



FROM THE POLITY

Keep Our Fishbowl Clean

An exhortation to all returning seniors: I entreat you all, as we enter this season of essay writing, to not make the mistake and fall into the errors of our forebears and turn our beloved Fishbowl into a den of iniquity.

We ought to treat our public spaces like public spaces and refrain from using them as personal repositories for books, papers, half-drunk and now-cold coffee cups, plant life, gnawn muffins, and shrines to the Blessed Virgin. If these things help you to write, then by all means, bring them; but also remember to take them.

The writing period is a wonderful time for us Seniors to take our time with a text we truly love and create our Johnnie magnum opus. This activity can and should be, in the words of our dean, “exhilarating and satisfying” but it needn’t be a selfish one. In fact, I would argue that the writing of a senior essay, while a seemingly-solitary one, is intensely collaborative. The Johnnie essay has been described to me as “a continuation of the conversation.” In any Johnnie essay and especially in the senior essay, we get to collaborate and learn from our peers, our essay advisor, and the authors themselves—from the reading of the text to the drafting, to the editing, and finally, to the public oral. Every step along the way, we are reminded of the thoughts and words of others and the fact that we are not alone in this journey.

So, let us put pen to paper and enjoy this month as a privileged and extended conversation. And, as we think of others’ thoughts, let us also think of the other people, and keep our Fishbowl clean.

Happy writing.



Caleb Briggs

A dirty fishbowl.
[Credit:
r/shittyaquariums]

AT ANNEBETH’S, WITH ANNEBETH A Casual Interview

On a given Tuesday afternoon, around 3:35 pm, you might find me trudging hungrily down Prince George Street in search of an after-school snack. My walk home takes me along Maryland Avenue—an agreeable necessity— and I often can’t resist stopping into Annebeth’s for a sandwich or some focaccia bread. I know I’m not the only one: Annebeth’s is an Annapolis staple—and so is its eponymous owner, Annebeth herself.

I recently stopped in for a conversation with her, hoping to get to know the woman behind it all. She’s a familiar face to many, with her dark hair, youthful smile, and friendly disposition. But she manages nevertheless to be somewhat enigmatic. Her shop, in varied forms, has existed for 26 years, longer than most of us can remember (and longer than some of us have been alive). Its steady presence on the corner lends it a mythic aspect, like that of a timeless monument. Whether you’re a frequent customer or a passerby, this feature of the modern Johnnie landscape is as familiar to us as the quad and College Creek. But how did it get here? On Friday, I stood across the counter from Annebeth, eating steak bites and asking her questions between customers.

“I moved to Annapolis in the mid 80’s,” she said. “I was a teenager and went to high school around here... my parents lived a couple blocks away. Going to my bus stop for school, I would walk Maryland Avenue in my teens. I just loved that street. My bus stop was right off of Duke of Gloucester.” Her first job was at Dimitri’s, a Greek restaurant on Main Street where Preserve is now. Her coworkers downtown were often Johnnies. “I went abroad to Europe for a while, after college, and when I came back, I wanted to start my own thing,” she continued. So, on Black Friday of 1998, the first Annebeth’s opened— right up the street from its current location. “My background was in hospitality, but I knew I didn’t want to open a restaurant. But I did want to be around food and drink.” Along with food and drink, the first iteration of Annebeth’s was also a movie rental store. “It was kind of a date-night theme,” she recalls, “You could go in and get your movies, snacks, wine, beer. Now everything’s just streamed, so that’s changed.” Here, our conversation diverged to movies: Annebeth’s favorites are classic romances, like *My Fair Lady* and *Roman Holiday*. She also mentioned that *Patriot Games* has scenes filmed in Annapolis. But I digress.

15 years after opening the video store, Annebeth moved down the street to her current location at the

corner of Prince George and Maryland Avenue. She’s been there for the past 11 years. Annebeth’s is integral to the St. John’s community: she has furnished the wine for many a Johnnie soirée, the bread and cheese for springtime picnics, and the kombucha to accompany us in our late summer sunbathing. She also has family connections to the college. Her dad, Gerald Bunker, was a tutor in the ‘60s. Her stepsister’s dad, John Sarkissian, taught here in the 80s. She loves having the college nearby. “I’ve always had at least one Johnnie on staff,” she said. “I only have three employees, so it’s pretty small, but there’s always a Johnnie.” She feels more of a connection to Johnnies than to Middies, but she’s happy to do business with both. “I always get a giggle when I see a mid and a Johnnie dating,” she added.

I asked her if she has any advice for future small business owners. “Consistency,” she said. “Make sure you’re open when you say you’re open and closed when you say you’re closed. Follow through.” She certainly exemplifies this herself: it’s her reliability, among other things, which makes her a Maryland Avenue staple.

“I love being my own boss,” she said. “Making the decisions. I can’t imagine going back to work for somebody else. And I like the social part of it. If I’m at home too long, I need the outlet. I get energy from seeing people.” People seem to enjoy seeing her, too: at one point we were interrupted by a customer looking for a vegetarian sandwich. Unfortunately, his herbivorous intentions were thwarted by the chicken fajita. As Annebeth closed the transaction, she handed me a caramel candy. “For later,” she said. I put it in my pocket.

Helen Wagner



Left: “Portrait of Gerald E. Bunker.” *SJC Digital Archives*
Right: Annebeth, photo by Helen Wagner



This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- Thursday, January 16th: Thucydides: *Peloponnesian War*, VII; VIII, 1-6, 45-end
- Monday, January 20th: Plato: *Parmenides*, beginning–148D, 166C

Sophomores:

- Thursday, January 16th: Dante: *Divine Comedy, Purgatorio*, XIX–XXXIII
- Monday, January 20th: Dante: *Divine Comedy, Paradiso*, I–XVII

Juniors:

- Thursday, January 16th: Hume: *Treatise of Human Nature* (selections)
- Monday, January 20th: Hume: *Treatise of Human Nature* (selections)

Seniors:

- Thursday, January 16th: Writing Period!
- Monday, January 20th: Writing Period!

Friday All-College Seminar:

On Frederick Douglass’ “The Mission of the War.”

Upcoming Events:

Friday, January 17

- All-College Seminar, Great Hall, 7:20pm

Saturday, January 18

- Eva Brann Memorial, Great Hall, 2pm
- Pajama Waltz, Boathouse, 9pm

NEXT, WINTER COMES SOFTLY
Reforming Deicing Practices on Campus

The return from winter break is an interesting one, where the sudden need to face the bracing cold is met by all, some of whom are not adequately prepared, seniors fight a losing battle writing their essays in the fishbowl, and everyone is sick. Over the past few days, I’ve returned inside from a delightful wintry walk or an adventure sledding down the lower field hill to hear a booming cough reverberate down the hallway.

Winter at St. John’s is a time when everything is shared, from barbeque lids used as improvised sleds to chronic pulmonary illnesses. The ingenuity of Johnnies when they see snow never fails to impress. From the aforementioned barbeque lid, which performed surprisingly well and resulted in few injuries, I also witnessed students using undersized cookie sheets stolen from Spector and Gilliam kitchens, garbage bags, and sleds hijacked from townspeople in their efforts to speedily descend the slope. New sledding techniques were developed, one of which involved sitting backwards and was aptly named “gruesome style”.

The sledding fun waned, the hill compacted to thinning ice with grass visible in patches. The ice receded from the dock and is merely a distant temptation. Another dusting of snow came again to refresh the landscape. But its boon was limited, and the eternal enemy of salt was to blame.

Salt is worthless, good for nothing but to be thrown onto paths and trampled underfoot. It reduces the charming crunch of snow and ice underfoot into a wet slush that fills the shoes and leaves white trails in the hallways. Most of all, it makes me really sad. A

snow day is a thing of joy and wonder that propels even room Johnnies outside to enjoy the outdoors. Salt ruins snow’s texture, stains its pristine color blue, destroys footwear, and makes spaces indoor and outdoor feel chalky and weird. The intentions in which salt is used are certainly noble, but I would argue its use creates other issues that are perhaps even more dangerous.

One recent morning, I was going to breakfast, exited Paca, and almost died. Several days prior, salt had been laid on the steps to melt the accumulation of snow, but this watery slush became diluted and refroze in the night. I confidently placed my foot on a smooth glassy round of ice, and, if I had fallen, there would’ve been no snow to cushion my fall. The railings saved me, not the salt.

This is not a criticism of the school’s actions when it snows, certainly it is a great and meet thing to keep paths clear and accessible, but the issue with salt is that on days below 20° F, any benefit it is able to grant is turned into another obstacle. This is why I propose the school move to other means of deicing the walks and heed my chemical knowledge.

Aphorism of the Week

ὁ τροφός ἐστὶ ἀνὴρ σὺν ἀγκιστρῶ.

Jacob Sharpe

The humble element of hydrogen is cheap, abundant, and, most importantly, freezes at the nippy low of -434.5°F. Were hydrogen scattered on the paths instead of salt, and were it also soluble in water, our problems would be solved and paths on campus would remain clear and safe. This latter problem, on making hydrogen an amenable solute for water, as well as lowering its vapor pressure so that it might hold a scatterable form in standard atmospheric pressure, is a project I assign to worthier minds than I. Until then, I recommend everyone watch their steps. Godspeed.

Jacob Sharpe



A student enjoys the sledding medium of ice-grass amalgam.

WALKING IN A WINTER UNDER LAND

Breaking news! The Lady of the Underquad was recently spotted frolicking about our winter-kissed campus in the wee hours of the night. Witnesses say frosty fairies danced about as snow surrounded her in its pure white glory, though these visions may very well have simply been clusters of snowflakes falling from the heavens.

Either way, this snowy jubilation indicates the promise of wondrous new beginnings. Far below the frosty blanket wrapping SJC in its glittering splendor lies a realm where fires never deprive the people of comforting warmth, long-forgotten tomes whisper wisdom to those frantically typing up senior essays above ground, and gossip runs rampant about the unknown new successor to the Underquad’s throne. Assured by their Lady that a new heir shall indeed be selected well before the last Ab Major chord has resounded through the halls of Mellon, the Paca gnomes have turned their attention and energy towards preparing for the new ruler’s advent. Goldsmiths are hard at work sketching designs for a new crown, while politicians debate relentlessly over the proper proceedings of the coronation.

Yet the Underquad’s new ruler must be aware of the lore they will one day pass along to the Polity’s next generation of eager young minds. Therefore I, Herschel Reuben, shall do my best to faithfully convey tales of the lore and life of the Underquad from this day forth until that fateful time when the

torch of its knowledge is passed along. The Lady of the Underquad especially implores the newest members of SJC to open their minds to whimsy, mirth, and wonder just as she and many other Johnnies have done before. Therefore, let us join her frolicking and journey through the world of wonder together!

Herschel Reuben

UPCOMING SCI FORUMS

Courtesy of the Student Committee on Instruction

Jan 22nd: What do we gain from studying and participating in music?

Jan 29th: Does the program prepare us for death, as Socrates suggests in the Phaedo?

Feb 5th: Is it wrong to maintain preferences for certain kinds of texts on the program?

Feb 12th: How do we cultivate good relationships between students and tutors?

Feb 19th: How do we approach the process of planning for and writing our annual essays?

Feb 26th: How can we best use our breaks?

WEDNESDAYS. 11:45. PRIVATE DINING ROOM.
Free lunch for off-campus students!

ABOUT THE ST. JOHN’S COLLEGIAN

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

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

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