



FROM THE POLITY

Why Smoking is Frickin' Epic

I hear the concerns of a tragically misguided member of the polity and raise them the age-old aphorism, "live and let live," applicable in the sense that you should let me live my life of peace, freedom, and looking damn cool whilst you live your pedantic, nit-picky life of cold unfeeling sobriety.

Big Anti-Tobacco has been in the limelight for far too long, propounding such fiction as "lung cancer" and "emphysema," which has poisoned public nicotine discourse in the way smoking does not poison the body. It pains me to see the noble gifts of my good and unbiased friend, Phillip Morris, so treated with base contempt. We could speak for hours on the claim that well over 10 people die of smoking related illness per annum, but I digress. We have issues closer to home to discuss, and such arguments are beneath such esteemed sophists as we. Did Socrates ever decry the baseness of smoking? I think not.

Moving onto my anonymous friend's claim that smoking grants one an unattractive nature and an unpleasant presence. I'd in fact like to argue the opposite, that you non-smoking squares and your whining tires my fellow smokers and I, gives us a headache, and makes us really need a smoke. When you think about it, you're the problem. But my low, sexy voice and existential joie de vivre allow me to suffer such blows without complaint. If you insist upon being so bent out of ideological shape, perhaps you should consider the good of the whole. Does the presence of smoking not elevate the mysterious and pseudo-intellectual atmosphere that the polity aspires to cultivate here? In standing in opposition to smoking, you stand against progress, truth, and freedom. After all, academia is best seen as the process of peering through the veil—in this case, one of smoke.

Now, to the author of *On the Smoking Policy*, I hope this refutation is not deeply offensive to you, but rather that it has encouraged you to entertain the truth, that there exists no art more dear to—nor more conducive to—the St. John's spirit and culture of passionate truth-seeking. Please cease your attacks on the cornerstones of our college, and our intrinsic, God given right to smoke on the quad.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need a Lucky Strike. You know where to find me. That's all.
—J.S. (*Jilted Smoker*)

CALLS ALLEGING SUSPICIOUS ITEMS MADE, BUILDINGS EVACUATED

Local and State Police Conducted Check of Campus, Found No Explosive Objects, Investigation is Ongoing

Classes in Mellon on the morning of Thursday, November 2nd, were interrupted at about 10:40 by the harsh ringing of the fire alarm. For many students, the reason for the alarm was unclear at first, with some speculating that there might be a fire drill that was not announced, or that there was actually a fire going on in Mellon. However, the word quickly began spreading amongst students standing outside of Mellon, and was confirmed by tutors and staff nearby, that a suspicious package was reported to be somewhere in Mellon, and that the Annapolis Police Department had ordered the building to be evacuated.

Students who were signed up to the Public Safety Emergency Alert System received emails and texts warning them to evacuate Mellon at 10:47, and students who were in the building at the time were moved over across the fields of back campus, before being told to continue down towards the boathouse. At this time, Fielding Hall, Campbell Hall, Carroll Barrister House, and the Harrison House were also evacuated. The buildings remained closed until an all clear message was sent out to the Polity at 12:44. Due to this, 1 pm classes were canceled, and the dining hall was opened from 1-2 pm, with campus operations returning to normal at the start of 2:20 classes.

The evacuations were triggered in response to a call made to admissions earlier that morning, in which an unidentified person suggested he knew that there was a student in possession of a dangerous object on campus. "It was Thursday, and I had a 8:30 am to 12:30 pm shift," explained the student who received the call, who asked to remain anonymous. "I opened things up as I usually do, and I was returning calls that were missed... there was a call that came in at 7:40 am, which I thought was odd, because admissions doesn't open until 9, and why would you call admissions at 7:40?" The student proceeded to call the number back, and a voice of someone who didn't sound like a student responded. "He said, 'did you know that there's a student on your campus that has explosive material that can be turned into a weapon?'" continued the student who answered the phone. "He said, 'I don't want anyone's arms or legs to be blown off.' That is where the call began to feel threatening."

The student kept the caller on the phone while trying to transfer him to Public Safety, but was unable to,

and so gave Public Safety's phone number to the caller. After the call ended, the student called Public Safety, and explained what had happened. "They basically said, please come over right away," he continued. After he arrived at the public safety office, he was given a statement to fill out. "At some point while I was there, the person actually called public safety again... as far as I could tell [the Public Safety Officer] was mostly trying to get his name."

Upon receiving this call, which specified the dangerous materials were near a "chemistry classroom," the Annapolis Police Department was notified, and Dean Susan Paalman went around talking to tutors before 10:20 classes to inform them of the situation, and to say that they were awaiting the Police Department for further instructions.

Danielle Lico, Vice President of Student Affairs, who helped coordinate the response, said in a statement that "upon [the police department's] arrival to campus and after a review of the information available, the decision was made to evacuate Mellon Hall... Public Safety continued to work with onsite law enforcement, including the Annapolis Police Department, Maryland State Police, Capitol Police K-9 Unit, the US Navy Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, including explosive detection canine units, to determine if any explosive materials were present. After searching multiple locations on-campus, no explosive materials were found."

Paalman, in a statement to the Collegian expressed appreciation that the response was quick, well organized, and that the first priority was to keep students safe. "I'm not sure what led someone to report that there might be a dangerous object on our campus. It was frustrating to have to leave everything for a couple of hours. I am grateful that there was, in fact, no dangerous object and that students, tutors, and staff were calm and listened to instructions. I'm grateful for the beautiful day and the extra time many of us had to enjoy it. I'm grateful for the people who were not able to enjoy the lovely day, but whose job it is to respond to emergencies. I especially note the calm professionalism of Ms. Lico, Mr. Abbott, Ms. VanNess, Chief Boston, our Public Safety officers, and others I'm not thinking of at the moment."

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- 11/9: Aristophanes: Clouds
- 11/13: Plato: Apology and Crito

Sophomores:

- 11/9: Bible, First Corinthians
- 11/13: Bible, Romans and James

Juniors and Seniors:

- Preceptorials

Friday Night Lecture:

All College Seminar on Ecclesiastes, Hosted by the SCI

Upcoming Events:

Saturday 11/11

- Noon, Library Patio: Library Book Sale
- 9 pm, Great Hall: Masquerade Waltz

Tuesday 11/14

- 3:45 pm, Hodson Room: Internship Search Workshop
- 4:30 pm, Conversation Room: Shakespeare in the Fall, Coriolanus

Wednesday 11/15

- 2:30 pm, Hodson Room: Maryland Public Service Scholars Info Session

EDITORIAL: The Gadfly Publication Delays, and Why Both Campus Publication’s Review by Administration and Independence is Important

For the third time this year, the Gadfly’s publication has been delayed, with none of the three issues scheduled to come out to date having been published on the week they were supposed to. The first time was purely an internal issue, which has been resolved, but the remaining two times have been because of concerns over the Gadfly’s content during its review by the administration of the College. The most recent issue, which should have come out last Thursday, is not yet out at the time of the Collegian’s publication.

Publications are delayed on campus for two good reasons. The first is practical: we receive our funding from the College, and the College cannot have a publication that operates with its money spreading disinformation or harmful content without exposing itself to liability. The second is more philosophical: these reviews often function as a check for truth and moral character of the publication. In one incident that occurred this year, the Collegian was delayed because I had mis-

recorded some important financial data from the BVG meeting, and the treasurer wanted to offer a correction. This kind of fact checking is important for the publication, and was a good reason for a delay. Likewise, an article in the Gadfly held up the second issue because some of it might have seemed insulting to individuals on campus. The author of the article had secured the permission of the people mentioned, but the person doing the reviews did not know that, and it was very reasonable to make sure that the paper wasn’t personally attacking or hurting students on campus.

However, the most recent delay caused by these reviews is not necessary for ensuring the factual or moral soundness of the paper, and has continued a trend of more administrative involvement in the day-to-day operation of the Gadfly. The Gadfly is currently being delayed because Ms. Demleitner wants to publish a response to an interview I conducted on tutor pay. While I respect that there may be a need to provide factual corrections,

holding up the publication of the newspaper to give a greater voice to the administration is an abuse of the review power. If Ms. Demleitner really wants to have her voice heard about tutor pay, she should be able to either offer an official statement outside the Gadfly, or wait until the next issue.

Once the paper is ready, the primary aim of the review should be to get a factually sound Gadfly out as fast as possible. Otherwise, the Gadfly loses its relevance as a source of news and information. To hold up this key part of what a campus publication is just in order to give more voice to people on campus who already have many other platforms of communication seems irresponsible and infringes on the independence of the Gadfly.

I hope that moving forward, the Gadfly and administration can work to build better communication, to ensure that we can find a balance between publishing an independent, relevant newspaper, and reasonable review of its content.

BALANCING OUR BOOKS AND OUR BODIES:

Musings on the Campus Problem of Student Health (or Utter Lack Thereof)

Recently my friends and I were imagining a Hunger Games-type situation at St. John’s; a fight to the death with the entire student body. While entertaining to think of, and maybe even intriguing (Reality Club... maybe something to work on?), there was a thought that came to me: we are all incredibly weak. And yes, this is ignoring some of the student body that does really have their shit together and could probably kill a lot of us with their bare hands. But for the most part our weakness is accurate and unavoidable. And this isn’t just due to the student body comprising mostly of previous high school nerds, and we can hear why in the conversations we have outside of class. Does any of this sound familiar? “I haven’t eaten anything all day” “I only got three hours of sleep last night” “I’ve just been drinking coffee and eating the dining hall fries for the past week” “I had ten (10) shots of Jack Daniels last night” “I have had bronchitis for eight weeks but will continue to smoke half a pack a day” This campus is malnourished, under slept, and sick.

With our college’s motto being “Books and a Balance” one would think that we would attempt to execute this. Our failure to do so raises the question of what kind of balance the student body is seeking. If it is not the balance of a healthy life with an immersive study of books, then what exactly is it? With the obsession with acting thoughtlessly and unhealthily along with the need for our peer’s eyes, it seems as though we are seeking the balance of someone on a tightrope, teetering on the thin line we have created for ourselves, made for the spectacle of it. Because it is not that we are just drinking too much or eating and sleeping too little, but that it is done alongside perfection in school. It is an attempt to do the impossible; reduce your body and health to nothingness while turning in a beautiful essay in on time. We must be the impossible to everyone we know! And as glamorous as that sounds, being a functional alcoholic with a great Don Rag, it is impossible. We can try to convince ourselves that the essay we turned in after seventy-two hours of not

sleeping is good, but it really isn’t. Instead of reaching perfection and self-destruction at the same time all we have done is hurt our bodies and our minds without anything to show for it. As much as we avoid this conclusion it is inevitable, and we can all see it when we cry to our friends about not being able to keep going as tired as you are.

To offer a solution for this is to throw a stone in a glass house. I smoke an incredible amount and absolutely do not work out. So, really what I have done is offer up useless critique on a mass problem of young people in academia. But I will say that each and every one of you would benefit from drinking a glass of whole milk and eating some vegetables.

Molly Sprout

Pensée of the Week

The observant reader will note that this is now classified as the pensée of the week, rather than the aphorism. This is because a new manuscript, attributed to the same sage of Gorman Street, was found by my friend, clarifying that these were in fact inspired by the scattered philosophical musings of Pascal. Upon receiving this information, I quickly corrected the title of this reoccurring feature, as most of these really don’t make sense as aphorisms to begin with. Whether they make sense as thoughts in general is another question, but one I feel more comfortable to let the reader decide.

The Leviathan ruled the wide sea on his majestic throne. One day, he was sitting on his throne for too long, and he drowned because he forgot to breathe.

ABOUT THE ST. JOHN’S COLLEGIAN

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

Want to submit an article? We always need more writers, whether for opinion or reporting! Submissions for news articles should be between 350-450 words, while opinion should be kept short at 300 words. Just email anicholskaufman@sjc.edu with your article, and we will work to get it in print! Longer form articles and more in-depth exploration of ideas should go to the Gadfly, which accepts submissions at lbriner@sjc.edu.

Contributors for this issue:

El’ad Nichols-Kaufman, Editor

J.S.

Molly Sprout

Enjoy intramurals? Want to see more coverage of games, scores and standings? The Collegian wants **you!**

We are looking to provide comprehensive coverage of College sporting events going forward, and would like to have a sports writer on staff. If this interests you, please email El’ad Nichols-Kaufman at the email listed above, and we can get started on giving our campus sports the attention they deserve.