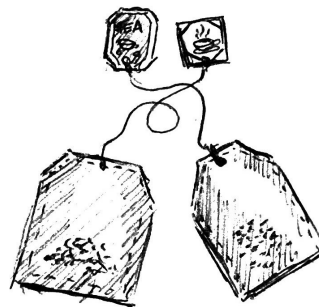
THE A.M. RADIO PRESENTS: a letter from your host, brought to you by Seeing All Red by Shakey Graves

By AM

Stop asking me why my eyes are red. No, I'm not high. Yes, I am okay. No, it doesn't hurt. Yes, I appreciate your concern. Yes, I understand that I look like a "freaky vampire, but not like a sexy one, like a weird one that kills people." My eyes are red because there's blood in them, and there's blood in them because the blood vessels in them burst. According to the wonderful people in the health center, this is nothing to worry about. I should apply a cool compress and enjoy my two to three weeks of looking like a little white crusty-eyed little white dog with reefer madness. At least it brings out the green in my eyes. And I'm also supposed to avoid touching them. After all, there's only a thin membrane separating my pristine and sterile blood from the dirty, dirty world, and while I might look good in an eyepatch, an infection in the eyes is going to do nothing for my look. You might then ask, "Why G-d? Why would you let this happen?" I asked the same questions. Apparently, when I got sick from a cute little stomach virus on Friday the 13th (a happy holiday to all who observe), I vomited hard enough for my. Eyeballs. To. EXPLODE. -10/10 do not recommend. But never let it

be said that I don't give it my all in everything that I do. Anyways, this malady and the bloody fallout left me marginally compromised over the weekend. And to that end, the article that I planned for this issue of the Gadfly will have to be aired at a later date. But rest assured, dear listeners, it will be a good one—an exclusive interview with one Mr. Nate Burke on the phenomena he dubs "Goofball Lunch." I had the pleasure of dining in his company the evening of my illness, and while I cannot for certain say that his cooking (or the toe fungus possibly spread by his unshod roommate) did not cause my present state of optical ingloriousness, I can reliably share that it was

not the "Goofball Lunch" that did me in. But to uncover what really makes a "Goofball Lunch" (and why our meal was not one) you'll have to tune in next week at the next printing of the Gadfly!



old awnings

Natalie Goldman

Under the shade of old awnings,
I used to pass many muggy evenings.
I watched days drop away like flies,
Though, then, they felt long.

A midwest sunset always seems to stand still,
Paint asleep on canvas,
Until it passes away in one eye's blink.
I breathed deeply,
Practically inhaled the gnats and mosquitoes,
Counted days on my fingers,
Tried to cheat time.

I don't need to cheat anymore.
Now we are trying to get along,
To be friends.
Time braids my hair to keep
The heat off my neck.

Dorm Cooking

By Marit Hendrickson

This month for my 2nd act, I present to you, my hungry audience, two recipes that only have two ingredients!



MUG CAKE

This first recipe tastes just as good as the prepackaged mug cakes but costs way less than the prepackaged ones. Prepackaged mug cakes cost \$15 for three mug fulls while this recipe costs only \$3 and gets you 21+ mug cakes.

Ingredients:

3 Tablespoons cake mix

2 Tablespoons water

Mix directly in mug and microwave for 1 minute and enjoy!

Tip: This recipe is easy to double or triple in larger mugs. You can also add sprinkles or chocolate chips for more variety.



QUESADILLA

There's nothing that tastes better at 3 in the morning when you're wrapping up a paper that was due at midnight than a microwave quesadilla. It's quick and surprisingly filling too!

Ingredients:

2 tortillas

Handful of cheese (pre-shredded Mexican works best)

Sandwich the cheese between the tortillas in an even layer on a plate and microwave for 30-45 seconds, then carefully flip it to the other side and microwave for another 25-30 seconds. Flip once again when fully cooked and let cool before eating.

Tip: You can add leftover chicken and beans to this recipe for some protein or dip it in ketchup or hot sauce for extra flavor.



Chef in the Dining Hall Kitchen, Date Unknown

Μουσείον

St. John's College is "The Decline of Western Civilization"

By Gabriela Forte

Personality abounds in punk rock: poets, writers, burnouts, academics, amateurs, serious musicians. Yet the unifying characteristic among them all is an unshaking independence and dedication to going against the grain. Punk has meant many things over the generations—working class solidarity, feminism, self-expression, shock value, good music—it's all punk rock. What makes this movement so interesting is that it is perceived and experienced in a myriad of ways, yet its constituents are still very much a united front against the conformist expectations of external society. There is a potent rage to it—a rage that differs in origin, but one that seems to unify the movement.

But this is exactly what catches one's attention in Penelope Spheeris' documentary, "The Decline of Western Civilization," an up-close and personal view of the Los Angeles punk rock scene of the late 70's and 80's. She captures the singular nature of each person involved in the subculture, punk icons and audience members alike, while also highlighting the common values that unite them: revolution, hopelessness, frustration, excitement, intoxication, fear, loneliness, community. It also appears that this unity could not exist without the characteristics that distinguish each member of the movement. There will never be another Claude Bessy, or Exene Cervenka, or Keith Morris. They embody such different parts of the punk rock movement, but each one of them has been essential to the unique fingerprint it has left on music and subculture.

This is not just the case for those whose names we remember today. Every single person in the punk rock sphere made the scene what it was and what it will be. The kids taping bootlegs in the alley because they couldn't afford a ticket made just as indelible a mark on punk rock as the guitarist who left to record

folkstyle hurdy-gurdy music before the band made it big. The impact of the individual does not necessarily need to have been groundbreaking to be significant. What matters is that they were there. And Spheeris does a fantastic job of showing us every single cog that pushes the gears of punk rock along, no matter how big or how small, no matter how smooth or how rusty. Every rickety piece.

At a place like St. John's College, with so many subgroups within the community, it is very easy to feel certain social divisions. However, I find it incredibly important to remember that each person is just as essential to St. John's as each person was (and is) to punk rock. We all came here for a reason, and while we may differ in our self-expression, our motivation, or our interests, we share a common love of conversation and inquiry that truly unites us. The DC members and the artists and the archons and the friend groups all make up parts of the St. John's culture that we would be incomplete without. We are bolstered by our community members and are beautifully complicated by their most minute contributions. Without even the smallest pieces, the gears would fail to turn. I encourage you to look upon our polity with this kind of appreciation—there are no "others," no insignificant individuals. We are not set apart by our differences. We are made more remarkable for them.



Art Criticism:

Mitchell Museum's Theater of Turmoil

By Caiden Cawthorne

Trying to unveil an aspect of human nature is a high enough bar on its own—invoking Artaud, another. The Mitchell Art Museum put forth both as guiding goals of its new exhibition, entitled, in allusion to the 19th-century artist's essay within *The Theatre and Its Double*, "The Theater of Turmoil".

Filled with photo print reproductions; from broken antiquities and Baroque masterpieces to Post-War Warhol's and depictions of police brutality, the show invites one to take in the multifaceted manner by which turmoil can arise, all while entertaining the central question of whether or not we exist in what they term "unusual times".

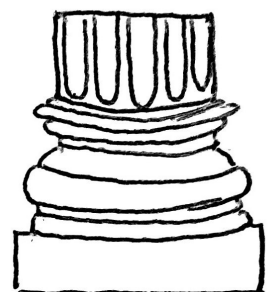
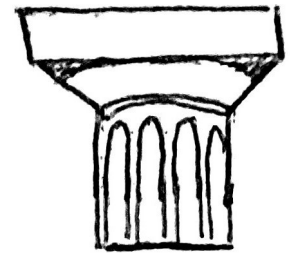
Though the Museum puts forth this question in a seemingly objective manner, their answer to it is clear as they represent turmoil as being an all-encompassing and inescapable part of human existence—nothing new at all. Indeed, the introductory text offered to one before entering the exhibit almost seems to conflate calamity, denoting, "accidents, race riots, and domestic violence" as simply "troubling aspects of daily life". This cacophonous combination of elements lacks both cohesiveness and emotional gravity, creating a level of intellectual abstraction that diminishes the degree of engagement one could have with the work. Furthermore, the notion that these atrocities are somehow synonymous with one another and occur every day, that such is simply the natural way of things, lends itself to the creation of a very callous and uncomfortable environment to walk into—and for all the wrong reasons. Indeed, the print of a painting that shows police brutality which adorns the closest wall to the entrance being equated to that which depicts a fatal car accident, serves to mute the circumstantial significance that each piece has in context. Though this may have been a conscious

decision, as to further focus upon the placement of these events under the wider umbrella term of "turmoil," such could have been accomplished more readily had more of a correlation been derived between the

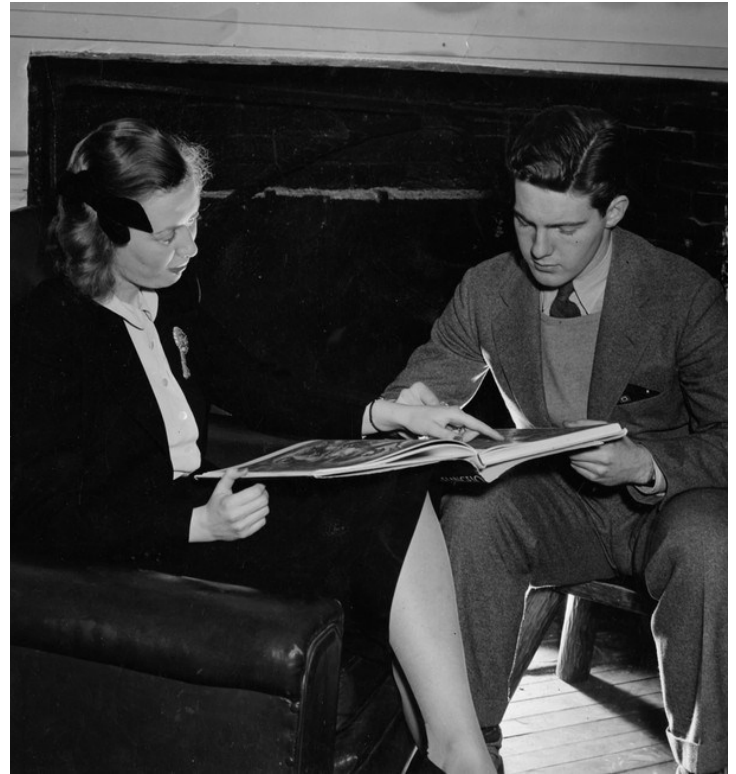
works, as opposed to their decontextualization. Such is a pervasive problem, as the nature of what exactly "turmoil" means within the show remains elusive due to such lack of care. Taking, for instance, John Heartfield's *5 Fingers Has The Hand*, it becomes evident that the exhibition is more concerned with shock than sentiments. For, created in 1928, the piece was made more so as a statement of unity than chaos, with the five fingers of the hand being an anti-fascist symbol championing the benefit of voting.

Likewise, though the exhibition features the return of the original architects of the Museum, immersion is still nowhere to be found. Perhaps what's most striking within the show is its intentionally ambiguous installations, large and looming grey walls that jut out like rocks on a cliff side, upon which the pictures are placed. Though a worthy idea, with certain prototypes of these installations appearing more suitable, the final execution proved impractical, as it further warps the display of the various pieces and serves as a distraction from their contents as opposed to an enhancement.

That is not, however, to say there isn't anything good about the show. One can most definitely commend the intentionality in color usage, which, though it hides some of the more aesthetically appealing elements in certain works, puts on full display the



nature of each depictions form and balance, allowing one to be further attentive to specific subtleties. Furthermore, the jarring and deceptive background composition, created by local composer Zachary Konick, solidifies a sturdy foundation for the overall presentation of the pieces. Similarly, the inclusion of photographs that deal with the destruction of cultural and artistic artifacts are of immense intrigue, creating a narrower scope much more fascinating than the Museum currently finds itself entertaining. It is such that, as interesting as these positive attributes are, they alone cannot correct the more glaring and prominent errors of the exhibition. For, though filled with imaginative and expansive potential, the show stands as a mountain without a summit—barely an adventure—and by no means a walk through Artaud’s door.



Mrs. Edward Lathrup and Robert Thompson Looking at a Book with Artwork by Michelangelo ca. 1945



Children and Teacher at the Mitchell Museum (Then Gallery) ca 1989

Restaurant Review:

City of Pigs: Timber Pizza

By Molly Sprout

I have a distinct memory of being an 8-year-old girl and lying in bed at my grandparents' house, reading Peter Rabbit and thinking, "something feels wrong about this". This was the first time I felt this uncanny feeling. It's hard to find words for this discomfort; there is something unfamiliar and uncomfortable about the reality that you are viewing, though there is little one can point to for the source. All you know for sure is that there is something off about what you are viewing, leaving you with a sick feeling in your stomach. Freud has a name for this feeling: "unheimlich", the unhomely. He gives a description of this as "starting from the homely and domestic, there is further development towards the notion of something removed from the eyes of strangers, hidden, secret. This notion is extended in a number of ways..." That feeling of the "unheimlich" at 8 years old was not the last time I felt that way. This feeling was evoked last Tuesday night when I walked into Timber Pizza, a poor simulacrum of a pizza restaurant.

The interior has a pizza oven, checkered floors, and wood tables. The air is that of a campsite Italian restaurant, as it is highly informal and woodsy but with high prices and bougie pizzas. The vibe is almost as confused as the staff. The restaurant serves cocktails, the presence of which is confusing, though. This place does not present itself as a bar at all, without the ability to order there. All orders are placed at the counter like a fast-food restaurant with no table service. I see the concept they are going for, but it just doesn't work. All it seems is lazy. I know this sounds harsh about a pizza restaurant, but seriously: what the hell are they doing? The plates are plastic versions of paper plates. These plates are almost a fourth-wall break, looking at the customers saying, "we know we're kitsch and an impression of

a pizza place, too."

Onto the food, we ordered two pizzas and a salad. The salad is a greens mix with candied peanuts, corn, and a sesame scallion dressing. The dressing was pretty good, with rich umami flavors covering up the mistake that is candied peanuts on a salad. They are too sweet, too crunchy, and confuse what should be a simple salad to go with pizza. The pizzas we ordered were "the Bentley" and "the Lot". The Bentley is a red pizza with provolone, mozzarella, cured meats, and hot honey. The pizza delivered on taste but was nothing better than Pizza Hut. Hot honey is taking the culture by storm for no good reason. Spicy and sweet, who would have thought! It is lacking in interest and taste but, on the positive side, it made me less hungry. The next pizza, "the Lot", is a white pizza with slow cooked pork, jalapeños, and pineapple. Upon arrival, it does not look appetizing. The pork was grey, and it just looked sad. This was worse than the first, with much too strong cilantro put on top. Cilantro is a strong and powerful flavor that has been taken advantage of here. It is just not the desired forefront of a pizza. To top it all off, they had no ranch. Am I crazy, or should a pizza place have ranch?

All in all, this place is no better than Fox's Den on Main street, which is a quicker walk and the same price. For three drinks, two pizzas, and two salads we spent 90 dollars and none of us would spend it again. The flavors, the staff, the environment were almost as confused as I am as to why I thought going there was a good idea.

The Reluctant Optimist

The D in OCD Stands for Descartes

By Tamar Pinsky

“Everyone at St. John’s is depressed.” – said an upperclassman, giving me my first impression of St. John’s as a very green freshman. And yet, here I remain. For I did not take these words as a threat that the coursework would consume me. I took them as an offering of comfort, saying that there is no need to worry if one is not 100% mentally stable, because St. John’s inherently attracts students with mental illness.

Or is it philosophy in general that inherently attracts people with mental illnesses? As someone with mild (diagnosed) OCD, I find that many seminar texts appeal to my obsession-obsessed mind. Their arguments’ structures resemble my obsessive thinking patterns and thus I do not look at them with fresh and frustrated eyes. These texts seem familiar to me; moreover, they are exhilarating. Dopamine-esque even.

One text that bears a striking resemblance to my obsessive thinking patterns is Descartes’ *Meditations*. It exemplifies how a worry can turn into perfectionist behavior and/or into hyper-focused thinking, both of which revolve around the need to determine what is “right” or what is “true.”

Descartes starts from a place of doubt, saying that “several years have now passed since I realized how numerous were the false opinions that in my youth I had taken to be true, and thus how doubtful were all those that I had subsequently built upon them.” Descartes’ overwhelming doubt lent him the need to write his meditations perfectly. He admits to procrastinating for so long, waiting for the perfect time to focus on his project in isolation, so he could stop brooding over it.

This succession mimics the steps of an obsessive thinking pattern: an event (it is unclear what Des-

cartes’ event was) leads one to worry that a previously held belief is false, and so one scrambles in panic to solve the problem of unsurety. However, because one knows this to be a difficult task, one that will require dedicated effort, one procrastinates, as a form of perfectionism.

Sometimes, one is able to move past the perfectionism and get started on the task. Then, the mind becomes entranced in working out the resolution. It keeps a tight grip on what it knows to be true, and then reframes the worry so that it can align with the mind’s strongly held “right” beliefs.

In Descartes’ case, his strongly held belief is that his thinking is essential to his being, and he orients his explanation of God’s existence to fit into this framework. He does this by focusing only on what logical conclusions he can make, until he reaches the need for God.

Then he acknowledges the difficulty he has maintaining strict focus, saying that he is “unable to keep [his] attention constantly focused on one and the same item of knowledge.” Here he differs from the obsessive mind, which hungers for such attention. The obsessive mind poses infinite what-if questions, yearning to stay on the same subject for as long as possible, so it can always be approaching the resolution, but never reaching it in its entirety. Descartes reaches his conclusion, and stops there, though he admits, in his *Letter of Dedication*, that his work is not “sufficiently complete.” He knows that his own mind cannot continue any longer on the subject; or at least he knows that he must stop at some point.

My mind has a hard time finding a stopping point. The type of work Descartes forced himself to put for-

ward in his Meditations is the type of work that the obsessive mind is held captive to every day.

Could the obsessive mind in a sense be at an advantage when it comes to studying philosophy, because it is used to this type of work – that of worry spiraling into doubt spiraling into meticulousness, for the sake of an end that may never be reached – ? It seems absurd, and politically incorrect, to deem an illness as an upper hand.

But even if having OCD does put one at an advantage for studying philosophy – that still might be bad news for the OCD-ers, for we may be using the study of philosophy to redirect our obsessive thinking. While it serves as relief from harmful thinking patterns, obsessive thinking is obsessive thinking; it is rarely beneficial. One strives to eradicate obsessive thinking, not continue partaking in a disguised version of it.

Can one even eradicate obsessive thinking fully? It seems an impossible task, for it involves stripping away a piece of oneself, a mode of one's thinking. Who would I be without my obsessive thinking? How am I to define who I am if not for what the inside of my mind is like?

Now I sound like Descartes! But maybe that is why he is so appealing to the mentally ill – Descartes puts so much emphasis on the importance of thought. For Descartes, “thought exists; it alone cannot be separated from me.” For everyone, especially the mentally ill, writers, philosophers, anyone who lives in their head – of course the thoughts are a source of vitality; they are essential to one's character.

I can imagine how many a person with varying mental illnesses might likewise find refuge at St. John's, a rare place, in that one's ability for self-introspection is celebrated. But this comes with a risk, that of praising navel-gazing. It is so tempting to define oneself by one's thoughts, but maybe we ought to look outside ourselves a bit more. What else can we define ourselves by? Or ought we to stop defining ourselves at all?



Woodward Hall, ca. 1900

THIS MONTH IN HOROSCOPES

WEATHER REPORT

(SEPTEMBER 2024)

By Madame Quiznos

ARIES

(March 21-April 19)

Aries knows best that the land is habitable for the strong. Summer ends and brings with it a second spring; the newly emerging foliage pokes out tenderly from the rocks, only to be swept away the next night in the coming monsoon. Nothing is supposed to live here, it's punishment for man's arrogance. There is no time to mourn, no time to reflect. The locals always parrot the same three phrases to each other; "We really needed this rain, huh" they'll say to no one in particular. Everyone says this, no one responds. The worst is the haboob. Sweeping in from miles of nothingness, the biggest cloud of dirt you've ever seen consumes the city. It's always the biggest cloud, you can't tell if they've been getting bigger or if you forget the chaos as soon as it ends. You can't see in front of you, your lungs fill with sand as cars line up along the emergency lanes on the highway, waiting for safety. Tonight, the rain will cement the dirt into mud on everything, painting the city with large clay bullet holes and endless tree limbs that tie themselves around your ankles like snakes. You'll figure it out, after all, we really needed this rain, huh.



town. Apparently, this is the big one. The DJ advises hunkering down in the storm shelters and under no circumstances coming out till the 'all clear'. It's about 4 o'clock, which means, like clockwork, your no good, rat bastard husband has just gotten off work and is lying drunk on the couch. At least he's quiet when he's asleep. He's been getting worse. Sure, he's never hit you, but he loves to pick fights when he drinks. Tonight, though, he's passed out in a pile of half empty cans. The siren sounds, blaring throughout the neighborhood. You jump at the noise; you hear the rain starting up outside. Sighing deeply, you go to shake your husband awake. He groans and swats your hand away; you think you heard him call you a bitch, but you can't make out the words. Fine. You head to the cellar, start up the little battery powered radio, and lock the doors. He'll sleep real good tonight. In the morning, your house is gone, foundation jutting from the ground like crooked teeth, you can't help but laugh to yourself as you sift through the empty shell of what was your living room. The radio reports an 'all clear'.

GEMINI

(May 21- June 20)

The paperwork from 'meet the teacher night' sits in the little green folder that was so graciously gifted by the wide-eyed kindergarten teacher. The sky is empty and blue. On the calendar inside, circled furiously in yellow washable marker, is today's date. It stands out among the quirky word art that decorates the schedule. Today, every other parent got to drop off their babies, lunch boxes stuffed with snacks and cute

TAURUS

(April 20- May 20)

The sky is a sickly green today, the radio warns of a tornado. Warnings are rare nowadays. Usually, the whole neighborhood scurries to their porches to watch the storm, arms crossed, making disapproving clicking noises as the storm wreaks havoc across

notes folded neatly atop sandwiches and pudding cups. The empty lunchbox that was picked with such delight sits inside its matching, empty backpack; first and last name scrawled in Sharpie along the leg of the mighty, albeit cartoonish, T-Rex. The house feels too big now. Raindrops sputter out of the clear sky, spitting wimpy little drops that color the pavement in a way that is not significant or meaningful. A bag from the dollar store is slumped on the kitchen table among cards, bouquets, bills and pamphlets. It is full of number two pencils, new washable markers, small, flimsy, red safety scissors and two glue sticks –the purple ones, not the white ones– despite the almost two dollars difference in price. It is so nice to have color in the world. The rain continues, the pavement is washed dark with water, chalk drawings slide into the road leaving a blank slate. The sun shines through the window, illuminating photos and scribbles on the walls. Toys remain strewn about the floors, as if moving them would somehow anger whatever lingered in the home. It becomes increasingly obvious that nothing is lingering. It's a museum to someone no longer here. The rains continue their pathetic dribble, the sky is empty and blue.

CANCER

(June 21- July 22)

The sun has gone up and down around you about three times, at this point. A hedge maze was a stupid idea for a meetup, but it seemed cute in theory. You would have gotten so many cute pictures for your Instagram! You would have thought of so many cute captions, too, like “we had an aMAZE-ing time today!” Your last Hinge date would have found this hilarious. You'd lost your friends about an hour after arriving, though. The green, bushy walls of the maze snag your shirt as you continue to walk through. The pollen is thick, everything is caked in a thick layer of yellow dust. Your sneezes echo. It's hard to stay awake, it's hard to focus. Your nose tickles. When was the last time you'd eaten? You bleed into your shoes, heels rubbed raw from the endless search for

the exit. Your socks are soaked. You lost cell service when you got here. Your stomach growls. Your hands shake. You continue walking; dead end again. Your mouth is dry and you're freezing despite the sun shining overhead. You march bravely forward, back to the same intersection you were just in. Maybe you could use the loose thread from your shirt? It's hard to focus, and if you lose your shirt, you risk freezing at night. You've read about that online, and even if it's not true it beats chewing on the bitter, waxy leaves ripped from the walls of the maze. Water to drink would be even better, your lips crack and bleed as you draw your mouth tightly closed. Your tongue is too big for your mouth, everything is dry. Your head is pounding. Your stomach cramps painfully, like a pulling at your guts. You feel weighed down. Everything hurts, a dull ache pulls you towards the ground. Pollen fills your nose, snot drips down



your face. You're too tired to wipe it away. You slump down alongside the wall, snagging your shirt again. You close your eyes as you imagine how the water would feel in your mouth, cold as it slips between your teeth and down your throat. You long to feel it lap up along the walls of your stomach– it's cold there, too. You picture it painting your insides as it sloshes around inside you, the feeling would be so cathartic. You want to cry, but nothing comes out, just loud wails as your shoulders shake. The sun is directly above you, you know you're wasting valuable travel time, it's too dark to see at night, but your eyelids are too heavy, you let darkness wash over you as you rest. Does it matter if you wake up again?

LEO

(July 23- Aug 22)

On warm summer nights, the air wraps around your naked body, pajamas long ago discarded in a vain attempt to cool down. It flows through your skin and into your organs, seeping through the spaces between your guts and dancing along your bones. The thick air weighs heavy around you, the open window lets more

of it in, it sucks up all the breeze produced by your small, enervated fan. It sinks onto any surface it can, rolling down your pudgy, bare body where it dampens the sheets before sliding onto the floor in a thick heap. You surrender to the air's sticky embrace. It caresses your cheeks, slides slender fingers down your jaw and along the tendons in your neck. You feel it fill up the hollows of your collarbones and the dip where your throat ends. The posters on your wall droop, as if to cover their eyes, offering privacy to you and the humidity. It holds firm on the space behind your knees, the small of your back and the weird little fleshy bits that dip where your leg meets your hip. It is gentle but commanding. It's uncomfortably warm, but the damp is worse. Movement makes it worse. It licks inside your ears- you don't hate it as much as you think you should. It's nice to be held, even if the sensations aren't what you remember. Its full weight presses onto your chest, your breathing isn't labored but it is deep and heavy. It has wrapped itself around you like a thick film. Does it care that your skin is dry or that your legs aren't shaved? It doesn't even seem to notice. It's too hot to sleep, it's too humid to ignore. Hopefully by the time you doze off- around 6am or so- the rain will come, and your lover will leave out the window it came in from. You can wake up to this sickening moldy smell in your hair alone, sheets akimbo and thoroughly dehydrated.

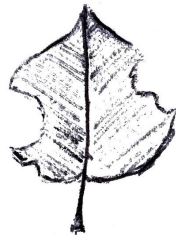
VIRGO

(Aug 23- Sept 22)

Virgos, ruled by Mercury, presiding over communication and intellect, is in an unfortunate situation. Contacts in Maine warn me of a proverbial 'mud season' approaching. Being from Maine, they cannot be taken too seriously, and upon further examination and intense study of the Heavens, I have discovered that there is nothing proverbial about their warnings, in fact, it may have been a curse. Your life is soon to be full of a sickening, gray sledge that coats the roads and sticks to everything. Try as you may, tire chains

are more expensive than anticipated. The slush is everywhere. Your house is ruined, carpets stiff with icy goop tracked in on your worn duck boots. You can't get clean. Bootscrapers, coarse welcome mats, even changing shoes, it does not matter, you're marked eternally. A snowy snail trail drags behind you. It only becomes a real issue when you realize that it's not just your boots. Everywhere you go a haunting reminder of the thawing earth follows. You swear you feel it in your sinuses sometimes, it's cold and chunky, you feel it slide down the back of your throat in big, viscous globs. It makes you gag. Sure, it melts eventually, but you can't stop thinking about it,

your face feels swollen, eyes and cheeks puffy; applying pressure causes the sledge to leak from your eyes, the cold is agonizing, drying out your eyes as the breakup dribbles down your face, again, staining the goddamn carpet. What a wretched place to live.



LIBRA

(Sept 23- Oct 22)

Olympia Springs, Bath County, Kentucky. March 3rd, 1879, approximately 11am. A single lung drops from the sky into the dust below. More fresh meat to follow, raining down from the clear skies above. About an hour of loud wet plopping sounds followed as decently sized chunks of meat rain down upon the town. When the skies cleared, residents brave enough to eat the mystery meat reported it to be deer or lamb. This never happens again. This is all true, by the way. The most commonly believed cause of this is said to be vultures, who will projectile vomit to escape predators, but as many townspeople mentioned, the skies were clear and the meat was fresh and solid, taking on the visual quality of a moderately priced ribeye. I have no cosmic messages for you this month, Libra, but they tell me it is of utmost importance that you have this information going forward.

SCORPIO

(Oct 23- Nov 21)

When was the last time you were in a field, Scorpio? You need to learn to slow down. Imagine a crop, I prefer wheat, alone among the grain. Maybe there is peace. It can be anything, corn, oats, soybeans, barely; whatever it is it must be in a field. What does *your* wheat field look like? What season are we in? Are your crops tall? Does it brush up against your legs, trying to grab onto you for an easy escape? The corn is touching you. Maybe it cuts into your arms, littering you with little paper cuts as you walk through. Is there a crop circle? A scarecrow? A gaggle of teenagers hiding out, drunk off a bottle of Pink Whitney, expertly shoplifted from the gas station down the road? Are you alone here? Do you know it? Does it matter? You've never seen farmers here, it's here one day and gone the next. Wind combs through the crop, maybe it changes color in the sun, as wheat is known to do. There is sudden change all around you, but it feels weird knowing that a lot of it is manual. *Someone* had to harvest it, and you were none the wiser. You're vulnerable here, your back is exposed to the endless sea of foliage. Something is touching you. It's probably corn. You are not afraid. Stand totally still, ignore the sounds of your body, of your breathing and your heart beating, just listen to the wind blow through the crops. Listen to the slow drip of the irrigation ditch a few feet away. Listen to cars zip past you, listen to things run around in the dirt below. Isn't this nice? The corn is touching you again. The sky is big and endless here, the sounds are different and many.



shout. The end is nigh! The illustrious House of Urchin has fallen! O! Tragedy! The great wave crashed into the South wing of the castle, crumbling it into the very sand it was made of. The soldiers clack their claws, attempting to bring silence over the frenzied crowd, but the chaos continues. Legions of sand mites burrow in and out of the castle's crumbling walls, looking for survivors. Priests open their church doors, trying to protect the survivors, their cathedrals flooding with occupying octopi and frightened fish. Diplomats hopelessly search for their traveling parties, who were washed away into the shallow waters during the backwash unbeknownst to their fellow countrymen. Villagers retreat into tidepools, not caring

if they returned to their respective homes, cramming into houses of strangers in a panic. The fear of being in the open is too much to bear. The king sits in his bedchamber, watching the madness unfold from the hole that'd now opened in his wall. He is silent and unmoving, a beacon of stoicism. Seagulls circle overhead, summoned by the chaos. They watch mothers comfort their children and they plot their next meal. Another wave slams into the castle, taking out the watchtowers and transforming the intricate courtyard into nothing more than an indiscriminate lump on the beach. The king falls from his post, sliding onto the ground below, losing a spine in the descent. Lords and Ladies of the court weep as their benevolent ruler falls. The moat floods and the citizens panic, trying to burrow into the sand or escape into the remnants of the once mighty castle. The plastic yellow shovel that once acted as a gate is claimed by the ocean as the tide ebbs. The wooden nobly held up the county's flag topples into the debris below. All hope is lost.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22- Dec 21)

Too cold to keep writing. Fingers hurt. Losing feeling. Figure it out.

CAPRICORN

(Dec 22- Jan 19)

Ten thousand soldiers run wild around the courtyard, the church bells ring frantically and the townspeople

AQUARIUS

(Jan 20- Feb 18)

You're brought to a gurney in the hall, it smells like Cottonelle and floor cleaner. The restraints curl up around your gut, your legs are tied together, they pull

your arms into a passionate embrace. You are splayed out— crucified. It’s disturbingly sterile in the fluorescent white room. You hear the shuffling of feet, witnesses you assume. The door clicks open, in comes two medical staff, blue scrubs interrupting the white walls that house them. You declined last rights, you were never a God-fearing man before, why start now? Silence is so loud in here. They wipe down your arm, little individually wrapped wipes that leave you smelling like chemicals, it’s a symbolic gesture, surely. The IV is pressed into you successfully after many failed attempts, finally settling into your vein among the 12 previous attempted entry points. You know what happens, why are you scared, Aquarius? First they flush you with saline, then a light sedative, then comes the paralyzing agent. More saline. It feels a bit cold going in, you try to shift in your restraints, but your body won’t let you. Now comes the poison. It fills you up, it’s warm in contrast. For the first time in your life, you feel your blood circulating in your body. The heat increases, your flesh feels like it’s bubbling, something under your skin is scratching its way out from the inside, attempting a violent escape. Your light cotton uniform is smothering you; you need it off, now. You try to open your mouth, to move your hand, to let out any sort of sound to signal to the medical staff that something is wrong, but you can only lay there. It becomes a fire, you feel your blood pooling in the tips of your fingers and toes, your body spasms, chest heaving, fighting against the leather straps. It burns, you can’t breathe. The witnesses watch you choke and heave; cool air feels like it turns into steam as you gasp for breath like a fish. Jesus Christ, it’s hot in here. Your veins feel like they’re expanding and contracting inside you, as if trying to milk the poison out of your body. Thrashing involuntarily against your binds, everything blisters and burns. You imagine the outer layer of your organs sliding off, melting away in the heat into the empty spaces in your body. Agony. You writhe for ten minutes. Mercifully, your heart stops;

justice is served.

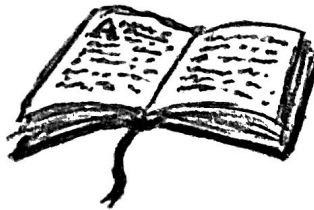
PISCES

(Feb 19- March 20)

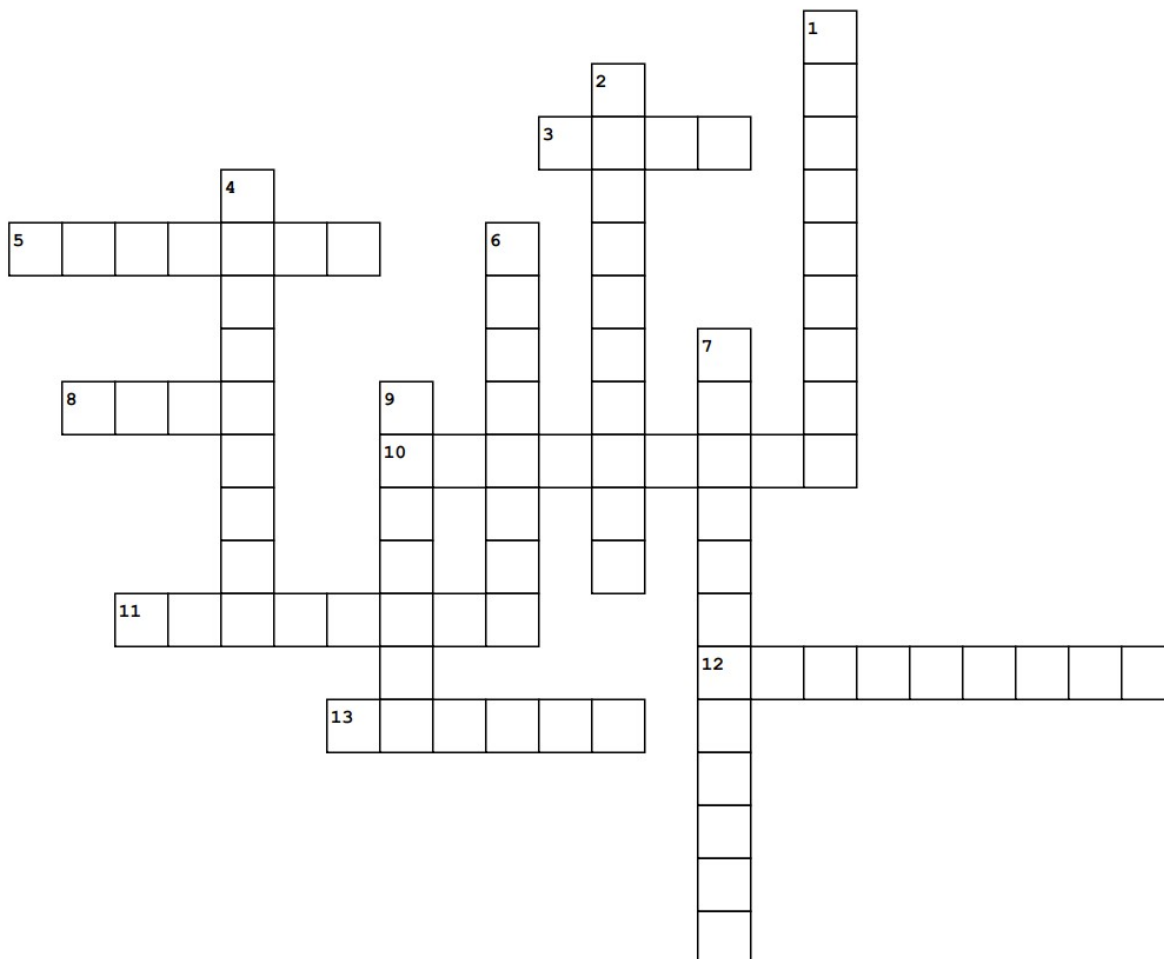
The painful mundanity of a small-town tragedy means nothing to anyone but the people who suffered them. Looking around, your town is full of them, most painted over with some sort of emotionally stunted “landlord special”. The wounds are festering, albeit quietly. The woman who sells you your lottery tickets wanted to be an Olympic gymnast, a long time ago. A bike accident took that from her. She never would have made it, but she was robbed of the privilege of a direct rejection. Her knee aches when the

rain comes around. On the drive home, on a stretch of backroads no one pays attention to, a matted, dirty teddy bear is delicately stacked atop a little wooden cross. It is decorated with little lawn statues that hold now deflated ‘sweet sixteen’ balloons and pink, glitter foam stickers that are peeling off, revealing

the discolored white wood underneath. Faux flowers lay sun bleached under the memorial of a car crash that everyone seemed to forget about a month after it happened. Her mother will never forget, but the memorial is dry rotting on the side of the road. Her name and birthday are washed away in the oncoming storm. A man runs into his high school sweetheart in the Kroger. She waves and asks how he’s been. His answers are brief yet courteous, he’s too distracted trying to look for a wedding ring on her finger, he completely blows any chance of future interaction, she’s reminded of how boring he is. He’ll finish his shopping after they part ways again, he’ll be so distracted he’ll forget the milk and won’t realize it till he’s already halfway home. He still drives the same car they had their first kiss in. He dissociates in his driveway for a while as he watches the windshield wipers shake the raindrops out of view. The rain isn’t sad, but it is cleansing. It’s something about the devil you know, I’m told.



Philosophers



Across

3. mid 20th century, has writings on political parties, Christ, and suffering
5. professor of 4 down only to have his university chair taken by him
8. 18th century economist and essayist, known for his skepticism and naturalism, "friend" of Adam Smith
10. popularized stoicism along with 11 across
11. emperor of Rome around 100 CE, most famous work includes "Meditations"
12. coined the phrase "God is dead"
13. famous for his works on existentialism as well as his plays

Down

1. he thought therefore he was
2. around 500 BC, mostly known for his fragments about fire and cosmology
4. ontologist and phenomenologist of the 20th century with ties to nazism
6. father of neoplatonism
7. mid 20th century, believed that the world was given meaning based off of the words that we choose
9. mid to late 20th century, developed the philosophy of deconstruction, works focusing on linguistics and language



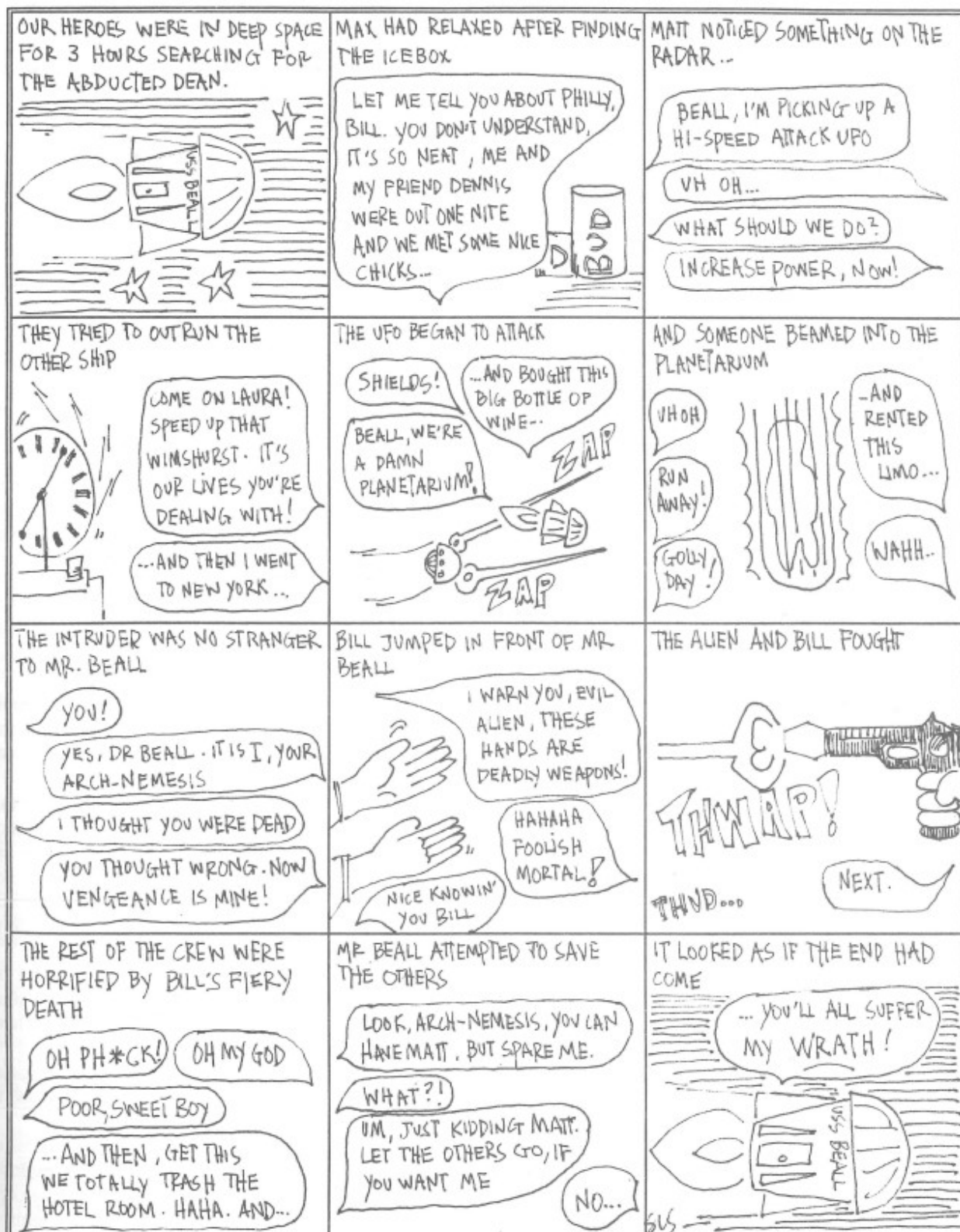
Why I talk to my Uber Driver



Nonchalant Ex-Nun

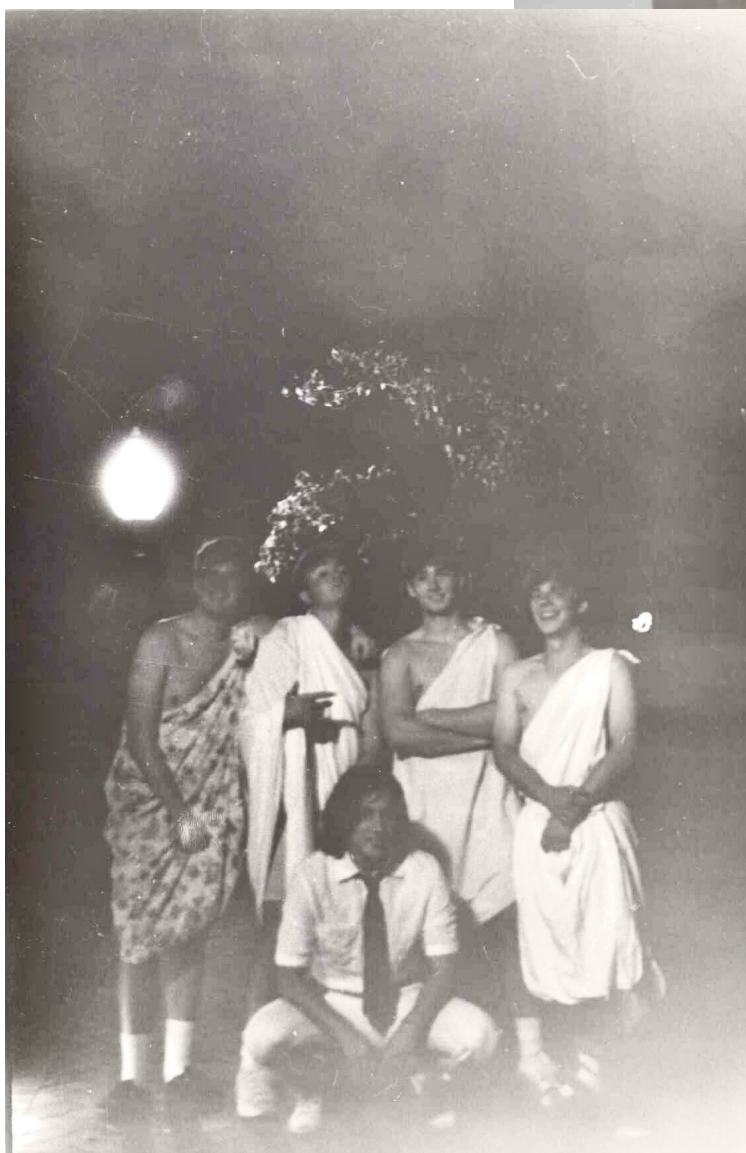
The Mysterious Doktor Sajoco #2

By Sean Stickle



The Mysterious Doctor Sajoco No. 2 by Sean Stickle
Originally published in the Gadfly January, 1995

*Photos from this month on campus,
including the Achilles Rager and
intramural games, taken by Dora
Vecoli*



Your Campus This Week

Friday, September 27:

- ♦ 3:30 pm, Edensword Hall: Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- ♦ 7:30 pm, Great Hall: Friday Night Lecture, "What's Wrong with History?" by Zena Hitz

Saturday, September 28:

- ♦ 2 pm, Bookstore Patio: Meet Financial Expert and Author, Anne Lester.
- ♦ 2 pm, Back Campus: Alumni Soccer Game
- ♦ 4 pm, Bookstore: Reading and Book Signing with Mark Pothier

Sunday, September 29

- ♦ 10 am, Conversation Room: All-Alumni Meeting & Elections

Seminar Readings

	9/26	9/30
Freshmen	Plato: Gorgias, 447A–481B	Plato: Gorgias, 481B–to end
Sophomores	Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, IV–VI	Virgil: Aeneid, I–IV
Juniors	Hobbes: Leviathan, Chapters 12–18	Hobbes: Leviathan, Chapters 19–21, 24–25, 27, 28 (only last paragraph), 29
Seniors	Tocqueville: Democracy in America (selections)	Tocqueville: Democracy in America (selections)

Sexism Survey

Sexism has long been an issue in higher education at large, and necessarily our St. John's College is no exception. Aspects of the classroom appear to lend themselves to equable treatment (e.g. the use of honorifics) but for many students, expectations for unbiased conduct often clash harshly with reality. In the interest of creating a more truly equable experience, we as a polity must publicly examine what feels distinctly unequal. To please an observer interested in examining anecdotal data, submit a roughly paragraph-long response detailing an instance in which you feel you experienced sexism as a Johnnie, either inside or outside of the classroom.



Submitted by Fe Tower

Please scan this QR Code to submit your response

Classifieds

Businesses:

Lawyers in Highest Position

Markby, Markby and Markby will represent impeccably. Write for more information at 104 Grosvenor St.

Finest Sperm Oil

Samuel Enderby and Sons, hunting Leviathan since 1775. Inquire with Capt. Boomer for prices.

Miscellaneous

Wanted

Shoes on Feet

Important Question

Did anyone see Gary the Orca? Was he real? Please find Herschel Reubens and tell him, he wants to know.

Want to leave a classified ad? Write us at office.gadfly@sjc.edu, or drop off your submission at our office in the BBC basement



*St. John's students on State Circle the morning after a party,
date unknown.*

Photographs without a listed source are from the St. John's College Digital Archives. St. John's College owns the rights to these photographs. All illustrations and doodles without a listed source were drawn by Helen Felbek

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

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

Opinions expressed within are the 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.

Submissions sent to the Gadfly should either be in Microsoft Word Document or JPEG format. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

For more information, contact us via email at gadfly.office@sjc.edu.

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