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THE GADFLY

A Saintly Johnnie • 02
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Seniors Discuss Seminar • 04

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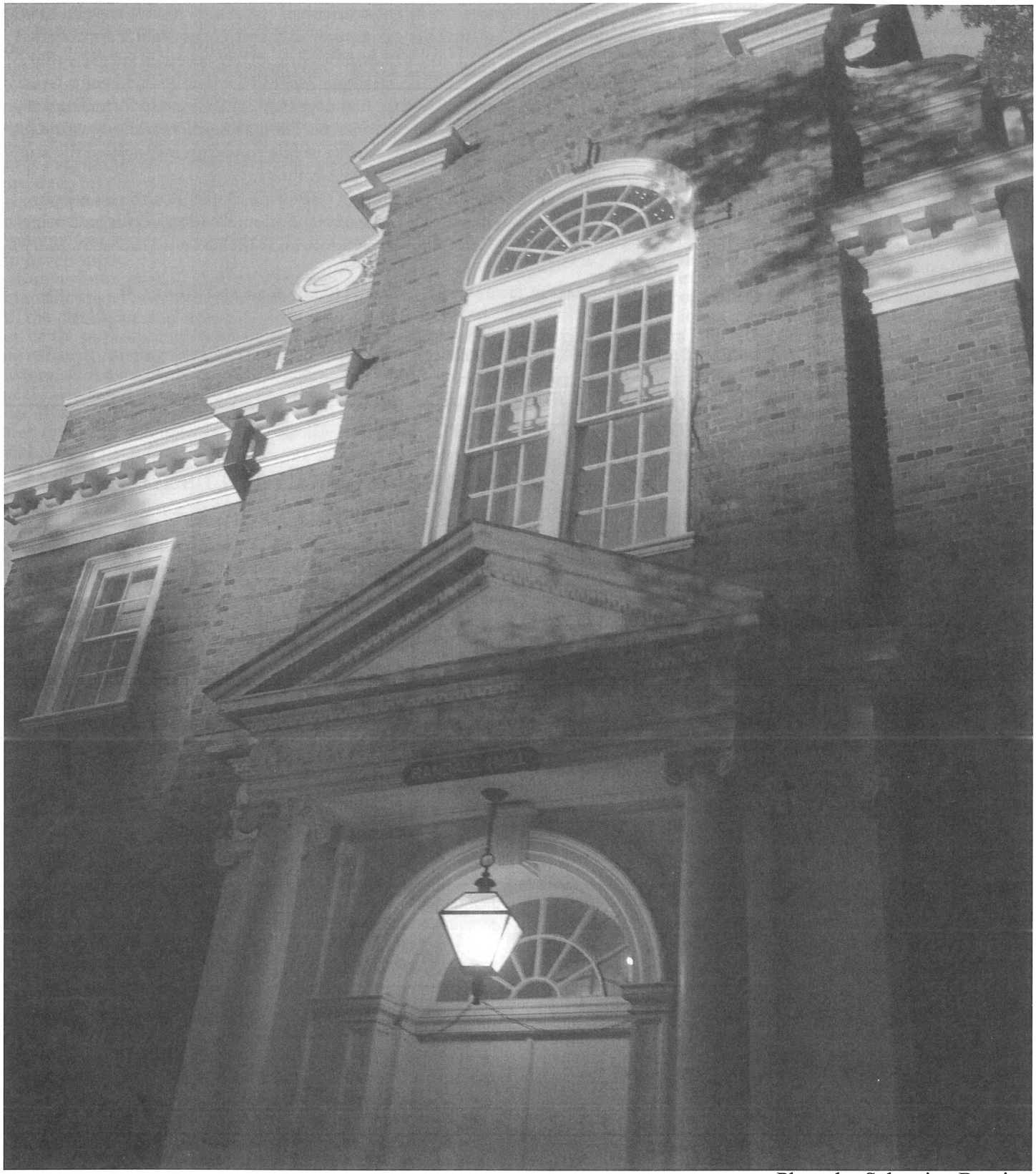

Photo by Sebastian Barajas

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 *Gadfly* meets on the Lower Level of the BBC every Sunday at 7pm.

Articles should be submitted by Friday at 11:59 PM to sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

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The Power of "The Works"

Nancy Calabrese Nurse Practitioner

Having worked at St. John's College for almost 14 years I have seen first-hand the influence of the studied works on the students' lives. As an example I offer the following:

During the past summer while collecting mail at the mail room I happen to notice a Dominican Priest sitting at a computer in the adjacent room. I approached him and asked if he was indeed a Dominican priest (he expressed surprise that I recognized the habit) and we began talking. He told me that he had been a Graduate Institute student and at that time had no particular interest in formalized religion per se. HOWEVER the works of Saints Thomas Aquinas and Augustine (as part of the curriculum) particularly "spoke to him" and thus he pursued the study of Catholicism which lead to entering the seminary.

He was ordained a Dominican priest in California May 2014 and was encouraged by his order to return to the place of inspiration, St. John's College. During his visit he was able to meet with some tutors and officiate at a Mass at St. Mary's Parish.

Suffice it to say "The Works" continue to influence and inspire. ◆

Q: Do we really live in fish-heaven?◆

From the Editors:

Last week, the *Gadfly* staff was approached by two writers who felt that the *Gadfly* editors altered the articles that they contributed to our most recent issue. Both articles, one titled "Facebook and Facades" the other titled "Where's Waldo," went through the same editing process that every article goes through before being printed. First, the article is sent to a copy editor who reviews the piece for spelling and grammatical errors. Before the entire issue is printed, the *Gadfly* staff as a whole reviews every piece in order to catch any mistakes the first editor may have missed. Finally, the edited issue is read by Taylor Waters before being printed and distributed to the student community. This system is designed for fact-checking and copyediting, so the fact that two writers had the styles of their articles altered goes against the purpose of the editing process.

The article "Facebook and Facades" had a sentence that read "I typically resign myself to implying snarky contradictions, and leave it at that" but it was changed to "I typically refrain from snarky contradictions." The article titled " Where's Waldo?" had the sentence "where in the world was she?" removed from the end of a joke that implied that Waldo was in a relationship with Carmen Sandiego.

Because of these concerns, the *Gadfly* staff is reviewing the editing process in order to assure that every article that gets printed is made up of the writer's own words and style rather than the editors'. The *Gadfly* staff believes in preserving each writer's own style and word choice in order to accurately portray their thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Any deterioration from this does not fulfill the *Gadfly*'s purpose. The *Gadfly* staff would like to extend its apologies to the polity and specifically to the two writers whose articles were taken out of their original context.

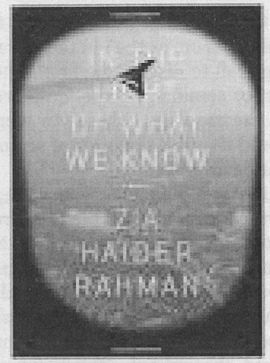
If you are interested in submitting to the *Gadfly*, and would like to see our changes before we go to print, please tell us this explicitly, and give us at least a week before the deadline so that we can get it back to you.

Thank you for your support
-The *Gadfly*

In the Light of What We Know

Eva Brann Tutor

I would like our community to know about a book whose 500 pages I drank up, so to speak, in one week because it seemed written for us Johnnies. The novel lives under the aegis of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, which our seniors study. Here it is given a wisdom-interpretation: There are things we feel to be indefeasibly true but cannot know to be so. Much of the book is taken up by an ongoing conversation between the Pakistani-American narrator and his Bangladeshi friend Zafar. Half a thousand pages of philosophico-personal talk might seem terminally boring. It's in fact entirely engrossing, like a really good seminar on a deep text in which opinions emerge that seem just wrong-headed to me (as in fact do many of the two protagonist's) – still, it's a common text and a shared enterprise and so time well spent.



In the Light of What We Know
by Bruce Chatwin

Conversation isn't all there is; the story intensifies to a really explosive denouement. All the discussion and action is underwritten by the author's stupendously detailed acquaintance with big subjects, ranging from high-stakes trading to East Asian history, with a lot of observant local knowledge thrown in. A reader who likes learning how alien types live will love this book.

> "It's in fact entirely engrossing, like a really good seminar on a deep text in which opinions emerge that seem just wrong-headed to me...

Another source of pleasure is Rahman's deft English. In my reading experience the contemporary sources of lovely writing are American mid-western home-grown and Anglo-Asian emigrant writers – because they're both so staunchly unaffected by the loose, deteriorated lingo of now-speak.

A third delight is stumbling on familiar items. At one point, Zafar mentions "a lovely little volume called *What is Mathematics*." It is Courant and Robbins' classic by which, in the old days, our seniors (and myself) were introduced to the calculus. (It must be beloved of East Asians, because it also plays a role in Vikram Seth's marvelous novel, *A Suitable Boy*.) Another, human, item is Emily, the entirely ungiving upper-class Englishwoman that Zafar falls in love with, past hope and past despair. She is the twentieth century avatar of a figure well known to Juniors, Rosamond Vincy of *Middlemarch*, who is totally centered on a self which is a big null and who calculates every thing and thinks of nobody.

In the Light is, for all its delights, a novel full of tragedy, the tragedies of ethnic rootlessness, of personal being-out-of-kilter, of mismatched pairings. But it has one redeeming moment, to me the high point. It occurs late in the novel, and by the time you reach it, you'll have forgotten that I gave it away; anyhow, I can't contain myself. Zafar is visiting Josie, the little daughter of a friend. She is obsessed with giraffes, and he has brought her a toy giraffe. "When she took the toy, this child of four said, with her soft brown eyes looking straight into mine and in a voice containing a tiny element of surprise that almost broke my heart, You thinked of me." "You thinked of me" is, I think, the most poignant sentence in a very appealing book. ◆

Cranberry Marshmallow Cream Salad

Pam Anderson Johnnie Mom

1 lb. fresh or frozen cranberries, ground
1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained
1 c. sugar
1 (10 1/2 oz.) bag mini marshmallows
2 c. heavy cream, whipped

Mix together cranberries, pineapple, and sugar in a large bowl. Fold marshmallows into whipped cream. Fold whipped cream mixture into cranberry mixture. Chill until serving time.

If you prepare recipe a day or two ahead, chill cream and cranberry mixtures separately. Fold together before serving. Makes 10 cups or 20 (1/2-cup) servings.

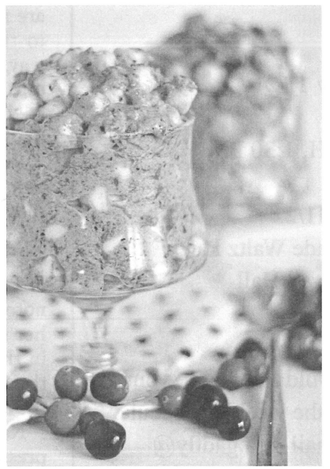


Photo from http://www.heatherlikesfood.com/cranberry-fluff-salad-thanksgiving-blitz-9/

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 11/18
Kunai Netball
4 PM

Fencing
4 PM

Wednesday 11/19
St. John's Chorus, Great Hall
7 PM

Storyteller's Guild
9 PM

Friday 11/20
Kunai Netball
4 PM

Fencing
6 PM

Lecture: "On Classical Liberalism and the 'Liberal' Point of View," by Roberto Salinas-Leon
8 PM

Saturday 11/21
Soccer
S vs. H, 1:30 PM

Sunday 11/22
Masquerade Waltz Party,
McDowell Hall
9 PM

If you would like to see your event on the weekly schedule, please email sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

SCI: First Semester Senior Seminar

Henry Hirsch A'15

On Thursday, October 30th, the SCI held a forum at 11:45 in the Private Dining Hall to discuss the first semester of senior seminar. Do the ideas presented in the readings cohere? In what ways could the first semester of senior seminar be improved?

Many of the seniors who were present at the forum felt that the Hegel readings did not form a cohesive whole. Notably, Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not included in the reading list. Much of this book is currently skipped, and the sections that are read are scattered throughout. 200 pages are currently skipped between the second-to-last reading and the last reading. In the latter, the final two pages of the entire book seem to be shoehorned in.

One student complained that while the last reading in the *Critique of Pure Reason* provided an opportunity to reflect upon the book as a whole, the last reading in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* did not. The students felt that in general the Hegel readings are not structured as well as the Kant readings. There seems to be a parallel between the structure of the Hegel readings in senior year and the structure of the Hume readings in junior year. Specific sections of Hume are read so that Kant can later respond to those particular ideas. In the same way, we seem to read particular sections of Hegel so that Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzche can later respond to those particular ideas of his.

> **"Nearly all of the seniors present expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their seminars.**

Some students suggested having a guide on how to read Hegel available that could be optional reading for students. One student advocated having a vocabulary list of Hegel's terminology distributed to seniors. Another student noted that her tutors had encouraged her seminar to read the guide to Hegel in the back of the Miller translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* along with the assigned seminar readings.

Nearly all of the seniors present expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their seminars. It was suggested that the nature of the first semester senior seminar readings might contribute to this by changing the behavior of both students and tutors. In addition, several students were upset by the way in which their tutors approached the Marx readings. They felt that theirs tutors didn't take Marx's ideas seriously and made no attempt to hide their personal opinions from their students. This negatively impacted their seminars.

Another senior claimed that his seminar had suffered because his classmates were not viewing the readings historically. This raised the question of whether some 7books are inherently great in themselves, or whether the greatness of texts is due to their historical relation to other works. Most of the students present at the forum believed that all of the texts that we read can be viewed as having great worth in their own right. Nevertheless, it is certainly beneficial to relate the thoughts of different authors to one another.

Most of the seniors in attendance at the forum felt that many of the first semester senior seminar readings are too long, especially the Marx readings. Some students suggested shortening the length of individual seminar readings by stretching out the reading schedule to include seminars during senior essay writing period. While it might be beneficial for seniors to have this structure during writing period, such a proposition could also be problematic. If the first semester senior seminar readings are meant to form a cohesive whole, it would be detrimental for the readings in first semester to be separated from the readings during writing period by more than two months of preceptorial, Thanksgiving break, and Christmas break.

The forum concluded that the first semester of senior seminar suffers from organizational issues. The ideas presented in the first semester readings cohere. However, the individual reading assignments might benefit from restructuring. The students also concluded that seminars would be benefited if both tutors and students reevaluated the manner in which they approach these texts. ◆