

# THE GADFLY

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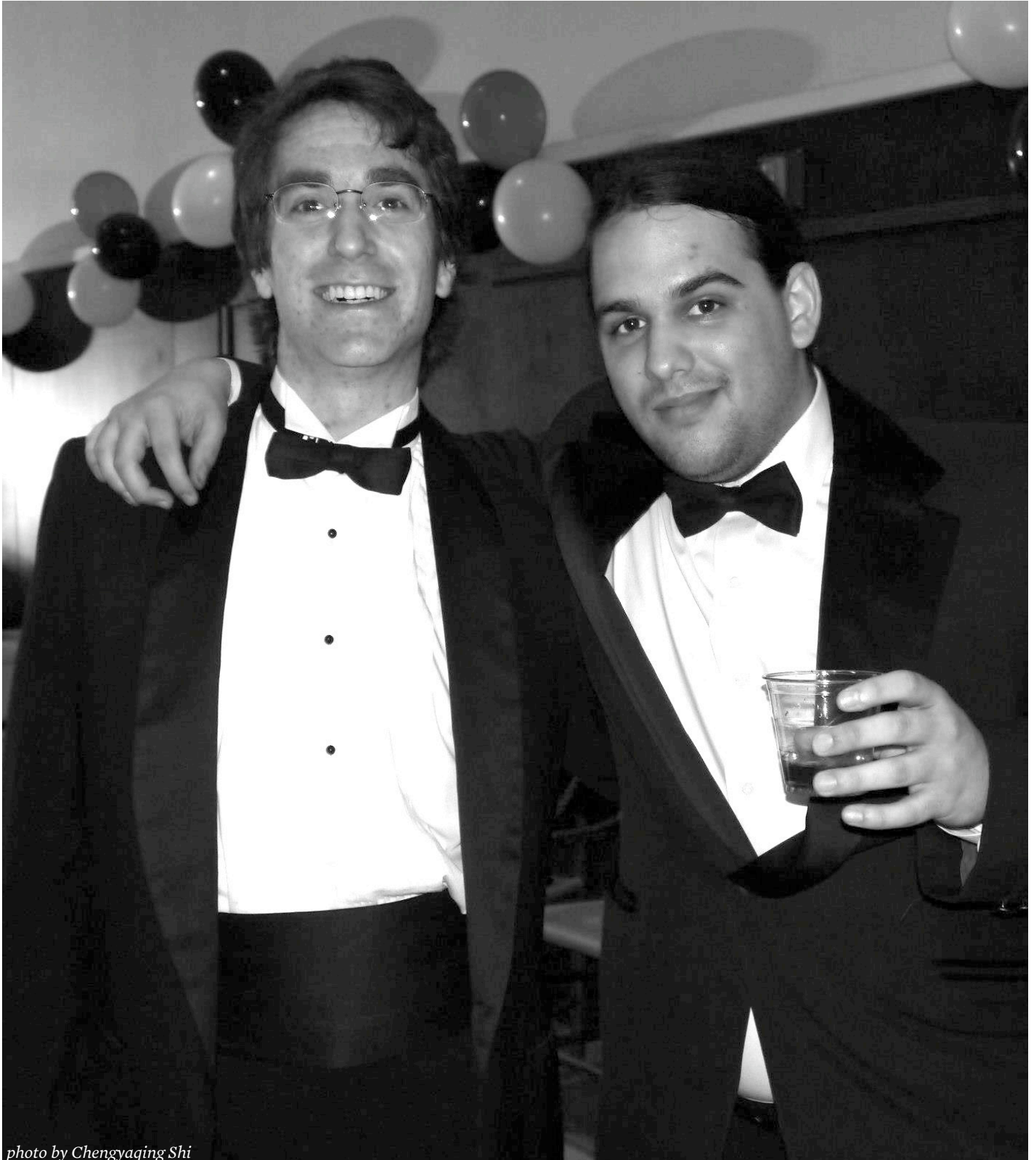


photo by Chengyaqing Shi

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER  
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

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

Opinions expressed within are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The *Gadfly* reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish a professional, informative, and thought-provoking newsmagazine.

The submission date for the next *Gadfly* is forthcoming. As always, articles should be emailed to sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

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## What's Your "Bliss Point"?

Check out the new posting on the dining hall blog to find out more about the science behind the processed foods industry, which tries to captivate consumers by discovering exactly how our brains respond to junk food. Do you know why you can't stop at "just one" Cheeto or potato chip? Because it's been carefully engineered to make you want more. From the bliss point to "vanishing caloric density" to advertising, the production and marketing of junk foods is a carefully and scientifically researched process.

\*<http://gastrokitty.blogspot.com/>  
— Formaggio Elettrico

## KWP Presents: *The Glass Menagerie*

Don't miss the first KWP production of the semester! Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* will play on Tuesday, April 2, and Wednesday, April 3, at 7 p.m. in FSK. The show is directed by Audra Zook ('13), with the assistance of Amy Stewart ('13).

*The Glass Menagerie*, along with *A Streetcar Named Desire*, is one of Tennessee Williams' best-known and best-loved works. The "memory play" revolves around a small family in St. Louis in 1937: narrator Tom Wingfield (Danny Kraft, '13), an aspiring poet who spends his dreary days working in a shoe factory; his crippledly shy sister, Laura (Rebekah Bentum, '13); and their domineering mother, Amanda (Dani Nelson, '14), a Southern belle whose husband ran off years before. The play's tragedy centers on Amanda's obsessive desire to save her daughter from spinsterhood through the person of gentleman caller Jim O'Connor (Raymond Lau, '16).

Almost 70 years after its premiere, *The Glass Menagerie* remains one of the foremost works of American theatre. Don't miss KWP's limited-time production!



## Accepted Students' Day: An Invitation from Admissions

Hello, Polity! The Admissions Office will be hosting the annual Accepted Students Day on Saturday, April 13th. This is a large event which takes place in all major spaces on campus. It is a wonderful event for the Class of 2017: for some, it is their first experience on campus; others are seasoned visitors and are taking this opportunity to get to know their potential classmates.

At this point, these students have been bombarded with plenty of pieces of our stunning Admissions Propaganda, they've watched the Virtual Tour videos, and they've read the book list 1,000 times. They understand the curriculum and our approach to liberal education. They're on board with education for education's sake, and they're OK answering the question, "But what do you DO with that?" from well-meaning relatives, neighbors, teachers and friends for the next four years. They're well-read and well-informed about the academic program.

What they are lacking is exposure to the community that lives and breathes this program. It is the Polity which makes this Program a reality, and their lack of exposure to the Polity is precisely what we are trying to address at this event. This exposure is mutual—while we want the Accepted Students to get a sense of the current Polity, we want you to get a sense of this class too. We'd like you to meet these students face to face, show them around, tell them about your annual essay (which should be done by then!) and break bread with them. We'd also like to have any interested club archons available for an Information Fair (similar to the All-College Fair in August).

And so, I urge you, comrades and citizens in the Republic, do not let this day's distractions become disruptions. Instead, rise up and meet the class of 2017; welcome them to the College. Next fall, these students will join you on the quad after seminar, sing to you at Freshman Chorus concerts, and marvel at the mysteries of the axolotls. They will inherit the *Gadfly* and KWP. They will live next door to you, sit next to you in the All-College Seminar, and come to you for Greek Assistance. Don't wait until Convocation to feast your eyes upon the inheritors of your legacy. Come to the Accepted Students Day and help welcome these students and their families on April 13th.

For details, or to volunteer time that day, please contact Alexandria Hinds at 410-626-2525 or alexandria.hinds@sjca.edu, or just stop by the Hodson House.

# Alumni Profile:

## Sir Robert Burbridge, A'05

*“Find an interesting problem that people need solved and solve it.” Sir Robert Burbridge, A'05, has done just that as CEO of Altometrics, Inc., and proves that the technology world could use a few more Johnnies.*



### What is your current job?

I'm the CEO of Altometrics, Inc. (altometrics.com). We are a tech company focusing on “big data” analytics.

### Did you attend other schools after St. John's?

I have not yet, but I'm open and interested.

### Did you know what you wanted to do while attending St. John's?

Sometimes. I was a “non-traditional” student with some non-academic experience (I graduated from St. John's in 2005 at age 28). I knew I wanted to be engaged in entrepreneurship, but had (and have) other interests as well. So far I've kept entrepreneurship as a central professional aspiration and focus, while pursuing those other interests non-professionally.

### Did St. John's help prepare you for work in the field?

Absolutely—and in a variety of ways. Some time after graduation, I tried to characterize the nature of the education I acquired through St. John's—a helpful process, itself. I finally decided that I had a degree in conversation, with an emphasis on principled analysis. Some of the particular ideas I encountered in the course of the Program have been of some utility (especially from the Bible, Socrates, Descartes, Pascal, Kant, Hegel, Flannery O'Connor, and others). Of vastly greater importance was the exposure to the high caliber thought processes of the writers, philosophers, artists, and so on. I realized that the true value of the Program (to me) was a dedicated time to examine the underlying mental, emotional, and spiritual mechanics of these Great Influencers of the world. The changes in myself during my time at St. John's and afterwards have been a holistic preparation for everything I've done since.

### What didn't St. John's prepare you for?

St. John's didn't really prepare me for the particular practice of any job. That's OK, because I didn't expect it to. I worked as a programmer at Cisco Systems for a few years after graduation, during which I learned about business machination and technological engineering.

### Any specific disadvantages to a St. John's background?

The biggest disadvantage to a St. John's background is the lack of technical training—in anything. Even the philosophical training we get isn't technical. That's not a huge obstacle if you realize it, but thinking that someone comes out of St. John's technically prepared to be a philosopher, writer, teacher, or even student (or anything else) could be disappointing. In fairness, that's not unique to St. John's, but it's especially

pronounced for the College in particular. The week that I learned that my senior essay was accepted, I remember thinking, “I think I'm finally ready to get a real education.”

### How did you feel you compared, in graduate school or early jobs, to people from different educational backgrounds, particularly those with field-related degrees?

I was generally better off than my peers with field-related degrees. That is, they had a short-term advantage, but I have had a long-term advantage. I had to work harder to compensate for the lack of technical training early on, but the education I received during my time at St. John's facilitated considerably faster growth in a diverse set of domains. In the end, technical expertise is among the easiest assets to acquire or train; an expansive, cohesive mental framework is among the hardest.

### Can you describe a general track someone from St. John's might take to get into a career in this field?

Generally, getting a couple of years of relevant work experience will go a long way to helping you in an entrepreneurial endeavor. Find an interesting problem that people need solved and solve it. Johnnies are among the best equipped people in the world to solve interesting problems interestingly.

### Any general advice, especially for an upperclassman who is interested in this field but is not quite sure what to do?

A Johnnie interested in programming should either work on some interesting projects on their own or get involved in someone else's (an open source project, for example). Taking a few summer classes may help too. A Johnnie interested in entrepreneurship (especially in an executive capacity) should get good at team building. Learn to identify your weaknesses and strengths and find others who are complementarily skilled or talented.

### How did you market yourself with a St. John's degree?

My first real job out of college was as a software engineer for Cisco Systems. The interview was a little bit strange, but I answered the questions candidly and without concern for the outcome. In particular, when they asked me why they should hire me, since I didn't have any formal training in software development or programming (I'm self-taught), I told them that if they want a mechanic to execute instructions well, they should not hire me; there's probably someone else applying who can execute better, sooner. If, however, they are looking to hire real talent who will bring a creative, rigorous, and

Continued From Pg. 03

broad view to any challenge that arises, then it would be a grave mistake to pass up on the opportunity to hire me—due in large part to the nature of my education at St. John's. They hired me.

**How would you characterize your field as a whole? Is it accessible to newcomers or difficult to enter? Stable or fluid? Etc.**

Tech and entrepreneurship are both pretty accessible to newcomers. It's pretty easy to enter, but can be tough to excel. The main reason is that entrepreneurship is highly volatile.

**What was your senior essay topic?**

My senior essay was about the relationship between the continuous and discrete; in particular, about the asymmetry between analysis and synthesis (e.g., a line fully describes all the points on it—analysis—but any number of points cannot describe a line fully—synthesis). I looked at it with a mind towards the involvement of human perception and cognition in our construction of ways to address the odd disparity between the way the functions of analysis and synthesis operate on what we perceive as continuous and discrete.

**What is your favorite book on the Program?**

That's a really tough question. Some small elements of various books have proven to be immensely valuable to me: for example, several of Pascal's *pensées* have become long-term themes of personal growth for me. Several parts of the New Testament have been utterly transformational for me. Parts of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (precept), such as the encounter with the sublime, affected me a lot.

**Do you find that you lead a philosophical life?**

Yes, to the best of my ability. I would definitely sacrifice "success" or "progress" for wisdom. I believe the proverb: "Wisdom is foremost; though it cost you all you have, get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7). I have four excellent kids and my wife (also a Johnnie) and I focus on that as a principal endeavor with them. Whenever I encounter an idea, I think the most important thing I can do is follow it with the question, "How, then, shall I live?" ♦

# Habemus Papam!

## Pope Francis I Takes the World Stage

Melissa Gerace A'15

After Pope Benedict XVI's brave announcement that he would step down, leaving the seat of St. Peter empty, the world wondered who would be selected to take his place. At times, the media seemed to be in an uproar at the very rare instance of abdication, seeming to forget that the Catholic Church has been selecting new popes for thousands of years. Misinformation and misconceptions were everywhere. Catholics might have been asked bewildering questions such as: "Will the new pope allow contraception?" or "Will the new pope allow women to become priests?" I know I was, and found myself at rather a loss. My first instinct was simply to answer, "Um...no." However, in the list of questions asked beginning with, "You're Catholic, right?", my favorite has been, "Who will you vote for, for pope?"

Though votes do figure in to the selection of a new pope, they do not come from the laity. Cardinals cast their vote in conclave. The law of conclave was begun after the election that placed Pope Gregory X in the seat of St. Peter, an election which lasted over two years and nine months. It finally ended when the local authorities became fed up with the delay and locked the cardinals in. In order to prevent such a scandal in the future, Gregory X, in the fifth session of the Second Council of Lyons, promulgated the law of the conclave. Cardinals are closed in to a room without partition where no communication may be had in secret, and no message may be sent to the outside. The only communication between the conclave and the world is the famous colored smoke from the Sistine Chapel chimney: black if no deci-

sion has been reached, and white to signal the election of the next pope.

This year, conclave began on Tuesday, February 12, and ended the following afternoon. The world watched the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel, anxiously awaiting the sight of white smoke. It came just after 7 p.m., CET. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina had been chosen. Bergoglio is the first non-European pope, the first Jesuit, the first Latin American, and the first to choose the name "Francis"—the media has already taken to calling him "the pontiff of firsts." Bergoglio, at seventy-six years old, is a humble, intellectual man known for his simple style of living,

“Bergoglio is the first non-European pope, the first Jesuit, the first Latin-American, and the first to choose the name “Francis”—the media has already taken to calling him “the pontiff of firsts.”

doctrinal conservatism, and dedication to Catholic social justice. His choice of the name Francis, for St. Francis of Assisi, further illustrates these qualities.

Pope Francis I greeted his Church on that Wednesday evening in simple white, choosing not

to step up on a platform which would elevate him above the Cardinals. He led all in three well-known, important prayers: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria. In another first, he asked the crowd of thousands to pray for him. In a world full of noise and chaos, he asked for and received silence from the gathered crowd, bowing before them as they asked for blessing upon him. He followed this by urging prayer and brotherhood among the Church, and offering his first blessing. The prayers of the Catholic Church are with Pope Francis I as he begins his ministry, and the world is watching with interest to see what the papacy of this humble, intelligent man will bring. It is my opinion that we can expect great things from the "pontiff of firsts." ♦



# Visiting Shimer

The Great Books  
College of Chicago

Samuel Weinberg A'14

Along with Maca Pallares and Grace Tyson ('13), I spent a weekend at Chicago's Shimer College the second weekend of spring break. We were there presenting papers for the ACTC (Association of Core Texts and Courses) student conference on "Core Texts and Liberal Education," along with thirty-seven students from almost as many institutions. Shimer College is a curious place. Since 2006, it has been housed on two rented floors of the Illinois Institute of Technology on Chicago's South Side. Before that time, the school was not without its problems—in the late 70s, after a vote from the board of trustees to close the school, the faculty and students protested, and instead moved the operation to Waukegan, Illinois, where they remained until 2006. With the assistance of Lynne Cheney and the N.E.H., Shimer was able to stay afloat and remain relatively fiscally stable.

In 2009, Shimer became embroiled in a stark ideological battle when another N.E.H. bigwig, Thomas Lindsay, staged what many thought was a neo-conservative takeover of the school. Through a no confidence vote, the faculty and students of Shimer ousted Lindsay, and in so doing, rid themselves of all the financial security that he would have brought to the

College. When I asked senior Michael Doherty about the decision, he told me that it was far more important to preserve the ethos of the place than it would have been to, in his words, be "rolling in it."

In any case, Shimer remains certainly uncertain about its financial future. The College currently has around 110 students and fourteen faculty members. While it is a "great books college," its program varies from St. John's' in many important ways. While it has a core curriculum of classes, many classes taken by "Shimerians" are electives, all of which are broken up into subject headings such as "Humanities," "Social Sciences," "Natural Sciences," and "Integrated Studies." In their upper level classes, Shimer tends much more towards modernism than we do. During our first meal, one of their professors (there called "facilitators") was truly shocked that Durkheim and Buber are nowhere to be found in our studies.

But despite the differences—of which there are many more—we are more similar than different. I felt a strange sense of camaraderie with the Shimer students whom I spent time with on my Saturday night there, and not only because their bookshelves were lined with Joe Sachs' translations of Aristotle and the unmistakably hued *Newton's Principia: The Central Argument*. At a student's apartment, we collectively bemoaned the fact that both institutions are attracting far fewer students than they should be. This was followed by a laugh that was both comforting and slightly disheartening.

What's more, though, is how inspiring the Shimer community's ardent devotion to their work is. Throughout their history and all of the aforementioned financial instability, there is a real sense that many of the members of the faculty really believe in what they are doing and are willing to keep the spirit of Shimer alive, even if that means renting a floor from a technical college. Often, at St. John's, we speak of the inevitable doom that will come upon us before we know it, but my visit to Shimer makes me realize how good we have it. Sure, I will

concede that the future of liberal education seems questionable at best, with the sad fact that American's expectations are tending far more towards demonstrable, vocationally

oriented education than liberal education. That said, it was truly a privilege to speak with so many students from a school far from ours and recognize our overwhelming similarities and priorities. In the national conversation on the future of liberal education, it would be easy to overlook Shimer College, but my visit there showed me that that is a sad thing. Just as the Program has irrevocably changed all of us, the education the Shimer students have received has been just as valuable for them. Even though I visited Shimer with a healthy dose of incredulity, which I perhaps still have to a small degree, I left with admiration for their commitment to their work, and a sense of comfort that we are not alone in valuing liberal education and the virtues of the Great Books. ♦

“We're not alone in valuing liberal education and the virtues of the Great Books.”

## Senior Essay Spotlight:

Chazaq Llinas

### Title/topic?

"Reflecting on the Generation of Knowledge," focusing on Plato's *Theaetetus*

### Why this work/topic?

I wanted to understand what knowledge is as it is coming-into-being, or, what is knowledge when one is coming to know?

### Advisor?

Mr. Salem

### Writing Period strategy?

The first task was to structure the day: I woke up early, exercised, meditated, and went to the library. Then, I was able to focus on the task of reading, thinking, and writing. The hardest task was to not allow my thought to be routine. I tried to cultivate a habit of thought that was both strong and flexible.

### Advice?

Let everyone read your paper. Enjoy this rare moment when all the parts of one's life share a common *telos*.

# The Art of “Enstrangement”

Nathan Goldman A'14

In literary critic Viktor Shklovsky's 1925 masterwork, *Theory of Prose*, he seeks to explain how literature works in a series of deftly argued and lyrical essays examining works as disparate as *Don Quixote* and the Sherlock Holmes novels. He delivers: in the book's very first chapter, “Art as Device,” he presents his theory of art's function. Shklovsky writes:

Automatization eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives, and at our fear of war... And so, in order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given the tool of art. The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition.

Shklovsky's term for this process is *ostraniene*; a Russian neologism, which translator Benjamin Sher renders as “enstrangement.” Art, Shklovsky claims, re-awakens us; it makes us *see objects* in their complexity rather than *recognize symbols* in their mundanity. Art exists to make the world strange to us—“to make a stone feel stony.”

Shklovsky's theory is a fascinating attempt to answer fundamental aesthetic questions: What is art, what is it for, and how does it work? But enstrangement is useful, too, apart from its intended use: it's a fruitful way to think about how works we study at St. John's might affect us. Much of what we study is art in the sense that Shklovsky means it. One way to understand the beauty of a chorale from the *St. Matthew Passion* is as a process of musical enstrangement. But how can we bring the theory to bear on works of philosophy, mathematics, or natural science?

Great works in these genres enstrange our world, too; the thinkers we read lived amidst daily mundanity

but found ways to see and discover strangeness, complexity, and wonder. The works alert our attention to this strangeness: where we might hear the obvious meaning of the word “knowledge,” Plato heard profound uncertainty; where we see shapes ambling through the sky, Ptolemy saw the epicures, elaborate and divine.

Often, the authors even thwart our normal means of communication and expression to enstrange. Euclid defines a point as “that which has no part,” and Aristotle interprets the world through the alien concept of *entelecheia*. The notion of enstrangement provides a way of unlocking a text: How and by what means, I might ask, does this work help me re-see everything around and within me?

In these cases, the works do the enstranging; our tasks are to look anew and to investigate the enstrangement's source. Other times, the onus is on us. Studying foundational works is not without its dangers: we may too readily accept familiar ideas or fail to see strangeness and complexity even as the works alert us to it. When Locke discusses property, it's difficult for me to encounter the idea directly. Because I've lived with property all my life, I'm tempted to merely nod along rather than wrestle with it. In Genesis, some being creates the world and sees that it is good. In our pervasively monotheistic world, it's hard to realize that “What is a god?” is not an insipid question.

In these cases, the works alone may fail to fully enstrange our world. Our task, then, is to assist them: to read actively, attentively, and sometimes outside ourselves. We must shake ourselves from our own complacency: stop nodding along and instead search for nuances and oddities. We must meet the authors on the page and, as they were before us, be willing not only to see, but to re-see—and thus to see far more fully. ♦

“How and by what means, I might ask, does this work help me re-see everything around and within me?”

## A Partially Frozen Canal on Easter Morning

♦ Erik G. Neave

*Christ has risen —  
this chilly morning in the zealous West  
while the East has yet to lay him low.*

*Where once a dozen anxious eyes awoke  
to plaster themselves in pastels  
for an egg hunt and celebrations in song  
(a hundred voices singing as one)  
now, in godless Sweden, I stand.  
Dressed in a drab jacket and cap  
at the foot of a canal to hunt  
the sacred film of ice—  
bearing the weekend's litter  
and eleven city seagulls—  
inching from east to west  
s i m u ltaneo u s l y.*

*Is the savior's linen woven  
in icy whisps  
across the river's skin?  
Have easter lilies stretched roots  
a globes length  
to sip from Judas' veins?  
When the stone was pushed back,  
handless,  
did it crush the vines of Esau?*

*The water began to bubble and boil  
so sitting, dangling legs over stone,  
I cracked the sloshing surface  
with a God-given heel  
to form the crooked smirk of Adam,  
on the fringes of a carpenter's shadow,  
floating in frozen pieces,  
shifting on its journey west.*

*At last, breath demands remission--  
that bloody, arctic vision of a lamb--  
and descends a dissolving grave.*

*But rivers that end in the sea  
return from the sky  
and shove the massive sheet,  
with a prelude of palms,  
rolling East like the stone,  
to gather fragments  
and crush the devilish head,  
melt into the frigid whole  
beneath my tearful stare.  
And one crackling voice  
(singing as one hundred):  
Indeed, he is risen.*

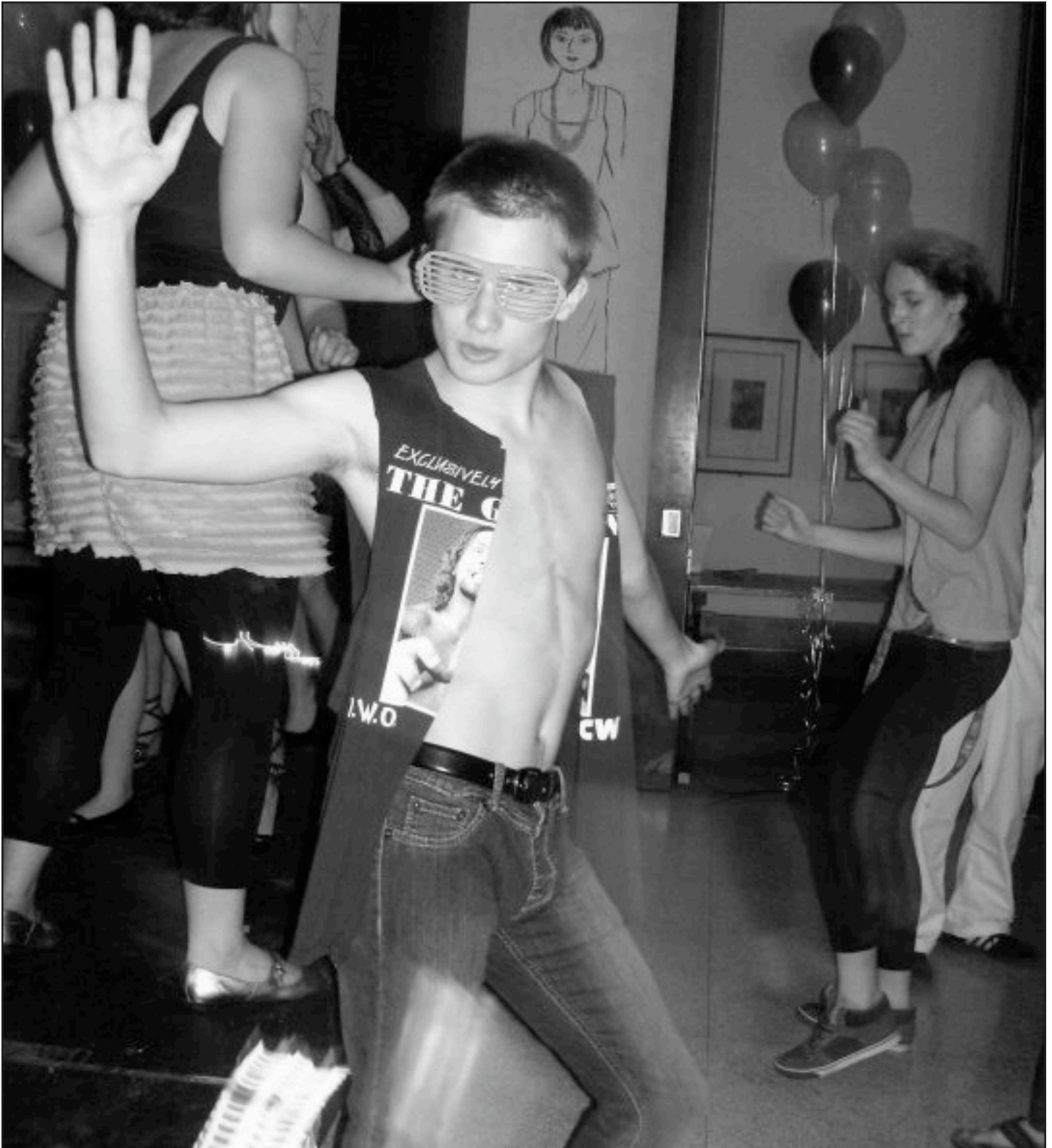
# THE BADFLY



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## Senior Herodotus Essay: “Ring of Gyges Actually the One Ring to Rule Them All”

One senior essay is causing quite a stir in fantasy/ancient Greek literature circles. Senior Thomas Underhill’s 126-page essay on Herodotus’s *Histories* argues that the ring of Gyges, which appears early in Herodotus’ account of the attempted conquest of Greece by Persia, is the same ring that descends to Mr. Frodo Baggins in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Writes Underhill, “A close textual analysis clearly shows that Herodotus and J.R.R. Tolkien are discussing the same piece of magical jewelry.” While some tutors have expressed skepticism at Underhill’s conclusions, Underhill insists that it’s common sense: “Come on, man, think about it: this ring turns you invisible; that ring turns you invisible. You don’t have to be Gandalf the White to figure this one out. Or, hell, even Gandalf the Gray. Look, it’s not like I’m saying Xerxes is Sauron or something crazy like that.” Mr. Underhill’s oral examination is set for late April. 🐉

## Overworked Paper Advisor Randomly Chooses Five Advisee Papers to Ruin

ANNAPOLIS, MD—She says that it started because of too much stress but that “after a while, I really started to enjoy it.” A tutor who stupidly agreed to advise multiple senior essays says that she “just started screwing with them” when she realized she did not have time to put in the effort required. “At first I just nodded my head when they talked, and if they asked questions, I said something that sounded vaguely Socratic. But after a while, I realized they might catch on, so I started making concrete suggestions. Before I knew it, my Newton student was incorporating derivatives, and another student actually took my advice to write the whole thing in Latin verse!” She says the power is intoxicating. “It’s not just their interpretation of a great text I’m destroying; it’s their entire future! It’s so much fun!” The tutor says she has already queried several juniors about advising them next year. 🐉

## Senior Brings up “the Cave” in Preceptorial

“We were dumbfounded,” says a female senior. “We just looked at him like, ‘Are you serious? Someone slap me. Like, are you SERIOUS?’” That is the reaction coming out of the Maxwell Electromagnetism preceptorial, where a senior reportedly referenced Plato’s Cave approximately an hour into the conversation. Says a classmate, “We were just going along, having a great class, and he brings this shit up—from what, like freshman year? The whole class just stopped.” After three minutes of stunned silence, the tutor ended the class early: “In my 27 years at the College, I have never stopped class before 10:10pm. But sometimes you just can’t recover.” Says the senior, who requested anonymity: “I mean, I thought it was relevant.” 🐉

**GADFLY EDITORS  
REPORTEDLY  
USE VERY LONG  
HEADLINES—  
OFTEN IN LARGE  
BOLD PRINT AND  
ACCOMPANIED BY  
INTERJECTIONS  
AND UNNECESSARY  
CLAUSES—TO FILL  
EMPTY SPACE**

## Student Graduates, Stays in Annapolis

Alumnus Tyler Smalls, who graduated with the class of 2012, says he “just couldn’t bear to leave” Annapolis after completing his St. John’s degree. “It’s a great town. I love the tourists. There’s water.” The former Johnnie, who hails from Bowie, MD, says he loves being far from home and experiencing “independence.” He is subletting a bedroom on East Street, where he says he spends “heavenly” evenings drinking Natty Boh and re-reading Plotinus. He is employed as a “go-fer” at City Dock Coffee, but he says upper management is considering training him to be a barista. He credits his St. John’s education: “During my time as an undergraduate, I spent enormous amounts of time in coffee shops. St. John’s also prepared me to think critically, and I think my bosses have noticed that. This upward mobility is exciting.” 🐉



Alumnus Tyler Smalls, A'12, living the dream.



## Campus Couple Breaks Up, Cites “Interpretative Differences”

Lauren and Michael, who had been dating on and off for nearly three months, broke things off last week, citing “interpretative differences.” Said Lauren, “If you ask me, Cato was a self-righteous fool who spilled his guts for nothing. Caesar would have been merciful, and perhaps Cato could have reasoned with him and rectified the situation. But instead he martyrs himself on the floor. It was childish. ‘I’m taking my ball and going home,’ that sort of thing.” Lauren says Michael refused to stand with her in this important judgment. “I was not comfortable moving forward with someone who saw things so differently. It was a tipping point. I mean, what would we have taught our future son Julius?”

Said Michael, “JULIUS? ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?” 🙄

## GADFLY POLL: 6 Students, a Tutor, and Taylor Waters Read the Gadfly

*Gadfly* readership is at an all-time high, a new *Gadfly*/ABC poll reports. Six students, one tutor, and Taylor Waters read the *Gadfly*, which appears every two weeks (or something like that) in the Coffee Shop. Of the six students, five are freshmen, all of whom say that they do not plan to continue next year. One reports, “I always think this issue will be better, but by the end I’m thinking, ‘Good God. What am I doing with my life?’” Taylor Waters admits she wouldn’t be caught near the thing unless it were part of her job, while the tutor only reads it when fatigued by annual essays. Says the sixth student, a junior, “I read it for the typos.” 🙄

## Exhausted Tutor Spends Sabbatical Exploring Baltimore Rave Scene



## PRIMUM MOBILE SEEKS MAKEOVER; PLANS TO PERFORM ONE DIRECTION AT SPRING COLLEGIUM

They are known for their exclusive audition process and renditions of folksy crowd favorites like Palestrina, but the College’s premiere choral group, Primum Mobile, says it is heading in a new direction—that is, over the pond to the British Isles, from whence hails boy band sensation One Direction. “It’s so fresh,” says one member of Primum Mobile. “Catchy beats, smooth melodies, sweet harmonies.” Says another, “It’s the lyrics, man. ‘You don’t know you’re beautiful. And that’s what makes you beautiful.’ God, it’s so clever!” The members hope that a new style will make them more “culturally relevant.” “Palestrina, Purcell, Byrd—sure, we know people love oldies. But you have to keep up with the times, sing what the kids are into. I mean, isn’t riding the trends what this College is all about?”

The group says they are considering new haircuts and skinny jeans. 🙄

## Sophomore’s Mediocre Essay Improved by Elaborate Cover Page

facebook

Haris Nadeem Friends Applications Inbox

Search

Haris Nadeem is exploring the new Facebook profile design. 34m ago edit

Wall Info Photos Boxes +

Status Note Photo Video Link Post Birthday Info

**Student’s “Favorite Quotes” on Facebook Just Filled with Snappy Progam One-Liners**

Today  
 Haris is now friends with Badar Saad.  
 Haris dugg Women President Anyone? Any other on Digg.

Yesterday  
 Haris wrote on Mansoor Ahmed Zia’s wall.  
 Haris is now friends with Mansoor Ahmed Zia.

Osama Tariq wrote at 9:53am

**Nervous Senior Confesses During Oral: “Fine, Okay, I SparkNoted the Books—Every Last One!”**

## St. John's University: No, We're Not the Croquet School in Annapolis!

Public relations personnel at St. John's University in Queens, New York, are reportedly becoming increasingly frustrated about having to clarify incorrect notions about the school's identity. The school's PR head says that the university receives at least a dozen calls a day inquiring about croquet scholarships and a "Great Books program." She says that the confusion, which has overwhelmed the university's phone lines, has caused several employees to quit. One has even checked into a mental health rehabilitation program. St. John's University's president is currently in talks with President Nelson to determine ways to combat the misconception.

The university's PR head admits that she breaks into tears multiple times a day. She "We have basketball! Doesn't anyone watch basketball anymore?!" 🐛

## NAVAL ACADEMY FLOTILLA LANDS ON COLLEGE CREEK; GILLIAM UNDER SIEGE

### LOVE FOR PLAID COMPELS GI TO ENTER UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

It was love for fashion and philosophy, says Joseph Freeman, that convinced the first-year Graduate Institute student to enroll in the undergraduate program. "I decided I could not live on the edge. I would always be sitting in the Master's classes thinking, 'What am I missing, just across the Quad? I couldn't take the sweater vests and old people.'" He says he knew that he needed a second undergraduate degree.

It will take some adjustment, he admits, but he says he is ready to "embrace their ways." He plans to grow out his hair, add scruff, go days between baths—and, of course, give up the Polo for the popular plaid. "It's really amazing how many people here look like lumberjacks," he says. "I always wanted to be a lumberjack."

Joseph says that the Graduate Institute was like "Johnnie-Lite." "And if I'm already disappointing my parents by getting a M.A. in the 'Liberal Arts'—well, I figured I should just commit." He says his parents no longer pick up his phone calls and have unfriended him on Facebook. "But that's okay. Who needs financial support when you have dialectic, right?" 🐛

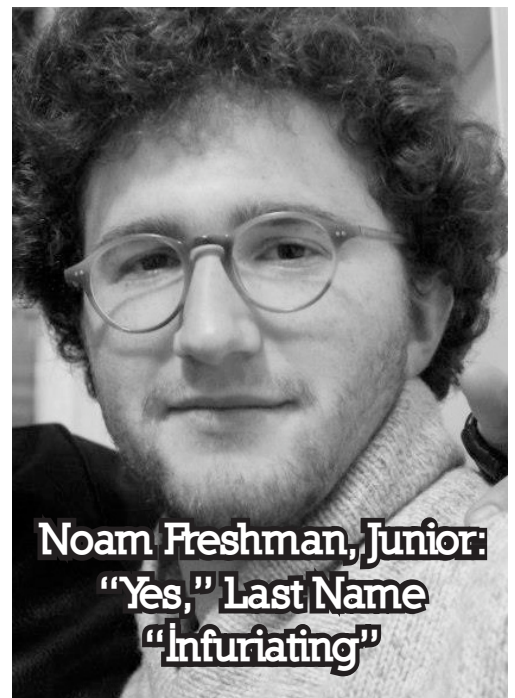
### BREAKING: Freshman Asks If One Can Know Anything, Upending Over 2000 Years of Philosophy

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Students and tutors alike began to weep openly Thursday night when a freshman demanded to know "whether anyone can know anything, really," during a seminar on Aristotle's *Physics*. "I mean come on, how can you know anything when life is just...like that, you know? Definitely been on my mind lately. It's like you can't even be sure of anything." Shocked by this new approach to the reading, several students requested to leave, while a tutor across the hall vomited upon hearing of it from panicked members of the administration. "I've never heard anything like it," said a tenured tutor who claimed to be "utterly blindsided" by the statement. "I thought the *Physics* was about defining essential concepts like space and time. It turns out I—I don't know anything. This student is undoubtedly the major thinker of our time." Others were less sure. "By all means, I think this is a remarkably brilliant student we have on our hands," said an anonymous member of the faculty. "But I guess my fear is that we're latching on to what may be just a small part of his emerging doctrine. I'm going to wait until he analyzes the *Phaedrus* and see what happens." In a prepared address to the Polity, the student recommended "not doing the seminar reading and just going balls to the wall." 🐛

## Naval Academy Launches Surprise Fireworks Display to Celebrate End of Sophomore/Junior Essay Period

Annapolis shook with a surprise light show just after 10 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26, when the Naval Academy launched a 20-minute fireworks display to celebrate the end of the sophomore and junior essay writing periods at St. John's College across the street. "You kids worked hard," says the mid who came up with the idea, "and since we couldn't come and drink ourselves into comas like you, we thought this was the next best thing." Said the commandant, "We sail the seven seas and protect our nation from harm. But 15 to 20 pages, double-spaced? Damn. Now that's hard work." President Nelson was honored by the display. "It was such an unexpected delight to share this celebration with our neighbors, and in such a wonderful way. I mean, who doesn't like to blow shit up, am I right?" 🐛

## REPORT: Painter Bob Working on Epic that "Will Make Homer Look Like Nursery Rhymes"



**Noam Freshman, Junior:**  
"Yes," Last Name  
"Infuriating"

## The *Gadfly* Investigates: For Whom the Bell Tolls

What has been for years a staple in the daily routine of Johnnies campus-wide is now a solemn piece of St. John's history: the bell tower tolls no longer. Many students have inquired as to why the beloved bell has ceased its pleasant proclamation at the end of every class, but the truth of the matter may surprise you. On February 12 the Polity received an email from Ms. Kraus concerning the bell tower, which stated that it was "unsafe" but that "no other details" were available. However, the email revealed one piece of information that, to an astute and careful reader (of which there are few, admittedly) revealed the true reason for the tower troubles.

The email in question said specifically that the bell had been "turned off" until further notice. But every Johnnie knows, and I need not remind you, that the bell is not automatic; our cheerful, chiming friend never has and never will have an "OFF switch." Don't believe me? Ask any senior who was sober for the bell ringing ceremony (of which there are few, admittedly).

No, no. The real reason the bell has abandoned its chime is much more shocking, and much more solemn. It is a little known but well remembered fact that, upon Leo Strauss's unfortunate and untimely death in 1973, a council of respected and venerable tutors held a meeting (a "seminar," if you will) about what was to be done. Leo Strauss had, in accord with his sociopolitical ideals, left an unintelligible will concerning his endowment to the College that had to be deciphered by the council. After one hour and fifty-eight minutes of competing opinions, and two minutes of actual textual references, the following decision was reached: samples of Strauss's DNA were to be reengineered for and spliced with the body of an axolotl.

The "Strauxolotl" was a huge success. Too much of a success, some might say. Its rate of growth was highly irregular and, due to its almost immediate sentience, the Strauxolotl was able to enroll in the undergraduate program, becoming one of the first non-human students at St. John's (of which there are few, admittedly).

“The “Strauxolotl” was a huge success. Too much of a success, some might say.

“So, what does this have to do with the bell tower?” you might ask. Well, believe it or not, the world of the 1970s just wasn't ready for a hyper-intelligent, half-man/half-salamander, so upon graduation the Strauxolotl took up residence in the bell tower, feeding on the snacks left over from waltz parties, and ringing our beloved bell at appropriate times during the day. It is for this service to our community that we immortalized

him in the construction of the Hodson House, named and dedicated in his honor.

But this story has an unhappy ending to which our silent bell speaks volumes. Several weeks ago,

our dear Strauxolotl, naïve in the affairs of man, stumbled upon Reality's alcohol stores in the top of McDowell and, having drunk his fill, he stumbled off his humble home and bashed his lovely, lizard brain on the bricks below. (I will take this time to thank the Building & Grounds team for their quick and efficient response.)

Anyway, the Strauxolotl, our friend and ally for all these years, is no longer with us. But his memory will live on: every time we get drunk, every time a Don Rag goes poorly, every time we get sexiled, every time we fail to finish a reading and bullshit our way through seminar, the Strauxolotl will be with us, watching us. Our quiet bells will be an ever present reminder of his faithfulness to this Program.

Inspired by: Robert George (A'15) ☞

## Dining Hall Staff Secretly Trying to Crush Students' Spirits by Gradually Removing All Marshmallows from Lucky Charms

## Reality Weekend to Live Up to Its Name

After recent reports of students failing to clear the lint screens of the Campbell dryers, the Reality archons have decided to change the theme of Reality Weekend to something more appropriate for the seniors' coming graduation. "Initially, we were planning on a Manny Sy-Quia-themed Reality, but once we realized the majority of the student body never cooks their own meals, we got a little worried," notes one Reality archon. "I mean, if even one student doesn't know how to make pasta, there's a problem. We just want to make it so real life doesn't seem quite so daunting." After hearing that several seniors have never been without a dishwasher, Reality decided to bring in some local adults to give some advice to the class that will be graduating this May. "Rather than performing some amusing but ultimately useless skits, we've decided to bring in a local accountant to talk about making a balanced budget," a Reality archon said. "We've also got events planned all through Saturday about how to buy groceries, clean bathrooms, and parallel park. We're excited to be able to offer the seniors something they need, instead of just a weekend lounging around drinking beer all day." A recent poll reveals that 54 percent of graduating seniors plan on moving back in with their parents after Commencement. ☺



Tutor's Spouse Dreads Late-night Seminar Recaps



**Student's Personal Life Laid Bare by indulgent Seminar Remarks**

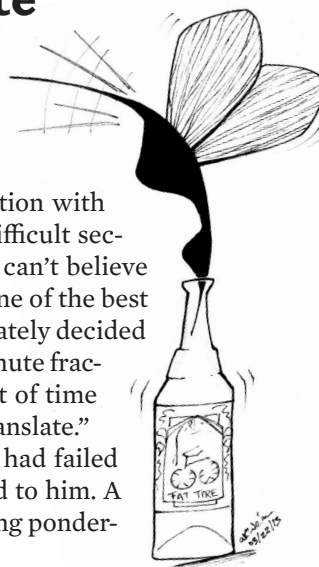
**28-Year-Old Freshman: "Good God, What am I Doing with My Life?"**

After initially declaring he had "finally discovered where I'm meant to be," following his first seminar, this year's Older Freshman has reportedly had a change of heart. "Good God!" he exclaimed. "I'm 28 years old working on my undergraduate degree? What am I doing with my life?!" The sudden insecurity came after an angry phone call with his parents, who said that he was an "adult" and should be "supporting himself by now, goddamnit." The freshman says that the prospect of graduating at 32 is frightening, regardless of the marketable degree he will receive. "32. Oh, God. 32! Will I even be fertile then?!"

**"Is Translation Even Possible?" Asks Hungover, Unprepared Student When Called on to Translate**

Sources confirm that freshman Tim Keeley, having barely made it to his 9 a.m. language tutorial after a night of heavy drinking, narrowly evaded embarrassment by asking what he later described as "one of those bullshit 'philosophical questions.'" Several students reported dismay as their tutor pursued the question with an eager glimmer in her eye, forgetting all about the difficult section of Plato's *Meno* that Keeley had been assigned. "I can't believe it worked," said one agitated student. "It was actually one of the best classes we've had all year," reported another. "We ultimately decided that it's basically futile to try to preserve more than a minute fraction of an author's intended meaning. Then we ran out of time and the tutor assigned twenty more lines of Greek to translate."

Keeley proceeded to his math tutorial, for which he had failed to prepare an involved proposition specifically assigned to him. A classmate reports that Jenkins opened the class by asking ponderously, "What is mathematics?"



**SENIOR FILIBUSTERS ORAL WITH 58-MINUTE PRECIS**

**Horoscopes - Week of April 2**

**Aries (March 21 - April 19)**

Your swing partner says you have two left feet, which sets you wondering whether the prosthesis was installed correctly.

**Taurus (April 20 - May 20)**

Your particularly impressive performance at the board in math class will set in motion a variety of forces unsympathetic to your excellent memory for Euclid.

**Gemini (May 21 - June 21)**

Your tutors will say that you have extraordinary lung capacity—which at first sounds like a compliment.

**Cancer (June 22 - July 22)**

It's not Plato's fault that you cannot tell the difference between Phaedo and Phaedrus.

**Leo (July 23 - August 22)**

Your next lab class will be particularly shocking, as the ER doctors will inform you when you regain consciousness.

**Virgo (August 21 - September 22)**

Drag Ball will create all sorts of new questions for you.

**Libra (September 23 - October 23)**

No one had thought of making a C Team for basketball before you came along.

**Scorpio (October 24 - November 21)**

Unlike an axolotl, your digits do not grow back.

**Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)**

When you started the "Johnson Study Group," you were thinking of Samuel.

**Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)**

How many ways can you incorrectly pronounce the protagonist's name? Thursday night you'll find out.

**Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)**

Practice makes perfect: "Tall, Grande, or Venti?"

**Pisces (February 19 - March 20)**

After months of your Kant-related puns, the quiet kid in the hoodie who sits next to you will finally snap.