

THE GADFLY

St. John's College
Annapolis, Maryland

A Polity Awakened

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Letter from the Editor

Once more, as predictably and freely as the summer jellyfish, the Johnnies have come marching home. We return to a different campus, with new faces, new buildings, and new thoughts, but somehow, unreasonably, we know it to be a homecoming, a return to a well known place. This Gadfly, hopefully, should be the same: a familiar return to something new. Some things have shifted; you'll notice a much longer Logos section, with dedicated news staff, and the first part of many returning columns, but all with the same kind of intangible, Johnnie spirit. This, dear reader, is only possible with you. Whether you are a GI, tutor or undergrad, your work at the College creates this paper. Please read it, talk about it, pass it on, write in it: these things make the Gadfly able to continue carrying this spirit for years to come. I look forward to seeing you many more times on these pages.

Your companion on our continually new familiar journey,

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

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Board of Visitors and Governors Meeting

Reagan Bottomley, Student Politics Correspondent

This past June, the Board of Visitors and Governors, or the BVG, met on the Santa Fe campus to finish its work for the past academic year. It presented numerous annual reports on the state of both campuses. All-College President Mark Roosevelt's report set the general tone of the meeting, which was his last before official retirement. As such he mainly focused on the future of St. John's, and what the main strategies of the BVG should be over the next several years. He stressed that the board must exercise careful stewardship over the College, as challenges like the nationwide decline in college applications will require a dedicated administration to keep St. John's successful. In line with this, the BVG must place a major emphasis on fundraising, while the College must simultaneously stay lean in its operations and keep all spending as economical as possible. A strong focus must also be kept on student retention, as the administration seeks to understand why students leave and what can be done to keep them at St. John's. With these last reminders Roosevelt officially retired, with Walter Sterling Jr. succeeding him as the new Santa Fe President and Annapolis President Nora Demleitner assuming the role of All-College President.

Sante Fe Dean's Report

The year at Santa Fe "wrapped up very nicely" according to their dean Sarah Davis, despite tensions around student employees attempting to unionize as they seek higher pay from the college. In this past year our sister campus has hosted several successful events, including Earth Day programs, Shakespeare Week, and a student lecture series with nine students presenting papers they had written to the polity. (A note from the writer: perhaps this would be an interesting event for our own SCI to coordinate?)

Annapolis President's Report

The administration in Annapolis has been busy preparing for a number of regulatory changes. The US Department of Education has released a host of new rules for the College to comply with, in addition to a separate 1,577 pages of new Title IX rules. This last includes making all student employees mandatory reporters, which as of this article's writing has already gone into effect.

With the help of generous grants to the College, the Annapolis campus is implementing further programs to aid its students. Most notably, Demleitner said this includes "helping our students figure out how their passions, their skills, and what they're learning at St. John's fit together to get them ready to kind of engage with career services and then to succeed on the outside." This will be realized through Johnnie Career Pathways, a program opening this fall that will allow Johnnies with particular career interests to see how St. John's can support them.

Annapolis Dean

In her report, our dean Susan Paalman was highly appreciative of the board and community, giving special thanks to now-retired Heather Latham for her tireless work on behalf of the college. Ms. Paalman praised the DC's efforts over the academic year, stating that they "reconciled their books with virtue" and noted that in general students are incredibly active on our campus. The athletic program broke attendance records this past year, with never-before-seen numbers of blazer points earned and blazers awarded to students. Outside of campus, St. John's and our neighbors at the Naval Academy have continued to strengthen our ties. The Academy has extended an invitation for Johnnies to join their fellowship preparation program, "an excellent opportunity for students interested in applying for the Rhodes, Mitchell, or other highly competitive scholarships."

Admissions and Visiting

The admissions office has found a significant decrease in international and domestic applications for the fall of 2024. The class of 2028 has reached 130 in Annapolis and the mid 90s in Santa Fe. This marks a decline for Annapolis compared to the class of 2027, and a slight increase for Santa Fe. The new



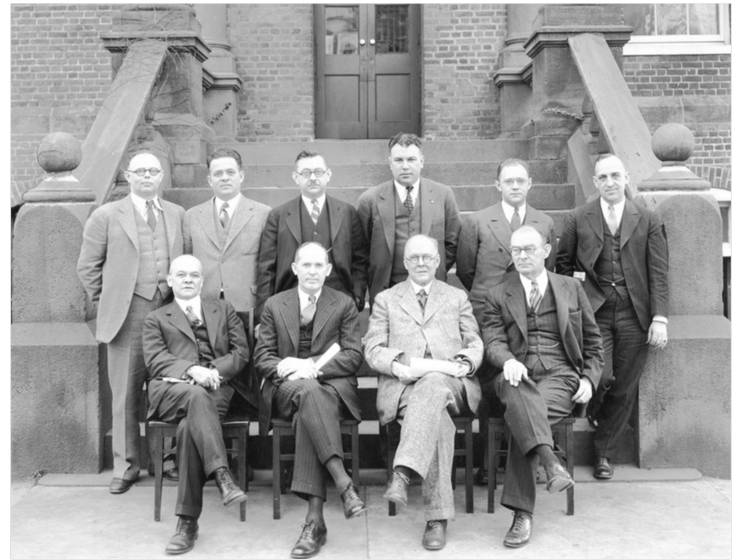
discussion-based application begun this year was used by about 15% of students. These lower numbers are not unusual; college applications are trending downwards across the country, and according to Johanna Wilson, chair of the Admissions Committee, “we are doing better than many of our peers” despite still falling short of our goals. Her report echoed President Roosevelt’s reminder that “if we stay flat in the next ten years in terms of average student revenue and enrollment, we’ll be doing really good work,” or in other words, St. John’s cannot expect to grow for several years. Student retention also continues to be a prominent issue, with the board’s commitment to a 92% retention rate driving questions about how to reach potential Johnnies and how to give them the assistance they need once they arrive. Summer Academy, however, continues to grow, with the largest-ever program being held this past summer.



*Scan this QR code to read the
Charter and Polity of the
College*

Finances and Investment

At the February meeting of the BVG, the Finance Committee tasked the administration with cutting half a million, which they managed to do by this meeting in June. The College’s projected deficit for this year has therefore sunk to between \$5 and \$5.5 million, which bequests will reduce by \$2.5 million. The finance committee stressed that this current fundraising trajectory is not sustainable. Planned gifts and bequests cannot be counted on, and they cannot anticipate increases in tuition revenue. The current endowment stands at about \$270 million, with various gifts set to bring it just over \$350 million. The Financial Committee did not sugarcoat the daunting financial prospects facing the College over the next few years, but their tone was one of cautious optimism. Finance Chair Richard Lincer has strong hopes for the future, stating “We now have a realistic idea of the go-forward challenge, but we’re going to have to work on it.” Similar to the Admissions report, the Finance Committee expects lean but manageable years ahead as the nationwide interest in college degrees begins to dwindle.



*Group Portrait of the St. John's College Board of
Visitors and Governors outside of McDowell Hall, by
Pickering Studio*

Polity Review

The Polity, the main governing document of the College, is due for its quinquennial review and amendment. As such, the Board will vote on Polity amendments in its October meeting. They are confident in their goal of legally sound governing documents that reflect our unique institutions and are looking forward to the amendment meeting. As the committee representative stated, “We may not agree on every matter, but, where we differ, our goal is to do so with full information, deliberate decision making, and mutual respect.” The Gadfly will publish updates on the Polity amendment as soon as the October meeting takes place.

Facilities

With the help of the Pritzker family donations, several improvements have begun on both campuses. The newly christened Edensword Hall is now housing students, although work is still being done on the lower level. The construction is expected to be complete by September 27th, when a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held for both the new bookstore and the Annapolis Cup coffeeshop. In Santa Fe, much work is being done on the Pritzker Student Center along with \$10 million worth of maintenance projects. IT on both campuses is busy installing new tech infrastructure, with improvements such as our new Wi-Fi network continually being added.



Board of Visitors and Governors Meeting in the King William Room, Annapolis, Maryland

Advancement

In the words of the Advancement Committee, there is “good news and not so good news.” The good news is that in total, this year \$56.8 million was raised for the College. However, the lion’s share of this was from non-recurring donations, and \$15.8 million came from fundraising. One important initiative was Mark Roosevelt’s tutor salary fund, which totaled \$8.34 million and still had \$1.89 million to go in order to meet the necessary amount as of this meeting. This fund is dedicated to increasing tutor salaries over the next several years, although additional fundraising or some other means will be necessary to continue that increase in the more distant future. The report closed with a reminder of the College’s \$5 million projected deficit, which must be carefully managed in the upcoming years.

Diversity

This meeting was also notably the last for the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which disbanded this summer. Despite praising the College for its

work in encouraging diversity, the committee spoke only vaguely about its success. The report stated “We should be proud, very proud” of improvements here, and seemed to think the committee was no longer needed as diversity would flourish on its own due to the unspecified increase in representation on both campuses.

Conclusion

All in all, the tone of June’s meeting was optimistic but cautious. Concerns over enrollment and retention are on the minds of every board member, but each report made it clear that St. John’s can expect to succeed with careful planning by the BVG. Several initiatives have already seen good results, such as Roosevelt’s fund to increase tutor pay and the successful renovations on both campuses. The next BVG meeting will bring further updates on these topics as well as amendments to the Polity, and we can expect it here on the Annapolis campus in late October.

Traces of the Great Books in Berlin

By Helen Felbek

Sometimes the best way to reflect on a familiar place is to be physically removed from it. I felt the truth of that this summer, which I spent in Berlin, interning at a German political association for energy efficiency (DENEFF e.V.)—the last place where I expected to encounter the legacy of liberal arts in Europe.

Usually, I do not expect Germans to know about St. John's or even to have heard of Great Books programs. So, you can imagine my surprise when one of the executive directors of the organization, Mr. Henning Ellermann, told me that he went to a program similar to St. John's, called the European College of the Liberal Arts.

Ellermann first came across ECLA during his civil service in 2001 or '02 in a *Die Zeit* article. "While traveling through Germany with a school friend..., I met the people who had come up with the program. They were about to start their first one-year program, the Foundation Year Program. It was only offered once... I thought, you know, that sounds fun. It was definitely appealing because it was clear they would challenge you a little," he said in our interview. He was indeed part of the first cohort of students who completed a one-year program which would later be known as the Academy Year.



ECLA Class of 2008. Photo from the ECLA Website

ECLA, founded in 1999 by a group of scholars and philanthropists around the German Ivy-league educated Stefan Gutzeit, was largely funded by the Christian A. Johnson Endeavour Foundation in New York. Situated in Pankow, a district in former East Berlin, ECLA did not have a traditional campus. Instead, its classrooms and offices were scattered across several former embassies to the GDR. For example, the library was located in the building of the former West German embassy. Students were housed in the former Egyptian and Cuban Embassies. At least initially, classes were held in the locality Buch-Buch, in a building, finished in 1907, which served as a psychiatric clinic, among other things. But the architectural style, reminiscent of East Coast private universities, showed the founders' ambition to create an institution akin to those private universities.

ECLA had a very international student body, with many students hailing from Eastern Europe. So, it is important to note that, while we typically associate the liberal arts with US-American higher education, ECLA was initially a distinctly European project. For example, Jan Werner Müller, a German professor of Political Science at Princeton University, and his wife Erika Kiss were heavily involved with the school, and German foundations like the Robert Bosch Foundation invested initially. Given the rather short history of the school, the founding ambition to create "Harvard in Germany" might have been misplaced. In 2012, ECLA was acquired by Bard College.

"I liked the idea of having something like a mixture of different systems," Ellermann said. "They tried to sell it as this old-school German *Bildung* idea, which then ends up meeting this American system... What was most appealing was that nobody in the world knew what it was going to be like, and that it was going to be something that hadn't been seen before. Coming from sort of provincial western Germany... going to a place where people were saying, 'Let's do this funky thing,' was intriguing." Besides the academic rigor promised by the program, Ellermann was attracted by the idea of the unfinished. After ECLA, he went on to study in Leipzig (former GDR),



Library (former official residence of the Head of the West German mission) (photo: Helen Felbek)

because he “wanted to be in the East where things were still changing, where things are malleable, where you can leave your mark in some way, rather than remaining in the more staid western part of the country.

Berlin is a sprawling city, about nine times larger than Paris, and reaching ECLA in Pankow was a trek involving three different trains, trams or buses. To some ECLA students, the location is so remote that they spoke of “The Island of ECLA” or “The City of ECLA.”¹ For me, the journey also involved three different trains. Most of the historic buildings are located on Platanenstr., a street that is, as the name suggests, lined with old, gnarly plane trees. It is very calm. There are no stores; it is a very typical street in a nice residential neighborhood. Frankly, it’s one of the last places where you’d suspect a college. And most of the buildings — with the exception of the two new additions — are seamlessly integrated into the neighborhood, marked only by red banners celebrating the institution’s 25th anniversary. However, I did not find any public plaques explaining the history of the buildings — neither providing information about their first residents (ambassadors to the GDR) nor their later ones (ECLA students).

When I walked around the streets, I saw small groups of students sitting outside with laptops and books in front of them, apparently discussing their writing. Stephanie Hausotter, head of admission, told me that they are part of a three-week pre-orientation program. While I haven’t spent much time in Santa Fe, the spread-out character of student housing and the many small outdoor seating areas (instead of one central quad) reminded me of the campus structure in Santa Fe.

I wondered whether these students were aware of the place’s history and to what extent ECLA’s aims and curriculum were still present in its teachings. Over the course of its 13-year long history, four different programs of study were developed: the international summer university, the academy year, the project year, and the BA in Value Studies. In a press release, ECLA touted their BA as an innovation, saying it would be the “first of its kind worldwide,” representing “a new European approach to liberal education.”

Unlike the distribution requirement model of liberal arts education at most liberal arts colleges or the structured great books programs we are familiar with, ECLA’s approach sought to create a curriculum that would be relevant beyond academic confines. I am not entirely sure whether the approach was unique per se. But their aim of “educat[ing] students as holistic individuals and engaged citizens, not just future professionals” seems noble.



Teaching building (former residence of the cultural attaché of the United States) (photo: Helen Felbek)

¹ Clara Sigheti, “News Archives 2007, BERLIN, The City of ECLA,” European College of Liberal Arts, June 12, 2007, <http://ecla.peterhajnal.info/news/news-archives-2007/index.html>.

The method of instruction at ECLA consisted of three components: Seminars, Tutorials, and Lectures. Seminars seemingly followed the same concept as seminars at St. John's — the joint exploration of a text. In a tutorial at ECLA, however, the student and teacher discuss, one-to-one, an essay written by the student, much like a writing conference at St. John's. ECLA's program was not all-required, but there also was not much choice. ECLA had a writing-heavy curriculum with students writing one essay per week. Additionally, there were lectures that were usually followed by a discussion.

While ECLA emphasized its uniqueness in the educational landscape in Europe, it is important to keep in mind that it never was the only one of its kind. There was and still is some interest in the liberal arts in Europe: Ellermann remembers that many of the Polish ECLA students had previously studied at a liberal arts program at the University of Warsaw. One should also consider the University College Freiburg and other EPICUR institutions (an alliance of nine European colleges and universities who share the belief in the importance of "Liberal Arts and Sciences Education" and aim to create a four-year "European bachelor of liberal arts and sciences") when asking about the relevance of the liberal arts in Europe.

While I can perhaps speak for most current students in saying that I had never heard of ECLA before this summer, there were apparent connections between ECLA and St. John's.

At least within the academic leadership of ECLA, the intellectual kinship to St. John's was a well-known fact. In the commencement speech of 2008, Thomas Norgaard spoke about Scott Buchanan, suggesting that Buchanan's Great Books approach had been "one of the most interesting educational experiments of the 20th century, and worthy of study."² In addition to the common intellectual connection, St. John's and ECLA shared some faculty members, namely Mr. Michael Weinman (now a professor at Indiana University) and Mr. Boyle, though this is probably not an exhaustive list.



Michael Weinman remembered that "long-time Dean of ECLA/BCB, Catherine Toal, has always kept one of those 'the following teachers will return to St. John's College next year' posters in her office; this despite the fact that she never attended or taught there." He considered this "as a sign of how deeply the underlying projects of the places are connected." Weinman was a tutor at St. John's between 2006 and 2008 and taught some GI classes in the summers of 2009 and 2010. He was at ECLA and later at Bard College Berlin from 2010 to 2020, teaching three of the six core courses. He found the biggest difference, both culturally and in terms of the program, between ECLA and St. John's was "the extent to which at ECLA/BCB the faculty as well as the students tend to feel that they need more choice rather than less, despite the fact that (from an SJC-like perspective) so few of the courses are fully required."

Boyle, who taught at ECLA before coming to St. John's, observed a "deep temperamental affinity" between St. John's and ECLA in that "the faculty at ECLA took this commitment to a curriculum rooted in great books very seriously." But he felt like that at ECLA the faculty "had a somewhat looser, somewhat more open understanding of what might 'count' as a great book and thereby be incorporated very easily into a 'course.'" Both Ellermann and Boyle noticed a strong sense of disciplinary affiliation among the faculty. "Boyle felt that the faculty seemed to think of themselves as 'historians' or 'literary critics' or 'classicists.'" "By contrast, most tutors at St John's maintain only a very attenuated connection to the disciplines in which they were trained." Ellermann remembered that there "were some major clashes in the faculty, some of it the unusual birth pangs of a new institution, especially between the historians and others for whom context is key, and the dean, who had a comparative literature background and in their eyes sort of flitted between texts and ideas." Ellerman remembered that some more experienced students and faculty needed to "unlearn the ways of the university," or what they assumed education should look and be like. He felt that it was an advantage to just be curious and "unafraid to be a dilettante because I didn't know what I didn't know."

2 Livia Marinescu, Samantha Williams, "News Archives 2008, Graduation of the class of 2008," European College of Liberal Arts, August 7, 2008, <http://ecla.peterhajnal.info/news/news-archives-2008/index.html>.



At St. John's, we engage deeply with the Great Books, often shielded from the immediacy of current events to preserve the purity of academic discourse. While St. John's has Friday Night Lectures as an opportunity to engage with outside scholars, I view our program as attempting quite deliberately to be removed from current affairs as a way to protect academic discourse in seminar from potential polarization that can come with politization. ECLA did not seem to share that fear, seemingly at ease with incorporating current affairs into their college with less of a concern for detrimental effects. Each year all students were required to partake in a special course called "State of the World Week." During this week topics such as "What Shall We Eat?" (2011), "The Politics of Cultural Ownership" (2009), "Water" (2008) or "Social Entrepreneurship" (2007) were discussed. This award-winning pedagogic concept had at its core the assumption that "the voices of thoughtful experience will enrich theoretical discussions" so "that theory may in turn inform practice."

In a student article, Clara Sigheti remarked about the impact of the "State of the World Week" on the students' learning. She noticed that the course gave students a chance to "reflect on the role liberal arts can play in confronting social realities." She argued that the experience helped her and her peers to recognize the limitations of government and non-government action while realizing the power of personal involvement and generosity. She views theoretical understanding of the systems underlying a social problem as the first step to resolving it: "the next step is leaving theory and entering praxis."³

3 Clara Sigheti, "News Archives 2007, STATE OF THE WORLD WEEK SUMMARY," European College of Liberal Arts, May 17, 2007, <http://ecla.peterhajnal.info/news/news-archives-2007/index.html>.

This willingness to incorporate current affairs, was not limited to one week of the year. It seemed to have been embraced by the faculty. For example, in 2007, following the initiative of a tutor, ECLA hosted the ECLA-Oxford Conference on Climate Change, Energy and Security. The topics of the conference corresponded with the themes covered by the elective course "Global Issues," designed as a survey of the most pressing challenges to humanity.

But whatever ECLA was like, it is no more. In 2012, ECLA was acquired by Bard College, carrying on the torch of liberal arts in Berlin in a different form. For his part, Ellerman says he sees the Program "as one of the most intense experiences" of his life. His best friend is his roommate at ECLA. "At least I, and the people I'm in touch with, still get each other, even if I haven't seen some of them in 10 years. I feel like we all haven't aged at all, even if outwardly we have, but I still see them as if they were 20. You get to know people really well... But we don't necessarily have an emotional connection to the institution as it is now. I've driven past it and I see that my dorm is still standing, but the other dorm was torn down to build a new building. ... that's just gone. It's obviously not what the founders envisioned it would be, but I assume it was probably a financial decision to look into how to make this viable," he said. But even though ECLA does not exist in its original form anymore, he would encourage people to seek an education similar to the one it provided. He says, "Would I recommend anyone doing something crazy like that [weird first year] again? Yes. But also, if you took it from a more established institution, would I recommend doing this type of intellectual boot camp? Yes."

Special thanks to Mr. David Kretz, who helped provide access to the old ECLA website which is no longer searchable via common search engines.



*Main Building
(Platanenstr. 24,
former
ambassadorial
residence of the
Kingdom of
Morocco) (photo:
Helen Felbek)*

Goodbye Ms. Munsey

By Tamar Pinsky

If you are a freshman, then you might not know Ms. Rachelle Munsey, who has left the college after working here for eight years. As the Community Facilitator for Student Activities and Events, she worked with administrative staff and students to facilitate events big and small, such as After Dark Donuts, Friday Fare, Collegium, Writing Lounges, and many more. She also supported student organizations and ran the off-campus trips. Helping her in all her work were the group of student aides fondly known as “Munsey’s Minions.” The Minions remain at St. John’s – and technically, Munsey has not fully gone yet.

Munsey has moved back to Sacramento, which according to student aide Nella Carlini, is “tragic.” Not only has she left St. John’s, but she still needs to continue working for the school remotely until her replacement is hired. “Even when she isn’t our boss,” student aide Gelila Kebede says, “Ms. Munsey is a great boss.”

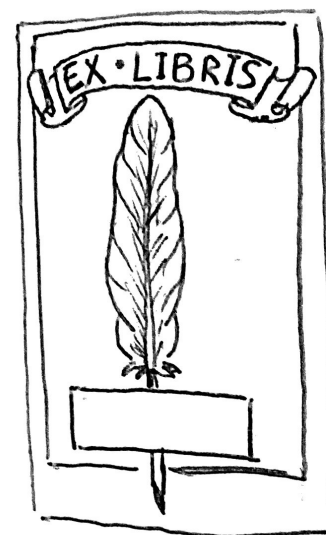
Munsey is grateful though that soon she will be able to “wear fewer hats.” Her many jobs have included teaching classics, wedding coordinating, and writing – in fact, the second book she coauthored has just been published; it is called *The Small Group Initiative: Facilitate Productive Communication & Sustain Lasting Culture Change Across Institutions*. But for now, she will focus on editing work and teaching her four-year-old, Ariadne.

As a Johnny herself, she enjoyed connecting with the diverse student body at St. John’s, and aiding Johnnies through the ups and downs. As a coordinator, her favorite event was the Club Gala – which she created two years ago to address the need for appreciating archons. As part of her legacy, the Club Gala reflects the intimate way in which she knows St. John’s; its design being “intensely referential to life within the Johnnie bubble... unapologetically nerdy and glamorous.”

To all Johnnies, glamorous and nerdy, Ms. Munsey extends these parting words: The individuals I most highly esteem exhibit a breath-taking sort of humility, so that will be my parting wish: “May you draw

steady confidence, rich wisdom, and genuine compassion from a deep wellspring of humility in your inmost being; furthermore, let that humility fuel your capacity to be captivated by wonder in the texts, the world around you, and the person across the seminar table.”

And to her Minions, who are “Majestic, Magical, Meticulous, Magnanimous, Masterful and Macho:” Munsey “will fight anyone who says they had finer or more hard working student aide teams than I during my years as a CF - it was such a joy to lead you and see you create and laugh and champion each other and rise to every insane challenge thrown your way with unparalleled grace and determination. May the rest of your time at the college be marked with new depths of flourishing and peace.” And for the new coordinator, whose role will change significantly, Munsey would like to say that “the polity is very lucky to have you - welcome and my best wishes for your time at the college! P.S. In case of an apocalypse, MEL 126 has everything you need to survive, just ask Mr. Kebede.” Ms. Munsey, what beautiful words. You will be sorely missed.



What's Your Major?

By Sadie Lewin, Student Life Correspondent

You just had a visceral reaction to that question, didn't you? The academic program seems to be the most obvious connection between fellow Johnnies. Every one of us panics and stumbles when some well-meaning person outside of the Johnnie bubble asks what our major is. Because how do you even start? How does one begin to describe the nature of being a part of the community at St. John's? The program is contrarian enough, and then you throw in the rich history, traditions, and campus culture. There truly is something unique about being able to call yourself a Johnnie.

And, with a new year starting, a whole new group of students get the chance to experience this place as so few do: as a member, or an insider. Convocation was, as usual, a beautiful ceremony. It's so interesting to watch the freshman seated at the front of the FSK auditorium, an anxious sea of black robes. They were excited and apprehensive as they walked across the stage to shake the president's hand and receive their copy of Euclid's Elements. Some seemed nervous (although that could have been stage fright). As President Demleitner said in her speech, this is a huge transition and the start of a new chapter of their lives. They seemed to be holding their breath, waiting for their career at St. John's to begin. Little do they know that in a year from now, many of them will come back to campus and breathe a sigh of relief: "I'm home."

There is so much more to what makes St. John's, St. John's than the academic program. So, the Convocation Waltz served as a social and communal Convocation for the new freshmen. A half hour before the party began, beloved seniors Rachel Hauben and Peter Quinn gathered a huge group of freshmen in the quad and taught them basic swing dance steps and outside turns. It was fun to look out



A proper Johnnie; or what recent Freshmen may hope to become. Photo by Dora Vecoli

into the crowd and wonder: which of these students will fully invest in Waltz and become instructors? Who will become intramural captains in a couple years? Who will audition for KWP shows? In the waltz itself, freshmen and returning upperclassmen danced the night away. McDowell emanates joy, laughter, music and community whenever there is a waltz going on. The dance floor was packed, with people spilling out the front steps into the lawn, and the snack trays became bare within the first thirty minutes.

The current freshmen are just beginning the transition from fly-on-the-wall to member of this little community we call St. John's College. Throughout this year, they will join clubs, figure out how to have a successful seminar, sing *Sicut Cervus* about a million times, and learn years' worth of Johnnie lore from the history of the college and stories passed down from upperclassmen. While many Johnnies enjoy their lives outside of school, St. John's offers a community of like-minded people who understand each other in a way that simply can't be found in the real world. So, what's your major? There will never be an answer sufficient to cover the experience we live as Johnnies.

Approaching Art Away from Annapolis

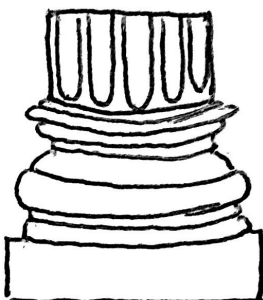
By Natalie Goldman, Art Correspondent



Summer can be a daunting time for any college student. How best to spend the abundance of time seemed to be the question at the forefront of everyone's mind. This question was magnified for St. John's artists. On the

one hand, the summer months might be perfect for jumping into projects that would be too time-consuming to execute during the school year. But, on the other, leaving campus means leaving behind a like-minded community and resources that might be hard to find elsewhere. How do Johnnies feel about creating art in a vacuum? Is solitude worth the gift of extra time?

I talked to sophomores Liza Love and Kat Goodrum to get a sense of how they used their summers to the fullest. Ms. Goodrum is a film photographer and drummer, Ms. Love is an oil painter, and both create drawings and collages. When I asked whether the time they spent making art increased or decreased when the summer started, Ms. Love told me it increased. Over the summer, she spent as much time painting as possible. "If I don't have work or anywhere else to be, I oil paint as much as I can



squeeze in a day, it's my favorite," she said. "I'll spend up to 14 hours in the studio at a time. Basically, til I feel like I'm rotting. Once I'm clammy and my eyes are sore I know it's time to pack it up." She also found her interest in collage heightened and

worked it into her family's routine. "My grandma has this old coal bucket filled with magazines in our living room. Every night when I come home from work I flip through and make clippings while we watch crap TV." She predicts, however, that she won't be able to spend as much time with her art this year, as the artistic process can be isolating, and she wants to be as involved in the St. John's community as possible.

Alternatively, Ms. Goodrum said that the time she spent on art went down during the summer. "Because my art form is film photography, my routine changed drastically over summer break, since I didn't have access to a darkroom. I still shot film, but significantly less. I think not being able to print my photos really affected my process, because having that control and creative expression is really something you can't replicate." Now that we're all back on campus, Ms. Goodrum is looking forward to getting back in the darkroom. Last year, she spent several hours a week developing and printing photos and expects to do the same this year. In the darkroom's absence, though, she did surprise herself with a silver lining. "I spent more time drawing than I typically would," she said. "I think it's such an accessible art form that it makes sense. It also feels like a summer activity, because it's so adaptable to what's most convenient at the moment."

Both artists agree that there are certain things you can do on campus that you just can't do anywhere else. Having a community of artists at your disposal is invaluable, even if it means compromising your creative process slightly to take advantage of it. Because there are so many art-related clubs and activities that exist at St. John's, it's tempting to drop everything and try something new. This year is a chance to give in to the temptation.

Going Clubbing

By Vivian Miyakawa, Club Correspondent

Every year, school clubs gather on the quad as freshmen wander around them, picking which groups they'll end up procrastinating homework for. Club archons sit behind folding tables, calling any unsuspecting passerby to come over and listen to them rave about the perks of joining the BEST CLUB EVER.

This year's club fair was met with just as much enthusiasm as in past years. Between the jokes and friendly rivalries, everyone was genuinely excited about sharing their passions with a new group of Johnnies. Despite the general excitement and high spirits, the club fair seemed haphazard and disorganized. Every club had to share a table due to lack of space, but some of the larger clubs objected to sharing with the smaller ones, needing more room to set up. As an archon of Spanish Club myself, I was left floundering for space until Purls of Wisdom so kindly invited us to share a table with them. Poster making materials were few and far between, and clubs were left scrambling for markers and paper. It did work out in the end, with plenty of shenanigans, as always. The Board Game Club vice archon only found out they were in a leadership position halfway through the fair, there was a healthy amount of bribery, and Bowling Club promised that the 200th person to sign up for the club would get to throw a bowling ball at the archon's head. The event had a great turnout, and the class of 2028 seemed genuinely interested in getting involved around campus. This year's club fair was a win for everyone, except, of course, the people pleasers. As one myself, I'd like to offer my condolences and best wishes. Good luck with your inboxes this year!



Croquet Imperial Wicket Angus Preston at the club fair. (Photo: Dora Vecoli)



Sailing team members at the club fair (Photo: Dora Vecoli)

Bug Bulletin:

Clogmia albipunctata: Drain Fly

By Louis Rosenberg

Author's note: I had originally intended to write on this species last year, following an apparent sighting in one of the dorm buildings. When I reached out to one of the building's residents for comment, they rather rudely told me to not write on the creatures at all, and thus I did not end up submitting an article at that time. However, as the self-appointed Campus Creepy-Crawly Correspondent, I felt then and feel now that the polity deserves to be aware of the small creatures that surround us in our day-to-day lives. When I saw the *C. albipunctata* specimens described in this article myself in the bathroom under McDowell I decided that I would finally complete and publish the article. I want to be clear that nuisance insects impact everyone at the college — as evidenced by the reappearance of the drain flies — and around the world, but this is no cause for judgement. Many entomologists actively study pest control due to the pervasiveness of infestations and the hardiness of the insect colonies. Please know that when I write about insects like these, I try to do it with utmost respect for both the people impacted and the bugs themselves. Even creatures that are bothersome to us can provide fascinating insights into the animal kingdom. In my articles I strive to raise awareness of that while still acknowledging the negative impacts the insects may have on the humans around them.

I spent the weekend before school started in Annapolis trying to finish "War and Peace." Every so often, I would move locations to help focus and eventually ended up in the McDowell Coffee Shop.

I took another break to get a drink of water and go to the bathroom, and I found that the toilets had an interesting surprise, something far more exciting and less disgusting than what you normally see in them:



Photo taken by author

an adult drain fly was lurking in the bowl, just above the water line! There was no one else in the bathroom, so I decided to peer into the other stalls. One had a drain fly on the door, and the other seemed to be insect-free. Like any good entomologist, I took some pictures to document.

The insects appeared to be adult specimens of *C. albipunctata*, a species belonging to the subfamily Psychodinae, which are collectively known as drain flies due to their propensity for living near water sources that contain decaying organic matter. *C. albipunctata* itself is commonly known as the bathroom moth fly, the bathroom moth midge, or simply the drain fly. The "moth" part of the common name stems from the appearance of their wings — the wings are large, positioned like a flat triangle over the body, and fuzzy (especially around the margins). This makes the animals, while taxonomically classified as true flies, resemble small moths. *C. albipunctata* is also known for having white antennae and white spots around the wing margins; these spots are the namesake of its species name, which means "white-dotted." They can fly, but do so poorly, and thus they are known for taking short, hopping flights.

C. albipunctata is very common in warmer regions, and it can feed on a wide assortment of organic matter. While not cold hardy, it can be found in colder regions where larvae may find warm shelter during the winter, and thus its range has expanded from the tropics to around the world. Drain fly infestations often start when water is left to stand for more than a week, making clogged pipes or infrequently used toilets (like those in the coffee shop over the summer) a prime breeding ground. Larvae are rarely seen, as they spend most of their time deeper in the pipes, but they may surface if a drain becomes too backed up. They are worm-like in appearance, usually gray or brown in color, and they have a breathing tube at one end of their body, which enables them to submerge most of their body for long periods of time.

While larvae eat refuse material from the drains in which they dwell, adults simply consume flower nectar and water; drain flies are harmless to humans and are not known to be common disease vectors. Adults live for just a couple weeks, and it takes between a week and a month (depending on environmental conditions) for eggs to mature into adults. When in outdoor habitats, drain flies are usually beneficial to other species in the ecosystem — they cleanse decomposing matter from their home but are themselves edible, with the adults being widely consumed by a variety of terrestrial animals. The earlier life stages are also often consumed by aquatic creatures.

Personally, while I do appreciate the cleaning capacities of these little guys, when the excitement of seeing one myself wore off, I decided that sitting on the floor of a public bathroom and stick my phone in the toilet bowl for pictures was not particularly hygienic. I went home to shower and wipe down my phone with rubbing alcohol. And eventually I went back to my book.

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The Tanglefoot Club

MOTTO

There Ain't No Flies On Us

COLORS

Yellow and Gold

FLOWER

Sunflower

Yell

There ain't no flies on us

There ain't no flies on us

There may be flies on some of you guys

But there ain't no flies on us.

An anti-fly club found in the 1923 yearbook, featuring officers with titles like “Most Excellent Executioner of the Elusive insect,” “Final Finisher of the Flimsy Fly,” or “Persistent Persecutor of the Pesky Pest.”

Our Most Difficult Delight

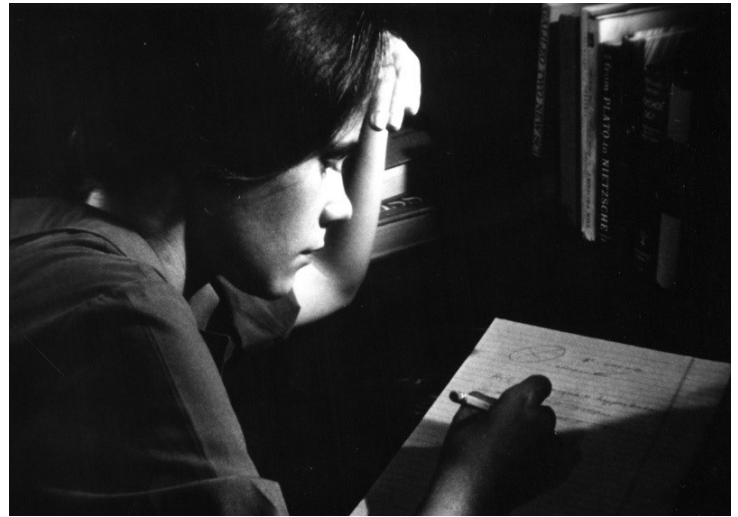
Writing, AI, and the Difficulty of Beauty

By Robert Abbott

For the past two years, I have written an essay for the Gadfly directed primarily at the freshmen joining the polity. This year I offer a shorter reflection and perhaps there will be more as the year goes on.

One of the first Greek sentences you read in the Freshman Language Tutorial is: *χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ*. “Beautiful things are difficult.” But why should this be so? Why are beautiful things—noble actions, great achievements, lovely works—inherently difficult? If you are reluctant to agree with this statement, remember that the word *χαλεπὰ* does not necessarily mean “painful, anxiety-inducing, and debilitating.” It is true, certain difficult things are painful, either in their preparation or performance e.g., running a race, dancing in the ballet, or building a house. But when a capacity is being exercised to its utmost, even when the most difficult work is being done, often a kind of delight appears alongside the effort. And it is a special feature of the intellect that when it is most at work, when it is doing what it is meant to do, it enjoys itself. Leisured intellectual activity, of the sort you are invited to undertake here at the college, is difficult, but it should not be, in itself, painful. You should learn to distinguish exhilarating exertion and worthwhile sacrifice from misapplied effort and unnecessary anxiety. If the latter impedes you, do not indulge, but remedy them by changing what you are doing or seeking assistance. For an anatomy of the inherent difficulties found in the scholarly life and the trials you are likely to face in your pursuit of it, I recommend Ms. Brann’s lecture, *The Student’s Problem*, available in the library.

But we still have not answered the question. Why should the beautiful things also be difficult? What does it mean for something to be difficult? I am studying Japanese—by all accounts a difficult language for someone my age to learn—so I have a



Student writing, between 1950 and 1960

good example to hand. (You too are probably studying a difficult language.)

Last week I was in a hurry to reply to a text, and to make sure I had the right words, I used an online translator. I could read the artificially generated response well enough to know it was more correct than my own attempt had been. I marveled at the ease with which my phone had produced the intended Japanese expression, and later in the day, I felt relieved I had responded as quickly as I had. But my self-congratulation was half-hearted. I was pretending I had accomplished something because I modified the translation, but really I had only been witness to its appearance. I had done no real work. I had not spoken the words.

One of the things happening in the world right now is that the inventors of artificial intelligence are marveling at their own creation—a mechanism that produces, often unaccountably to them, a stream of words. I find this embarrassing, on the one hand, and appalling, on the other. Speaking is our most essential activity. Consult Genesis, Aristotle, and the



St. John's President Henry Barnard (1811-1900)

Gospel of John: it is the word that makes us human. The origins of language are buried so deep within us it must be the only artifact we cannot be entirely sure is an artifact. If it is a technology, it is the most complicated one we have at our disposal, but surprisingly—and here is the source of my vicarious embarrassment—it is also the most common. Adults already teach children to speak. It has happened billions of times, all over the world. But because we have trained an artificial mechanism to produce speech like ours, we marvel at it, as at an idol.

The appalling part is that some people are pleased to

have made a machine to replace the very activity that makes us human. Why would anyone be happy to abandon a gift that made them what they were? We hide the fact that this is what we are doing by saying that, as with any other technology, we will use it to do only the unpleasant or difficult tasks that we cannot or do not want to do. One name for the outsourcing of one's essence is alienation, another, bondage.

And now you see why I am asking you to think about what makes something difficult, and to be ready to take on difficult tasks. To speak and to write beautifully is difficult. To be yourself is sometimes difficult; the difficulty is to do something yourself rather than to make someone else do it for you. Speaking and writing are so essential to who you are, that you should disdainfully refuse to hand over the chance to speak or to write in even the smallest task. Rejoice in your grocery list. Politely refuse the suggested expressions of the operating system trying to operate you. Appreciate the extraordinary opportunity it is to write an essay—to organize a world of words and ideas. You may thereby produce or perceive something truly difficult and beautiful yourself.

That might sound daunting, especially when you are facing a blank page. It is tempting to let someone or something else do the work, but that kind of false assistance leaves you weaker and worse off than before. There are many people here willing and able to set you going—your tutors and the writing assistants among them—but they will leave you to make your own way and to find your own words, however preliminary, tentative, or homespun. You will soon discover that the written and the spoken word are honored guests here at the college, in whatever rough and ready disguise they might first appear. We give them a place by the fire and our rapt attention, as if they were Athena herself, waiting for the right moment to take flight and reveal what they truly are.

Sicut Cervus: An Analysis

By Tarik Mahmud

Many of us have heard *Sicut Cervus* so many times that we do not often think about its musical beauty. Our deep emotional attachment to it has taken hold of us so strongly that a single feeble A flat sends jolts down many of our spines, triggering some kind of instantaneous neurological reaction. And while it is clear to me that it is a very beautiful motet, when I sing it week after week, I sometimes find myself losing track of its beauty as a composition—which is inevitable for any so often repeated practice. Wherefore I would like to engage in an examination of Palestrina’s *Sicut Cervus* in this article, as complete as I can bear to make it. I will not be going into its sequel *Sitivit anima mea*, both for brevity’s sake and due to the fact that I am not as familiar with *Sitivit* as with *Sicut*. I would also like to forewarn that if I speak of specific pitches, like F or C or B $\flat$, I refer to the pitches as originally written. Our Polity sings *Sicut* transposed up a minor third in pitch in order to accommodate contraltos; but the original key is F, so this is how I will refer to the pitches. With that being said, I will try to avoid this if I can.

We begin this motet with a single sustained F (or A flat) in the tenor. The melody which the tenor, the leading voice, sings is a relatively static one to start with—one whole measure¹ and a half of the tonic, a little trip on G, then back to the tonic. Only after this do we get a leap to the dominant and a little more flourishing in the melody. This is not a unique formula for the starting melody of a polyphonic motet in this style; in contrast to the more exaggerated subjects of, say, baroque fugues, the starting points of imitation in these compositions ease us gradually into the polyphonic texture.

I called the tenor the ‘leading’ voice. In imitative counterpoint, this refers to the voice which begins the melody. Most often in Renaissance polyphony, this is



the tenor. The alto here is the first following voice (which term refers to the voices that follow the lead) and enters on the fifth (as is usual in imitation). Normally, the imitation of melodies is strict, at least for the first couple bars or so, and especially at the beginning of a motet—but Palestrina breaks that convention in having the alto leap down a third rather than a fourth (like the tenor), and from thence the alto goes off into free counterpoint². The reason for this is to accommodate the entering soprano voice. The soprano enters half a measure earlier in relation to the alto than the alto did in relation to the tenor,

¹ For the sake of convenience I will be speaking of ‘measures’ in this article. In Palestrina’s day, barlines were not used in the notation of vocal music, and any meter was not explicitly marked. This meter did in fact exist, and there are clear upbeats and downbeats—but these upbeats and downbeats were not tallied up like how we do nowadays, with our neatly divided and numbered measures. The only indication of rhythm in *Sicut* as originally written is the sign C, placed at the beginning. This is a mensuration sign indicating ‘tempus imperfectum cum prolatione minore’, that is to say, that the breve (double whole note) consists of two semibreves (whole notes) (tempus imperfectum), and that a semibreve consists of two minims (half notes) (prolatio minor). This is part of an ancient system for indicating the relative lengths of notes and defining meter: having once been much more complex, by the time of *Sicut* it was mostly used to indicate duple vs. triple meter. This C symbol appears to be the origin of the modern symbol for ‘common time’.

² ‘Free counterpoint’ referring to any counterpoint that does not follow a strict rule or ‘canon’.



Douglas Allanbrook seated at the piano during music tutorial on suspension, between 1952-1959

providing an exciting little flash of light to the growing music.

he bass enters in, as is most satisfying for a bass entrance, on a cadence. Specifically, we expect the tenor to drop a fifth from the dominant to the tonic in order to fill the role of the lowest voice at a cadence³, but instead, the bass enters on the tonic, allowing the tenor the opportunity to fill out the third of the chord. Because the bass enters where the tenor was expected to go, the transition is utterly seamless, and this seamlessness is why the bass does not enter on the dominant.

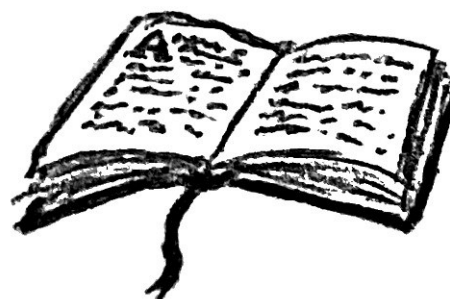
During this expository section, we get a beautiful little flourish from the alto, followed by an actual full imitation (at the octave to the tenor's). At this point there is a notorious voice crossing between the alto and the tenor, which, I believe, has sometimes led altos to accidentally sing the tenor melody briefly. These flourishes are particularly characteristic of this introductory section, their lengthy watery melismatic meandering around like the water-brooks themselves.

In measure 17, we get our first full cadence with all four voices, followed by a little series of parallel thirds in the upper two voices. I have never seen this series— which is a refreshing start after a cadence,

builds up to a large climax two measures later, and involves some quite charming parallel thirds—fail to fill sopranos and altos with delight. This climax which I mentioned occurs in the second half of measure 20, after a brilliant little diminution in the soprano; here all four voices come together for a big subdominant chord held for two beats—the only place in the motet where all four voices are static for such a long time (except, of course, the very end). This climax is followed by a sort of deceptive cadence⁴, though not a very strong one on account of the soprano's suspension.

3 This 'role of the lowest voice at a cadence' consists in a leap from the dominant (scale degree 5) to the tonic (scale degree 1); which can be either upwards or downwards. It is usually performed by the bass, but in upper voice textures, whatever the lowest voice is will do this.

4 Which, by the way, almost includes a dominant seventh, though the tritone (between the alto and tenor) does not resolve as one would expect from a true V⁷ chord, both voices moving in parallel fourths, which is not too unusual for the time. There is a tritone at measure 27, however, that does resolve this way: but it is not a full cadence there. I could imagine a particularly licentious editor adding an editorial accidental to the tenor's offending note, thus removing the tritone altogether: such accidentals were sometimes implied by the composer without being explicitly written. If, in a modern edition, you see accidentals placed above notes instead of next to them, that indicates that the accidental was added by the editor, and is not present in the original source. I have not seen any editions of *Sicut* with this edit, however, and this tritone is certainly brief enough that it is not necessary to remove it, and a good editor probably wants to avoid unnecessary edits. Interestingly, though, the tritone in measure 27 is a result of one of these editorial accidentals in the tenor.



The “ita” section begins with a light cadence, omitting the bass on the ultima, and a most memorable phrase from the alto (can you guess what my favorite part is?). This is followed by a new point of imitation, beginning in the bass this time. In measure 27 we get a wonderful tritone resolution, though it falls short of being a complete dominant seventh chord, instead being a simple diminished chord⁵. The soprano and bass sing in parallel tenths for a measure, which, I am somewhat embarrassed to say, I had not previously realized. I cannot quite discern the intention of this series of parallels; both the previous one and the next are part of a large build-up, but this one is decidedly in a very mellow section. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it sounds somehow excellently placed—perhaps it attains this by being a playful little moment of camaraderie between the two voices.

The subject of imitation becomes familiar to the listener, most notably through the bass’s repetition of

it on the tonic. Amidst the interweaving polyphonic texture, this singular voice is not altogether too noticeable, but it eases its way into the listener enough for it to become surprising when it changes.

In measure 37, the tenor begins its imitation on the same note on which the bass has been doing so, pretending, as it were, to be a bass—but the bass then enters a fifth lower, bringing a sudden and unexpected warmth with another subdominant chord. This is followed by the first instance of the “anima mea” melody, in the soprano, then in the alto at the lower fourth one measure later. This occurs simultaneously with a splendid upwards series of parallel thirds between the bass and tenor; all this coming together to make, in my opinion, the most sublime moment of the whole motet; and I trust that others are at least subconsciously of the same opinion, because whenever we have sung this, there is a great crescendo from every corner of every voice.

5 I would like to elaborate on this interesting dissonance further. It is not very thoroughly prepared or resolved, by usual sixteenth century standards. Here is how the dissonance is achieved and how it is resolved. We start with a D minor sixth chord on the third beat of measure 26: F in the bass, D in the tenor, F in the soprano. Bass and tenor move in parallel sixths so that the bass has a passing E in relation to the soprano; the tenor has a fourth with the soprano. The bass moves to a D to resolve the dissonance with the soprano, but this makes it dissonant with the C in the tenor: so the bass moves down again, to a C in octave with the tenor. But this is once again dissonant with the soprano (who holds an F this entire time), so it is treated as a neighbor tone and ascends back up to a D. But this is once again dissonant with the tenor, so the tenor’s C is treated as a suspension in relation to the bass’s D, and resolves to a B; in all editions it is a B flat rather than a B sharp (mi rather than fa), and this is what creates the tritone with the F fa in the soprano. In the editions of the Freshman and Sophomore music manuals, this is written as a normal accidental, but it is an editorial one, and not in the original score (which can be accessed here: <http://tiny.cc/GadflySicut>). I suppose the reason for adding this accidental is that the editors noticed that this is a cadence on C, and figured that the tenor note needed to be raised in order to make a major sixth with the bass, something which is generally

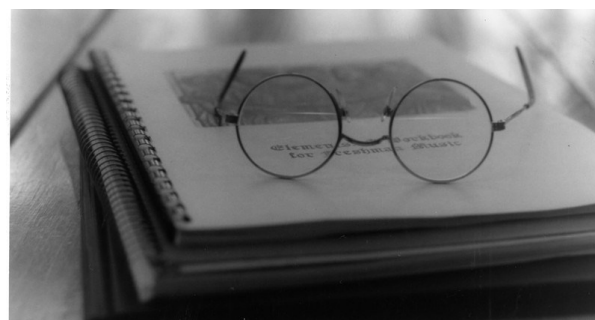
required in cadences (cf. Zarlino’s *Istitutioni Harmoniche*, III.iii): even though it makes a dissonance with the soprano; for this reason Zarlino advises against such accidentals, as they lead “to countless errors as well as offense to the ear” (ibid. III.xlv). This dissonance could theoretically be justified as a neighbor tone, but this would be to ignore the fact that it doesn’t sound remotely like one. The bass and soprano resolve in contrary motion. The reason I’ve gone over each of the parts in detail is to show the general attitude of Renaissance voice leading. I have started and ended this analysis by naming chords (the D minor sixth and the B diminished sixth), but between these I have simply listed every note in every voice. This is because, though it is sometimes possible to analyze Renaissance polyphony with chords, in places such as this it is improper and futile. For each of the dissonances encountered here and their resolution is between two voices only: the bass’s dissonant D is dissonant only with the tenor, but is consonant with the soprano: and when it resolves to C, it resolves for the tenor but enters into a neighbor dissonance with the soprano. All this is to say that to treat these dissonances as being ‘non-chord tones’ in some otherwise uniform progression of chords is impossible, and this is the nature of Renaissance counterpoint. A four voice texture is, in reality, six simultaneous two-voice textures, each of which individually follow the rules of counterpoint without regard for the other voices.

What more is there to say? The “anima mea” section is the cataractic fall before the pool, as Ms. Paalman so exquisitely put it. There is a subtle difference in this section compared to the one before it, which is barely noticeable, but makes all the difference in its effect. This has less to do with the music itself: the imitation in this section is itself quite similar to that in the “ita”, and more to do with the words. The great difference lies in the word “anima”, which begins with an open vowel: this open vowel makes each repetition of the word stand out. In contrast to the close vowel of “ita”, which creeps up on the music sneakily, this open vowel allows for the first syllable of “anima” to really fill out and make its presence known in this final section; the sonorant Ns and Ms add to this. This attention to the phonetics of the text is something that Palestrina has a clear mastery over. Note, for instance, how the T of “ita” often coincides with another voice’s D in “desiderat”, and the affricative C against S between the alto and soprano in measure 4. It’s not consistent enough to be any sort of rule, but it is noticeable when it happens, and very pleasing. I can’t say that there is any “anima mea” in this section that does not fill me with profound emotion: and particularly the tenor’s entrance in measure 51; I would also like to shout out the alto’s melody in the preceding measure which culminates in a Dorian plagal cadence.

We get our big cadence in measures 54-55, which is subverted as a deceptive cadence by the bass’s D, which initiates the final coda, which consists of a soaring imitation between the leading bass and following alto, with the tenor in free counterpoint, all beneath a soprano tonic pedal. It ends with a plagal cadence in the Ionian mode⁶.

I cannot recall the first time I ever sang Sicut. I imagine it was probably towards the beginning of freshman year in St. John’s Chorus, with me stumbling around trying to discern and keep up with what the basses were singing, having really no clue what was going on. Three years later, I can probably

sing the bass part in my sleep and have somewhat learned all of the other parts as well. I don’t want to think that there will be a last time I sing Sicut. There will be a last time this year, the last time as a St. John’s undergrad—but I shall consider this only a pause before the next time I sing Sicut, which, I like to think, will inevitably come. I am not sure I’ll be able to adequately sing my last Sicut as a St. John’s undergrad, for I fear a lachrymose sort of reaction will take place to hinder me. But I will greatly cherish every Sicut sing this year; I will try to soak in every note, every consonance and every dissonance. It is hard to say what in me has grown the most in my time here at St. John’s; every part of my soul, I think, has become more intricate and more florid while I’ve been here, like a fractal continually proceeding—but I do know that among the greatest of these elaborations has been my musical journey, the beginning and end of which being Sicut Cervus.



A pair of glasses on the Elements of Music manual

6 This is a very common formula in Renaissance polyphony—a primary cadence where the soprano reaches the tonic, holding it above the other voices as they come to a plagal cadence (i.e. a IV-I cadence) on the tonic; an authentic cadence is, of course, impossible against the soprano’s tonic. This period between the soprano’s cadence and the other voices’ plagal cadence is called the coda. This formula is mostly used in the Dorian and Aeolian modes, often accompanied by a final suspension that resolves to a Picardy third. Here, however, we see it in the Ionian mode, which is slightly less common. Because of the deceptive cadence followed by the coda, there is no authentic cadence to speak of at the end of Sicut: this is intentional, because this is not really the end of the motet. The second part, Sitivit anima mea, does indeed end on an authentic cadence, marking the true end of the motet.

A Call to Reform Prank

By Louis Rosenberg

I'm here to suggest some reforms for an enduring tradition of St. John's: Senior Prank. I've had these issues on my mind throughout my time at St. John's, and now that I am, in fact, a senior, I hope that I can finally present these concerns without being shut down by my peers. While I strongly value Prank's role in our community, I still believe it is worth discussing ways in which certain aspects of the tradition can be harmful. I specifically wish to address the different way Prank Committee is treated during the DC budgeting process, as well as a known tradition of Prank: alcohol consumption in the classroom immediately following the adjournment of seminar.

To start, anyone familiar with the Delegate Council (DC) budgeting process will note that it's a regimented procedure. Clubs first submit spreadsheets with their planned expenditures during the budgeting season. Line items must be specific — if a club is planning a party, they are advised to have not just one line item for that event, but instead figure out the specific costs of food, decorations, and so on, and put those as line items. These budgets are then

sent out for DC members to review, and a budget hearing is held with a club representative in attendance to provide more detail on specific items or answer other questions as necessary.

Every club at St. John's follows this procedure, and many archons sometimes end up not being fully reimbursed for the costs of running their club. As Insect Farming archon, for example, I have spent some of my own money in the past to cover small price changes in budgeted-for items or urgent purchases which we could not have foreseen — going to the DC to request a line item adjustment can be too time-consuming for purchases which are time-sensitive (in our case, those relating to animal care). We attempt to avoid excessive overbudgeting, which may be scrutinized in subsequent budgeting seasons, so this is in some ways a balancing act. Still, I find these standards fairly reasonable to prevent abuse of the budgeting system, especially seeing as every club is subject to these same intricacies and restrictions — well, every club except Prank.

Prank initially follows the same procedure as other clubs, except their line items in the initial budgets are typically satirical. During Prank's budget hearing, a game is made of asking for absurd things and then cutting them down to a more reasonable request of funds, while also not newly specifying what items the funds will be spent on.

Now you have been unseminared. Some, seminary-like ones, would object saying that the sacred seed of seminar has been aborted, has been sacrilegied. But we maintain that the semen of the true will not be disseminated here tonight, but will be nurtured in its comic mask. Spring is the comic season. Nature puts on an exuberant, arrogant show. Tonight we seniors hope to bloom and share merriment with our friends.

TRIAL BY JOHNNY

A dramatic Cantata in One Act

(More wild applause, foot stomping, etc. with appropriate signs. Enter Senator carrying two straw hats and two canes, gives one of each to Gene, and the two go off into a vaudeville routine based on Kant's first critique.)

The invocation to an operetta performed as part of prank in 1972, as well as a stage direction from a skit that followed.

The justification for this is that this approach preserves the secrecy of Prank. Prank's receipts are still required at the end of the year for verification, though they are given their budget as a lump-sum, unlike any other clubs, and receipts are simply checked to ensure they list the item purchased, the vendor from which it was purchased. While other archons will have to request an additional hearing or take a hit to their personal finances by going over budget on any specific item, Prank does not have such concerns, because they do not have specific items.

From my observations, however, it seems that this procedure also tacitly permits money laundering. Clubs cannot buy alcohol with funds from the DC; this has been stipulated by the administration and is included in club charters, including Prank's. The restriction on alcohol purchases applies even to clubs who wish to use alcohol for religious reasons — such clubs are generally granted permission to have alcohol at their events, but the alcohol must be paid for by club members.

It is my understanding that in past years' Prank, t-shirts were purchased using funding the club receives from the DC. These t-shirts were then sold to students in advance of the event, with the proceeds used to purchase alcohol which is then distributed in seminar classrooms for free during Prank. It is generally understood that the t-shirt sales fund alcohol purchases. In fact, during last year's Prank, after a large quantity of alcohol intended for Prank was confiscated, some of my peers complained that they purchased a t-shirt but may not receive free alcohol as expected.

To be clear, I'm not some kind of puritan when it comes to alcohol or drugs; I certainly understand wanting to be intoxicated, and I also recognize that many people drink alcohol safely and responsibly. But bringing alcohol into classrooms in this way is fundamentally problematic. Even aside from the illegality of providing alcohol to minors, offering alcohol in a classroom setting should simply not be

normalized. Seminar is, like all St. John's classes, mandatory, and alcohol consumption during Prank typically begins immediately after the tutors leave the seminar classroom (as the auditorium, where the larger kickoff event occurs, is more closely monitored by Public Safety). There is not always a subtle way to leave the classroom prior to this. A person who wishes to avoid alcohol can reasonably decide not to attend parties where alcohol will be present; they cannot reasonably avoid class, nor should they need to. For people who are recovering from substance misuse, avoiding alcohol and other intoxicants altogether may be an important part of their early recovery. But there are also other reasons someone might not want to be around alcohol, and al, because there simply is no good reason to bring alcohol into a classroom setting.

I write this as a 20-year-old who has already attended St. John's for three full years. I'm well aware that alcohol (and cigarettes and weed) are frequently made available to minors through their older peers. For those over 21, there's a multitude of liquor stores and smoke shops (and a dispensary) within walking distance from campus. Still, the availability of alcohol to the polity is in no way a case for allowing alcohol to be purchased and distributed in the way it tacitly is now. In fact, it's nearly the opposite. If everyone who wants to drink will already be getting drunk with their friends later in the evening, what reason is there to also bring large quantities of alcohol (purchased, again, through what is at best a loophole in school policy) in the classroom setting?

Thus, I propose the polity consider the benefits of limiting Prank's special treatment in two ways.

First, Prank should be required to provide an itemized list of their intended purchases prior to making them. I understand that, due to the secretive nature of Prank, the Prank Committee may deem it important for that list to be kept private.

Therefore, I propose that the list be either (a) provided to the DC Treasurer, if they are a senior or approved by Prank Committee, or (b) if the DC Treasurer is an underclassman, provided to a DC Officer of the senior class or to a Senior Delegate, selected by the DC Treasurer. If the person who is provided the itemized list has specific apprehensions about it, they could then privately discuss those concerns with the Prank Committee and even bring them up during Prank's budget hearing if the concerns are not able to be resolved in private. Prank would then be audited like any other club at the end of the semester or the year. (Because Prank's budget is typically divided across two semesters for the DC's benefit, even though the bulk of their purchases are made in the spring, I do think it would still be reasonable to roll any unspent funds from the fall into their available funds for the following semester, so long as any items which will be purchased are declared beforehand.)

Second, those affiliated with Prank should stop bringing alcohol into classrooms. There is no good reason to bring alcohol into a class, especially when so many people will get drunk on their own later that night. There is often significant peer pressure to stay in the room following seminar's adjournment for Prank, especially as skits and activities are often performed with the whole class. The alcohol and drug culture at St. John's is, as at many colleges, often unhealthy. Leaving alcohol out of the classroom is one easy step towards ensuring all students feel comfortable going to classes.

Author's note: After I had written this article, I spoke with a current member of Prank Committee who assured me that no DC funding will be (even indirectly) used to supply alcohol this year. I decided to preserve my article as an expression of concern about how Prank has been run in the past, but I also want to express appreciation for the active role that this year's Prank Committee is taking in addressing concerns such as these, and make it clear that these concerns may not (and hopefully will not) apply to this year's Prank.



the truth-hunters

By Natalie Goldman

Don't get carried away
When the truth-hunters come.
They want to snatch you up
And stuff you in that horrible canvas bag
To live alongside their little fragments and splinters
Of Frankness, Verity, and Candor.

When the truth-hunters come
You need to hide,
For you are worth more than every crumb,
Combined or standing in solitude.

How do I know?
Your substance—the stuff that gives you
Shape and structure and being,
That runs in your blood
And makes up your bones—
Is Beauty,
And nothing else.

You've Got Mail x2

By Caleb Briggs

This year marked the end of private mailboxes at St. John's and the beginning of mail folders. Students receiving letters and magazines must now go through the same process as those receiving a large package. This means that now any letter addressed to a student at the college arrives and is processed by the mailroom. The letters are then sorted into a folder with an assigned number, and an e-mail is then generated to alert a student via their St. John's email account that they have a magazine or a letter waiting in that folder. The student must then go to the package room in the basement of Humphrey's Hall during its business hours (Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-noon and 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.) and ask for their mail at a counter. The challenges this poses should be readily apparent: in summary, everyone will have to jump through more hoops than before.

To start, the system generates more messages regarding mail than ever before. Every time mail arrives, an e-mail must be sent to its recipient informing them of its arrival. Now, in addition to the chore of sorting mail, the mailroom workers must also generate an e-mail and note down the mail's collection upon the student picking it up, tasks previously only required for larger packages. In addition to having to go pick up their mail (a chore few people, especially receivers of junk mail, relish), students are faced with yet another e-mail. You're telling me I now receive mail to inform me that I have mail? Absurd! The system appears to be no better than a 21st-century imitation of the post horn used to herald the arrival of the post-coaches of old.

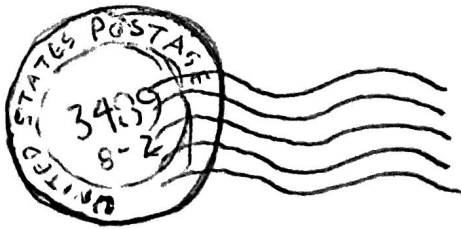


Post Horn. Image Credit: Merriam-Webster

Now that we have extra steps on both sides, there is also the challenge of the business hours. Coming from coastal Maine and having lived through the pandemic, I am no stranger to weird and annoying post office hours. Even in the great Capital of Annapolis, our local post office is not open on weekends. But even many rural and understaffed post offices maintain a bank of P.O. boxes for those who cannot or do not receive mail at home to come and pick up their mail at their leisure. While packages must generally be picked up during business hours, P.O. boxes are often accessible 24/7. St. John's has a similar and wonderful system: the package pod. Upon receiving an e-mail that their package has been placed in the pod, students are free to pick it up at their leisure. Granted, they still should not leave it there for days on end, but it does allow them to swing by during lunch or after seminar, if those times are more convenient for them.

Mailboxes in McDowell used to afford the same luxury of patience to letter recipients. There was no pressure and no detour necessary if one wanted to get their mail on their way through campus; a mail run could work with any schedule. Now, it is more convenient to get a package from Amazon than to receive a letter from one's parents. Likewise, a student must hand any outgoing mail to the mailroom instead of popping it in the slot that used to be in the coffee shop's wall. They could go down to the mailboxes throughout town, but again, that is one more step than we used to have to take.

Sending and receiving intra-campus mail used to also be painless. The main thing frequently sent across campus are the scored algebra tests that must be taken before jJunior year. For those of us who perhaps had to take the test more than once to get a passing score, the anonymity of one's mailbox was a godsend. With the old mailboxes, one didn't have a queue of peers behind them, many of whom may be there for the same thing and thus inclined to excitedly ask "what'd you get?" when the appropriate answer is "nothing good." People who work in the mailroom are frequently classmates and friends, and it is no fun to watch them extract a bill marked "PAST DUE" and hand it to you.



So, what is a good alternative? The mailboxes aren't coming back and having a package-pod style interface for regular mail both seems silly and wouldn't solve the e-mail issue. A good middle ground could be reached by having an optional sign up for those of us who receive mail regularly to have access to a small bank of mailboxes on campus. Not everyone would want this and most would not need this, but for those who find a trip to the package room inconvenient or incompatible with their working hours, it seems a good compromise.

I close with an appeal to the simple things, something snail mail is the poster-boy of. Inboxes at St. John's are already inundated with exhortations, calls, demands, queries, announcements, electronic Gadflies, and junk; adding yet another e-mail to come along a few times a week is not greatly appreciated. E-mail has failed to fully supplant postal mail despite the predictions of tech bros pre-Dot Com Bubble. Part of the reason for that is that there is no good

replacement for a physical card from grandma or a letter from a friend miles away. We at St. John's are a tactile bunch, and physical media is near and dear to many of our hearts. A Kindle will never be a substitute for a book, and an e-mail will never be a substitute for a letter. We live in a world that is increasingly online and isolated. All manners of things are already communicated electronically, and the fatigue of constantly being on a phone or computer is very real. A book or note can be a brief refuge from the demands of devices. St. John's is one of the last places of learning and living where the packing list can categorize a computer as "optional." Few things these days seem simple. Why complicate one more?



Postcard showing much of St. John's campus, ca. 1913

AM Radio: First Week Thoughts

Welcome back to campus Johnnies. And welcome freshmen, you may not yet be Johnnies, but don't fret—in a few weeks most of you will be. There is a decidedly odd air about campus this week. Perhaps it has something to do with the unseasonal cold followed by seasonal thunderstorms, or the low roar of the cicadas, or maybe it's to do with the changes around campus. Campbe—I mean Edensword, is now finished and filled with an indeterminate number of students, half of whom can't even enter the building. The coffee shop remains unmoved, and the bookstore exists in a strange sort of bricked up limbo, and the new faculty room remains inaccessible to students except to linger by the windows, sorrowfully looking in. Or perhaps it has to do with the new makeup of students. A hundred fresh faces, popping up around every corner—and to the freshman make that several

hundred. The now-graduated class of seniors are gone, well most of them anyways, and their absence leaves a vacuum of culture. The freshmen present an intriguing unknown—what, who, how will they do? The juniors have all but completely abandoned the dorms. The sophomores partake in excess but without finesse, and the seniors have seen the light at the end of the tunnel. The vibes are strange and off-putting, but yet...there is an air of optimism. Who knows what will happen? The year is young and there is much to do, much to think about, and many, many cigarettes to smoke. Will it be the same as years past? Of course not. Will things change? They always do. So, my fair and foul weather friends, how shall we make the best of it?

This piece has been brought to you by the album *Narrow Stairs* by Death Cab for Cutie.



Coffee Shop scene, ca. 1960

Dorm Cooking: Mug Pizza

By Marit Hendrickson

Welcome to the joys of living in the dorms! While college life has a lot to offer, fantastamazing dining hall food is not one you'll find. Unfortunately, eating out often eats into one's budget, so what are you to do when you have a craving for more than what SJC has to offer? What happens when you're starving but the dining hall is closed? The answer is cooking in your room!

Learning a few staple recipes that don't need much more than a microwave and a mug is a great way to start feeding yourself on a dime. That's where these quick and easy dorm cooking recipes come in. They only take a handful of ingredients, a microwave to pop it into, and are ready in a few minutes! And they taste pretty rootin' tootin' delicious to boot! For my first installment in providing delicious and easy recipes to the masses of starving johnnies, I present,



MUG PIZZA

Ingredients

- 4 Tablespoons flour
- 2/8 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3 Tablespoon milk
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon marinara sauce
- 1+ Tablespoon shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ teaspoon dried basil or oregano
- Either 5 mini-peperoni or 5 cashews

Steps

1. Mix the flour, baking powder, and salt in a microwavable mug.
2. Add in the milk and oil, then mix. There might be some lumps but that is okay.
3. Spoon the marinara onto the dough and spread it around the surface.
4. Sprinkle on the cheese, dried seasonings, and toppings of your choice.
5. Microwave for 1 minute to 1 minute and 20 seconds, or until it rises and the toppings are bubbling.
6. Enjoy straight away!



Three Johnnies seated with bowls of food.

ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ

Poetry and Madness: “Howl” as a Lesson for the Creative

By Gabriela Forte

“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness...” These are the opening lines to Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl.” Yet what exactly has driven this generation mad? There seems to exist a madness wrought upon us by a society plaguing our world with war and suffering and conformity, a madness that has been so deeply engrained in us that we believe it is part of our psyche, and not a consequence of our hypnotized participation.

I don’t think much has changed since the 1956 publication of “Howl.” It’s why I find it so essential that we read and understand the poem properly. I think we are still going mad. I think we have made our madness more palatable, more desirable, and more mainstream, but I believe it is still a response to the concrete-hearted Moloch described in this poem nearly seventy years ago, the demon that drives these people mad with hopelessness to the point of destitution, “yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars.” The place where this deception appears clearest is in the same medium that Ginsberg used to warn us of its evil: poetry.

Everyone is a poet these days. With such a heavy focus on what poetry looks like, it becomes quite hard to discern the intention behind the words. It feels as though there are different aesthetic camps that have arisen, where the illusion of voices can be distinguished. There is the camp of writers so preoccupied with images that there seems to be no message behind the endless depictions of pomegranates and cigarettes and the Catholic God. There are the Rupi Kaur types that spit out a collection of line breaks and phrases that feel more like a thought than a poem. There are the poets who detail their own psychological torment to the point

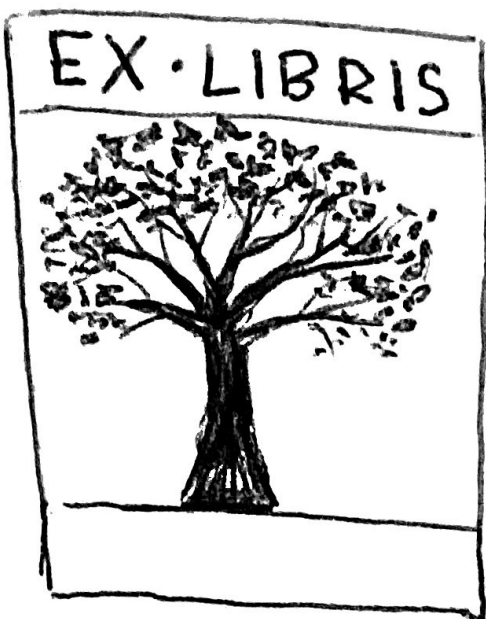
where one loses meter and tone and simply feels pity. Every single one of these poetry “styles” seems to depend on this idea of total insanity and/or hopelessness, to the point where the question arises: are we amping up the state of our own despair for a poem? Once we have bathed in our own imaginary crazy, where is the line drawn? When does it no longer become an exaggerated act but an actual way of living?

Ultimately, I believe that for many, poetry has become a collection of aesthetics and poorly ordered phrases intending to evoke the feeling that one is reading poetry rather than the feelings within the poem itself. It is perceived as a feature of the craft, not a deep infection the art has fallen victim to, born of a loss of imagination and a romanticization of our own neuroses. This is not to say that you should not write poetry. You absolutely should. But give it direction. Give it purpose. Give it voice. Your own voice. But do not let it fall victim to Moloch. Do not contribute to the wheel that keeps us crazy as long as it keeps spinning.

I believe the only way out is to read “Howl,” and to read it for what it is trying to say, not for the images. It is not a revelry in insanity. It is not a how-to guide for the beat poet. It is not a checklist to reach the purest intellectual salvation. It is a raw and disillusioning work that demonstrates the consequences of a world that is literally driving us mad. These great minds have “presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse with shaven heads and harlequin speech of suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy, /and...were given instead the concrete void of insulin Metrazol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong & amnesia.” They are not role models. They are a warning.

It seems that we have internalized this hysteria, behaving as though it is a part of us, something dirty and mysterious, something to include in our self-published chapbooks that nobody can tell apart. I believe the more we lean into glamorizing the ways in which Moloch has captured us, the longer we will smoke our cigarettes and bemoan our lost loves and be oblivious to the gravity of the lunacy that, due to its attractiveness, we have voluntarily checked ourselves into. This confusion is not glamorous. It is not romantic. It is to be fought against.

We are all creatives of some sort, and as creatives, I find it vital that we continue in our journeys of artistic exploration. Read “Howl” and read it as a cautionary. Be warned of Moloch. It is not your friend. Do not bask in your own insanity, choosing to write derivative poetry about it, a lunatic in the asylum of our own minds “where we hug and kiss the United States under our bedsheets the United States that coughs all night and won’t let us sleep.” Instead, work to discover and condemn what exactly it was that drove you mad to begin with.



Restaurant Review:

Luna Blue *By Molly Sprout*

I was met with deep blue walls, white brick, and the smell of garlic when I walked into Luna Blu. Luna Blu is an Italian restaurant tucked away on West Street, about a five-minute walk from campus. I'll be honest, my expectations were not particularly high. Annapolis is not the spot to go for authentic Italian cuisine, as you might know. But it's my birthday and my boyfriend decided to take me to Luna Blu. For \$48 dollars you can get an appetizer, a salad, an entree, and a dessert. This is enticing to us as we can't always afford to have multiple meals a day and like to go big when we can get some good food. We both decide to get the full four course meal and are ready to eat more than we should.

Our server was a kind and tall man, who is courteous and understanding when we take just over 15 minutes before deciding on appetizers and drinks. For the first course we got the crab bruschetta and the calamari. He warns us about the calamari, it is not like the traditional appetizer, battered and fried. Am I slightly offended about being warned about the non-greasy calamari? A little bit. But when it comes out, it is indeed fresh squid covered in a balsamic tomato sauce. The calamari has a rich sauce, overwhelming the flavor of the actual squid. This isn't necessarily a problem, with the actual calamari becoming a vessel to eat more of the sauce. The sauce is salty and deeply colored and really does leave you wanting more. The crab bruschetta appears to be a crab dip served baked on top of bread. While the crab tastes fresh, the bread is too crunchy and a bit much in the mouth. Both appetizers are good, but the calamari were something I would order again.

The next course is the salads; both of us order Caesar. A Caesar salad is something I have high expectations for. Its simplicity begs for perfection, and for the most part, I was not disappointed. The dressing is rich and creamy, and though to some it may have

been overdressed, but it really was good dressing. However, the croutons were not great. They lacked seasoning and tasted like a crunchy shortbread cookie. Otherwise, a great Caesar.

Now for the entrees. We decided on the salmon with spinach, along with the veal of Aosta. The salmon with spinach is one of the best things I have ever eaten. This dish is baked salmon on top of sauteed spinach topped with fresh crab and a cream sauce, and it, surprisingly, is not lacking at all in salt and flavor. The cream sauce delivers what salmon cannot and the crab adds something I never would have thought was necessary. The spinach is light to a quite heavy dish and all in all, there is nothing I would change about this entree. The other entree, the veal, was not my favorite. It is veal overtop red sauce angel hair pasta topped with fontina and prosciutto. It was good, and maybe it was the fish entree that made this dish seem lacking, but it was nothing to really celebrate. The veal was under seasoned and slightly tough, and the prosciutto did not add much but more salt. While fontina was a good choice of cheese, being rich and pungent and capable of making up for smaller flavors, it did not compensate enough. That isn't to say that it was a bad dish, but I probably would not order it again.

Finally, we had dessert. We ordered a tiramisu and the apple strudel. Tiramisu is one of my favorites, but the apple strudel with a side of vanilla ice cream absolutely blew us away. It was warm and tasted like an apple donut. I could not get enough of it. I am infrequently a pastry person, but I would happily order it again. The tiramisu was also good, with chocolate chips in the mascarpone that added something unexpected to the texture.

With a bill of 150 dollars for two four-course meals and four drinks, we were full and happy. They have large portions and enough to take home if you don't stuff your face like we did. The environment was good, filled with other couples and happy chatter. The service was professional and warm, and the food was amazing.

THIS MONTH IN HOROSCOPES

(THE WASH, RINSE, REPEAT ISSUE)

**BIRTH, DEATH, REBIRTH, ETC, ETC WITH
MADAME QUIZNOS**

After a year away at a spiritual retreat in Sedona, your beloved campus psychic is back with a sunburn and more messages from the stars

ARIES (March 21–April 19)

As August begins, the new moon will be entering Leo just as Venus is leaving it. Since Leo is your sister sign, this means that your passion and lust for life will be reignited, and what's more Aries than a challenge? The bloat is getting worse. You feel swollen and shaky, too hot and too cold. This overlaps with the sun entering your sixth house. By this point, it's already happened. The small, red creature has your exact face. It crawled out of you one night after a particularly grueling bout of cramping, but finally, it's free. You look into your own eyes as you watch the creature paw at your chest, its hunger is unending. Your whole body aches, you haven't slept in weeks. You're so tired, Lord. You can't let it starve, something about this thing awakens an empathy within yourself you didn't know you could feel. It suckles your fingers;, rows of sharp and endless teeth draw blood from sensitive digits. It's growing every day. You're becoming anemic. Maybe things would have been different if you had someone who loved you like this. Maybe this is a form of wish fulfillment, or a sick type of self-care, you are killing yourself to feed this new you-it's more beautiful than anyone outside of yourself will ever know.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20)

After a year and one month, the unclaimed dead of San Francisco are finally put to rest. People as young as 18 and as old as 99, all strangers in life, sit side by side, stacked atop each other on big wooden pallets

on their way to eternity. Names and death dates are the only thing that distinguish them. Two dozen matching wooden urns drift along the strait in silence. Funeral home owner Reuben Huston waits for the small boat to approach the Golden Gate Bridge, anchoring under the roar of cars above. He tosses flower petals into the water below, says a quick prayer and begins opening the urns. Hundreds of people, left behind because they don't have anyone, or because it's simply too expensive to claim them, are dumped into the sea, mixed together in a thick gray paste before dissolving into the depths. He can't think about who he's holding for too long, the mystery is too great and the answers too upsetting. His assistant's hands shake, not from emotion or hunger, but just the sheer magnitude of it all as he cuts open the plastic bag, containing all that remains of 'J Martinez, Sept. 8, 2023'. J Martinez is emptied on top of a 'H Marshall', the two become one as they splash up against the side of the small boat. Mr. Huston says it's best to lower the ashes to the water to avoid blowback, his assistant obliges. It's a quiet affair, sometimes they play music, sometimes they just listen to the waves. Next month, the routine repeats, business as usual. Welcome back to school, Taurus.



Ptolemaic Universe. Photo: the Astrological Explorer

GEMINI (May 21–June 20)

“MERCY! FATHER!” cries Berryman, bleeding out into his own dream song. We must extend empathy to our dear old dads, which is easier said than done, yet here we are. Why do you think so many men are inclined to run, Gemini? It must be frightening, being suddenly cast into the role of father. To now be christened protector, mentor and provider. Your lover is filled by a needy tumor, you feel it contort and expand inside her. It’s grotesque. Expectations are frightening. How can a child raise a child? Do you think you ever really stop feeling like a child? Will you wake up one day, your baby at your side and finally know that you are now a man? It’s crazy to think that all the pain and poison you fill yourself with in your lifetime oozes into your babies. Maybe it’s merciful to leave them, to spare them your pain — that doesn’t feel right. We’re learning that every style of parenting produces fucked up, emotionally stunted children. Maybe arrested development is just a natural part of life.

CANCER (June 21–July 22)

This Mercury retrograde combined with Venus in Virgo has not been kind to you, Crab. You need a firm reset. When was the last time you thought about the all-consuming rot? To eat and be eaten feels both grotesque and perfectly balanced. Is it self-preservation that makes you fear the decay? It’s a popular practice in Buddhism to picture yourself dying through nine phases; I believe this could greatly benefit you, Cancer. Peel back the layers of your physical body. Can you imagine skin sliding off? Is it a slide or a melt? Maybe it’s not that graphic at all, maybe it’s just there one minute and gone the next. It’s muscle under that. Then bones and fat and organs, all sliding away till you’re left with 45 miles of nerves. That part is what you are completely, sans religious or metaphysical arguments. It’s not a clean fade; your body is gross and wet. You’ll change colors at least five times before anything starts falling off. The bloat is also vicious. All your blood pools down, your skin is one huge, angry bruise, if you’re

lucky enough to die on your back. You eventually soften, rigor mortis seems uncalled for, but I guess the energy needs to be burned off somehow. How much can you change before you no longer recognize yourself? Your body is so nourishing, the land thanks you in its own quiet way. A vulture is an angel in its own right. There is peace in lying on the grass, you are held in a way nothing else could ever bring itself to hold you. You physically become one with the dirt as you leak into the soil. Nasty, Cancer, nasty.

LEO (July 23–Aug 22)

Do you think it’s cold outside your body? There’s a long line in darkness. Bureaucracy is hell, but this doesn’t feel like it. You don’t know if you’re sure what hell would even feel like. The ticket ticker ticks. You get in line behind a deer, insides popped over the hood of a Toyota RAV4, limbs twisted into uncomfortable positions. You take a number. The sun has grown so very, very old watching over zigzagging security tape. Do you hear the lobby music, Leo? The ticket ticker ticks. The line moves slowly, the shuffling of ten thousand feet grate like sandpaper along the floor. Behind you is a swarm of wasps, smelling strongly of pesticides and struggling to see which one of them will get to hold the little paper deli ticket. There are hundreds more behind you now, you haven’t even been dead for five minutes. The ticket ticker ticks. The statistics are frightening. You don’t see many other people around you, maybe a few lines ahead? It’s hard to see, the sun gets in your eyes. You watch the inky blackness from the windows. You’re realizing you don’t really know where you are. The ticket ticker ticks. You look at your number, it’s going to be a long wait. The carpet smells heavily of dust and Ffabuloso. Lead paint flakes off into your eyes as you look up. The building swallows up the music it produces, it’s an aimless tune, maybe ‘Men at Work?’ The ticket ticker ticks.

VIRGO (Aug 23–Sept 22)

Due to a scheduling error, Virgo’s reading will be postponed till the next issue.

LIBRA (Sept 23–Oct 22)

Coming back to school we are greeted with not only a full moon, but also a blue moon AND a supermoon all on the same night. This is CRAZY! Your plans will be disrupted, and combined with the current Mercury retrograde, I suggest laying low at home for a while. This is the perfect time for some solid introspection! Do you think your parents were ever truly in love, Libra? Your father must have seemed charming at one point, and your mother pretty and captivating. They must have thought the other refreshing at some point. Something new, something different. Do you think they were afraid of the commitment that the other presented? Or were they just happy to have someone to claim as their own? Do you think people are ever really happy together? Or is it just some sort of relief at meeting an arbitrary timeline laid out for their lives. Is it better to be punctual or completely seen? Do your parents see each other? Did they ever? And is it more upsetting to think that they never truly did, or that at one point they really were meant for each other? It's weird to think that you can be made for someone- that you can understand and empathize with their whole being for a brief time before losing that sense of solidarity completely. Maybe they had you before they realized that they had outgrown the people they were when they fell in love. Maybe you were the catalyst. Maybe that is ok. It doesn't feel ok, but what can you do? On second thought, maybe risk going outside, you were never meant for introspection. Maybe risking disrupted plans is ok if it means never having to think about this again.

SCORPIO (Oct 23–Nov 21)

In one hundred years, in a valley far away, a kitchen light flickers and dims. The country is anguished. We lost the factories decades ago, when the grid went down there was really no reason to keep producing light bulbs — we needed the water elsewhere. The Miller's generator kept working after the second flare, their kitchen light bulb became a beacon of hope to the thousands of Americans left. A small

kitchen in Nevada became Mecca, hundreds made the pilgrimage across the wasteland to catch a glimpse of the last lightbulb still glowing in the Miller's country-chic kitchen. Its sickly fluorescent glow was rumored to heal the sick, some said it was installed by angels. (The family protested, claiming it was installed by Mike, their beer-bellied patriarch, who had died in the first days following the flare in a dirt bike related altercation.). The house on Bloom Street was the last Jerusalem standing. Fights broke out among pilgrims to see who could bask in the white light first, tacky porcelain chickens and novelty egg timers watched over the brawls. They worried what would happen if they were the last person to bathe in its light — what is the punishment for he who witnesses its death? It was becoming increasingly obvious that the light bulb was dying. It was honestly impressive how long it had managed to hold on, other light bulbs would have died ten times over, yet this one held strong. Flies filled the glass covering protecting it, their little bodies piling up, casting abstract shadows over the faces of worshipers. They were worshiped as saints, their little buggy bodies made into reliquaries, sold to the highest bidders. What happens when the light finally goes out? Would the family finally shut off the generator? They stopped living in the house years ago, and the price of gas these days must be bleeding them dry, tabloids speculated. Some people became openly hostile when confronted with the reality of the lightbulb's dying, "Heresy!" they'd cry, hands frantically waving and swatting at the people around them. Finality is hard, as is acknowledging inevitability. Invest in Phillips.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22–Dec 21)

Free spirited Sagittarius knows better than anyone that you're born alone and you die alone. This is untrue. Checkmate, Sag. You've had a buddy built in since birth, literally attached at the hip. You've lived a long life together, you share everything. It's been a good run. One day, you'll wake up, but your left side won't. Did you know that you only had a 7.5% chance of survival from birth? It's beautiful that you've made it this long. But now, for the first time

in your life, you are alone. You lie in bed, breathing independently for the first time. Your left side feels heavy. It's frightening, but oddly peaceful. You're too hot and too cold. You'll be dead soon. You can feel the sepsis eating into you. You reflect on your life as you lielay in the sun. You remember a lifetime of struggle and solidarity; , the emotions overwhelm you. You think about the caravan and the dancehall, the sketchy managers and producers and trunks full of ill- fitting, gaudy costumes. Why did you need a manager? You weren't unruly children, you weren't animals. Why did you need to be managed? You wonder if maybe it's because of your natural inclination to teamwork frightens people. People in power loathe organization. You think about what you could have organized had you not been forced into dance lessons and taken up playing so many instruments. You think you could have been book smart if they'd let you. You're tired of asking permission. Alone at last, you are finally free from asking. You can act as your own free agent — - sort of. Your eyelids feel heavy, and you feel lethargic. It's too hot. You throw off the covers, trying to get comfortable as you go quietly into that goodnight, holding your sibling's- — your own — - hand. At least this time it's on your own terms.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22–Jan 19)

Do you remember the first time you felt your emotions? Not as a monolith, but can you pinpoint the first time you felt specific things? Do you remember shame? How it warmed your ears and made you feel the biggest you've ever felt? What about guilt and the stone in your chest? Limerence? That one is a dull ache. Jealousy feels slimy, your stomach feels too tight, like you have a belly full of eels. Are you aware of when you feel these things now? There is a physicality behind emotions, it makes you feel too much like an animal. We would all love to run strictly on logic — feelings are confusing and make one gassy. Don't you wish you could turn it all off? Your body in stasis would be a lot more productive, you tell yourself. The first time you felt these more specific emotions, were you

alarmed? It feels natural, and that's the worst part. The refined and polished metal exterior leaks oil onto the floor, a sign of function is awful — you NEED to seem perfectly constructed and effortless. There's doubt, it feels lumpy. Posturing seems exhausting. You're sweating onto the paper, knock it off.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20–Feb 18)

Do you fear your mother's life, Aquarius? At what point did she decide that her fate would be to be what it became? Does it frighten you to think of sacrificing your life to another being? A completely unknown one at that. Do you think while she was pregnant, she layid awake at night and thought to herself of all the things that could go wrong? Not even medically, but just in terms of bringing up a whole other person. What if the baby comes out wrong? Your father doesn't know what she means by this, and honestly, he doesn't care to figure it out. Is raising babies really a matter of pure nurture? What if it's in its nature to be evil? What does that even mean? She wasn't always this contemplative, but the thought keeps bubbling up. At best, the baby grows up to be thoroughly fine. Nothing special, but not bad. Mediocrity is all we can hope for. At what point did she decide that she was no longer herself and now going to be your mother?

There is a sort of ego death that comes with birth. Everyone says it's untrue, but she had dreams before she had you. The simple facts are that one day, she snubbed out her last cigarette, took one a last breath of the polluted air, and grew into who she is now. Maybe she always wanted to be a mother. Maybe this is exactly what she wanted, but there is no way you'll know the answer to that. Part of you suspects that she doesn't know either. We are all rather passive about bringing new children into this plane of existence, but there had to be a moment when reality hit. When you became real, when you became you. Do you think she mourns her old life?

A life she never had, maybe? Is this your generational curse? The moon in Aquarius also dictates a strong wave of emotions. Consider yoga.

PISCES (Feb 19—March 20)

You yearn to be seen, Pisces. It's a want so heavy you feel it slide around in the back of your throat like bile. Is it too much to ask to be completely dissected and understood yet appreciated at the same time? This feels like a simple demand, yet here we are. It must feel amazing — like the first warm day of spring. This feeling has to exist, artists have prattled on about it for as long as humans have been making art, surely someone must have felt this at some point. The internet says you might be autistic. Bullshit. Every stupid philosopher you've had to read believes in speaking things into existence, even if the language is a lot more confusing. Human will is strong enough to invent the atom bomb, it's strong enough to live through using them too, surely you can survive another Friday trapped inside. You feel trapped sometimes. Everyone does, probably, it's just a matter of finding someone who can articulate it the same way you do. Someone someday will understand, autism be damned. You are painfully alive. Everything feels so much, and the sting reminds you that you're not lucky enough to die. It's a long, hard road but you've been told it will be worth it. No one really knows what that means, but then again, if you say something enough it will become true.

Johnnies in Town

By Helen Wagner

Some swing-dancing Johnnies made an appearance at the city docks last Saturday night, where the Bayside Big Band was playing the last show of the Annapolis summer concert series. Rumors of swing music in town had spread to several students through word-of-mouth, and a group of 20 or so showed up to fill the dance floor. There was room for everyone, from novice freshmen to senior swing aficionados.

Onlookers enjoyed the festive scene—the ten-piece jazz orchestra, the dancers showing off their moves, and the sun setting over the water behind it all. “It’s always nice to get some surprise dancing in!” says Peter Quinn (‘25), a Johnnie swing dance instructor. Quinn happened to be celebrating his 22nd birthday that night, and the band dedicated a song to him. They also thanked all of the dancers and gave a special shoutout to SJC. “If you wanna be a good dancer, I guess you should go to St. John’s,” said one of the singers before her last song.

Students should be on the lookout for more events like this happening around town. “I didn’t even know about it until someone mentioned it to me,” said Peter. It will do us good to get out of our campus bubble, and Annapolis loves to see us dancing.



Johnnies swing dancing on the dock. Photos by Helen Wagner

The Reluctant Optimist: Back to School Conversations

By Tamar Pinsky

There are two foolproof ways to start a conversation with someone at the beginning of the year: talk about summer happenings or about what is new on campus. The following are my reflections.

Conversation #1: Summer

Everyone Except You Had a Great One

The never-ending question of “how was your summer?!” echoes across campus, and with every additional familiar face I encounter, the happy-go-lucky goblin within me exclaims, “It was great!”

I can call my summer “busy,” “exciting,” “fun,” maybe even “perfect.” But that would be my inner optimist speaking, reframing every experience as good, and just because—because—because why?

Why should I have to have had a good summer?! (Pop quiz real quick: tell me the tense of that question.)

The agonizing, fretful side of me could very well tell you that my summer was “just awful!” and not “the right summer for me at all!” Maybe my issue lies with that word “right.” How am I, with my mere ten years of being an age with double-digits, supposed to know what is “right” for me?

And yet, the next voice inside me says that I do know what is right for me. I took on a summer internship that I knew did not 100% align with my dreams. Why did I take it then? Because it seemed silly not to take an opportunity that presented itself to me, even if it was only “good enough.”

I knew from the get-go that fishery management is not my passion, and that office cubicles dishearten me. But I told myself the following, “What if it turns out that you love it?”

Turns out, I did not love it; turns out, maybe I should

trust my gut more, and not take every opportunity available just because it is there.

Not that I consider the internship a waste of time — this is the confusing bit! There were elements I loved, such as my coworkers, and the fact that I had the opportunity to expand my resume.

Of course, I also learned about myself – but only as confirmation of what I already knew – that I enjoy editing others’ writing, storytelling, and the thought of being a lawyer.

Though my summer was not a waste of time, did it bring me closer to finding what I want? Maybe, but maybe not. It could have even been a step backwards. But there is one piece of information from this summer that sticks with me, and I came across it because of another “good enough” experience:

I had started to go to folk dancing events on Sunday nights, for the sake of injecting myself into social environments (despite knowing this style of dance to be the bane of my feet’s existence.) My mother picked me up one night; the radio turned on to the middle of a discussion featuring Steven Pinker and David Deutsch.

They spoke of a school in which students were analyzed for their natural talents,

and then purposely placed into classes that fostered the growth of everything but. Their gifts were neglected while their weaknesses were embraced. Over the course of several years, the following occurred: students excelled at what they were predisposed to struggle with, while their natural abilities failed to remain impressive. In fact, students lacking talent outranked the students with talent—because they had done the necessary work.

Could this mean that an inherited disadvantage is an a

advantage in itself, in the sense that it might encourage one to work harder in recompense?

If this is the case, then I think I have the solution to the problem of How Can Everyone's Summer Have Been Perfect?

First, there are the few people who may have had completely wonderful summers. (Congratulations, by the way.)

Next, there are the people who had truly awful summers. With Pinker's advice, these troublesome summers can be reframed as receiving the advantage of being more prepared to deal with future difficulties.

Most common, however, are the summers that held some good parts and some bad. Maybe people sugarcoat these summers as they relay their summaries, because no one needs to know every harrowing detail. One can say that one's summer was good, despite its holding bad experiences. But why not say it was good because it held bad experiences?

Conversation #2: Campus Renovations

How to Stop Hating on Them

A surprisingly easy task is to give one's opinion on a subject without knowing much about it. It is imperative, then, for me to divulge to you the information about the new renovations on campus, to help you avoid regarding them with the human proclivity for disliking change.

Notable renovations:

1. What used to be Campbell is now Edensword (pronounced Eden's Word, not Eden's Sword, unfortunately.) The renovated building has a new electric system, new walls, an elevator, nice showers, etc.
2. The basement of Edensword will (hopefully in late September) have the new bookstore and new café—lots more space!
3. It is undecided what will happen to the old coffeeshop; there are several possibilities. In any

case, it will be closed once the new café opens, and construction work will not start at least before winter break.

4. The mail room has been moved to the package room in the basement of Humphrey's.
5. The dock has had boards replaced.
6. The gym has improved equipment.

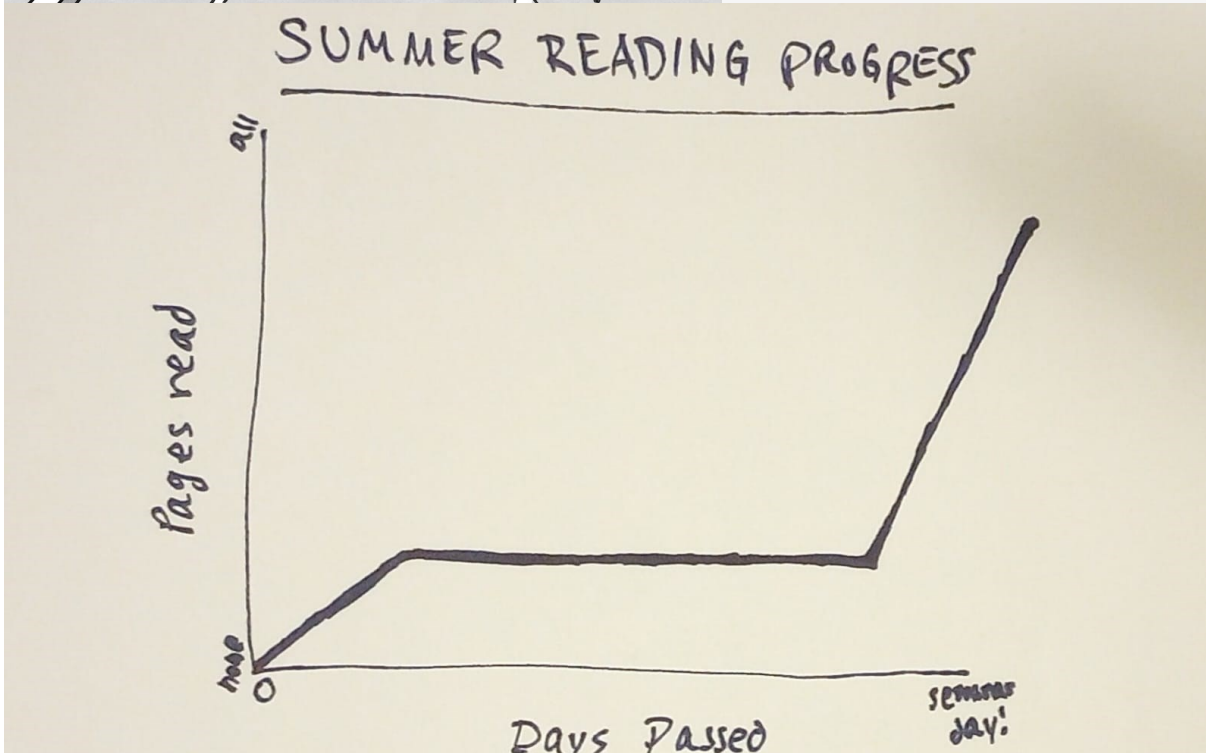
Upon looking at this list, I wonder if my claim about people hating change is entirely accurate, as these appear to be beneficial changes. But "beneficial" is subjective, is it not?

Perhaps you hate the change of the coffeeshop to a café, or the mail room having the limited hours of the package room. Or perhaps you hate that you know that these will not be the final changes to St. John's; there will always be more to "fix," and the school will never be a permanent representation of your college years. It could eventually change into place you cease to find beautiful.

A reasonable concern. Who knows what this place will look like in twenty years? But that is exactly why it is pointless to worry! No one knows, so why waste time being concerned about a future problem that may or may not occur?

Still, maybe you fear that the changes being made to campus are not "right." Good news for you then -- these changes are impermanent as well. St. John's will be ever evolving, a combination of good choices and bad, and we can only hope that it ends up in the direction of complete goodness.

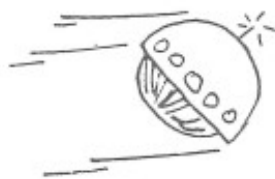




Above,
cartoons by
Polina
Vatralskaia.

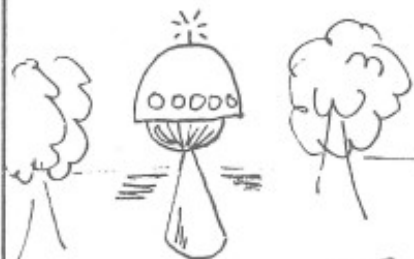
Left, cartoon by
Tamar Pinsky

IT WAS AN ORDINARY DAY
AT ST. JOHN'S UNTIL:



THE UFO APPEARED AND

ABDUCTED



DEAN BRANN!

MR. BEALL, WITNESSING
THE ABDUCTION, CALLED TO
NEARBY STUDENTS

QUICK!
TO THE PLANETARIUM



THEY RAN



AND RAN



AND FINALLY ARRIVED

MR BEALL TOSSED A
PACKAGE TO MATT BRAITH-
WAITE

OPEN THAT
AND PLUG IT IN.

YES
SIR!



THE DEVICE WORRIED
BILL ERSKINE

I'M SCARED..
SHUT UP BILL

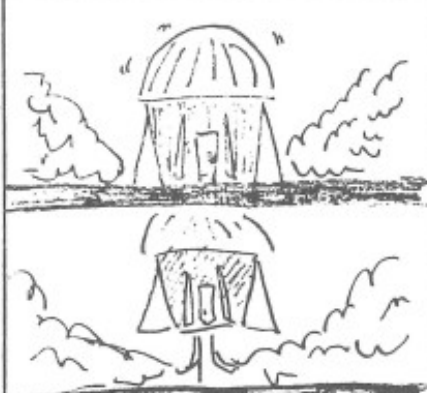
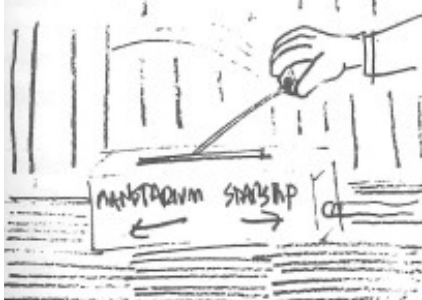
MR BEALL TOOK A MOMENT
TO SEE WHO WAS COMING:

BRAITHWAITE, ERSKINE,
SCHAEFFER, GIANINNY.
ALL RIGHT, SIT DOWN
AND GET READY.

MOMMY...

SHUT UP, BILL!

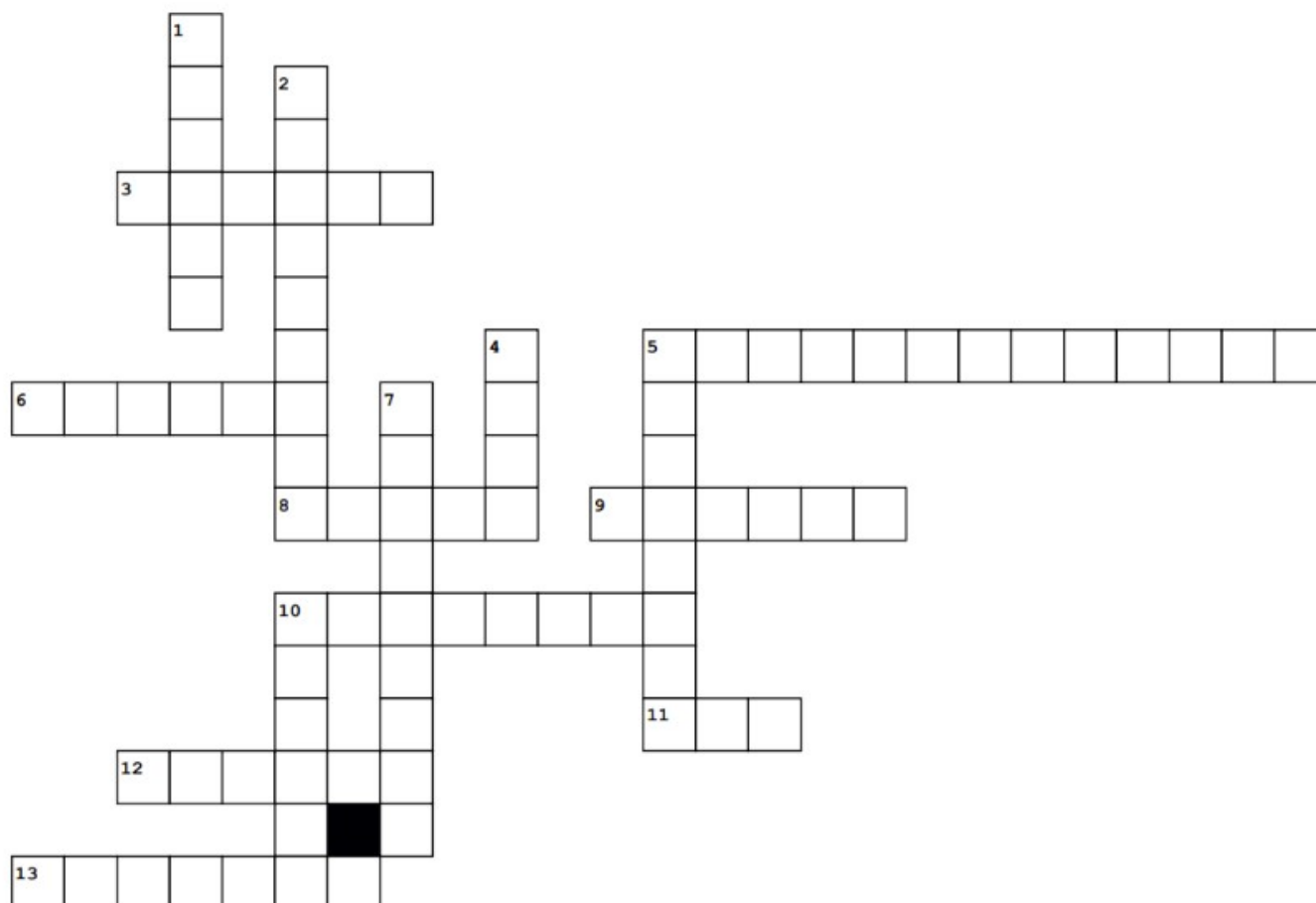
MR. BEALL TURNED OFF THE
LIGHTS, AND THREW THE SWITCH



TO BE CONTINUED...

The Mysterious Doctor Sajoco, by Sean Stickle. First printed in the Gadfly January 24, 1995

Women of the Great Books



Across

3. friend and colleague of Plath, poem titled "Sylvia's Death" following Plath's suicide
5. most popular cigarette among women in the U.S.
6. title woman of Racine's Grecian play
8. Plath poem following a ride on horseback
9. mid-20th century philosopher focused largely on fascism
10. Woolf novel following six children through adulthood
11. setting for most of "The Bell Jar"
12. lover of the author of "The Second Sex"
13. islander concubine of Odysseus

Down

1. recipient and subject of many of Kafka's letters
2. mother to Solomon, ex wife of Uriah
4. Jewish-turned-catholic philosopher focused largely on Christ and suffering
5. author of "Beloved" and "Paradise"
7. professor and lover of 9 across
10. mother to Achilles

Your Campus this Week

Classifieds

Friday, September 5

- ♦ 7 pm, Great Hall: All College Seminar. Text TBA

Saturday, September 6

- ♦ 2 pm, Conversation Room: Poets in the Conversation Room: David Kiplinger
- ♦ 4 pm, Greenfield Library: Closing talk on “Two Art Books”: Louise Bourgeois and Fischli Weiss
- ♦ Time and place not announced at time of printing: Reality’s Achilles Rager

Wednesday, September 11

- ♦ 2:30 pm, Mellon 124: Career Development Office Open House.

Seminar Readings:

	Thursday, 9/5	Monday, 9/9
Freshmen	Homer: <i>Odyssey</i> , I –VIII	Homer: <i>Odyssey</i> , IX –XVI
Sophomores	<i>Bible</i> Leviticus 11, 18-20; Deuteronomy	<i>Bible</i> Samuel I, II; Kings I, 1–4
Juniors	Pascal: <i>Pensées</i> (selections)	Pascal: <i>Pensées</i> (selections)
Seniors	Hegel: <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , The Truth of Self-Certainty (177 on-ly), Lordship and Bondage (178-196)	Hegel: <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Stoi-cism and Skepti-cism (197-206)

For Sale:

High grade, quality copper. Customer satisfaction guaranteed. 23 Alik Tilmun St. Ur, Mes.
Baby shoes, lightly worn. Call 555-9320

Missing:

The form of the good. Please reach out to Socrates by messenger at his address: number *three distances and four limits of the assimilating and the dissimilating, whereof a basal four-thirds wedded to the pempad yields two harmonies at the third augmentation, the one the product of equal factors taken one hundred times, the other of equal length one way but oblong,- one dimension of a hundred numbers determined by the rational diameters of the pempad lacking one in each case, or of the irrational lacking two; the other dimension of a hundred cubes of the triad*, Agora St. Athens, Greece.

Great Hall Chandelier. Where did it go?
Several thousand pixels in the lab manual diagrams. If found, mail by carrier pigeon to St. John’s IT.

Miscellaneous:

Wanted: whoever keeps leaving their things in the coffee shop on the floor between the sofas. Seriously, it makes the space highly uncondusive to study, and is not appreciated by those of us who actively use the spaces. If you have any leads to the whereabouts of said person, please contact H.P. Reubens as soon as possible, and I will finally do something about it.
Seeking layout editor. Must be willing to work long hours, no pay. Write gadfly.office@sjc.edu for info.
Want to leave a classified ad? Please write us at gadfly.office@sjc.edu or drop off your submission at our office.



*The Gadfly and Collegian editors at the club fair. From left to right, El'ad Nichols-Kaufman, Helen Wagner and Jacob Sharpe.
Photo by Dora Vecoli.*

We have two publications on campus: the Gadfly and Collegian. The Collegian features shorter, more immediate reporting and opinion, while the Gadfly in your hands should speak for itself. Some important upcoming deadlines and dates for those interested in submitting:

Monday, September 9th: Collegian 01 Deadline

Thursday, September 12th: Collegian 01 Published

Monday, September 16th: Collegian 02 and Gadfly 02 Deadline

Thursday, September 19th: Collegian 02 Published

Thursday, September 26th: Gadfly 02 Published

If you have any questions, please reach out to gadfly.office@sjc.edu, or drop by the Gadfly office in the BBC basement between 4 pm and 5:30 on Wednesdays or Fridays.

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THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Founded in 1980, the Gadfly is the student newsmagazine distributed to many 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 or JPEG format. The deadline for submissions is the Monday a week prior to publication.

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

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