

# CROQUET 2013



# THE GADFLY

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## **A Special Kind of Rivalry**

*Senior Drew Menzer, Imperial Wicket, muses on the singular nature of the SJC/USNA rivalry—one that unites, not divides.*

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The student newspaper  
of St. John's College

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Founded in 1980, the *Gadfly* is the student newspaper 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.

Articles submitted will be edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and length in most cases. The *Gadfly* is not obligated to publish all submissions except under special circumstances.

The *Gadfly* meets every Sunday at 7 PM in the lower level of the Barr-Buchanan Center.

Articles should be submitted by Friday at 11:59 PM to [sjca.gadfly@gmail.com](mailto:sjca.gadfly@gmail.com).

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Letter from the Editors

Dear Johnnies, Mids, Family, and Other Guests,  
Welcome to the 31st annual SJC vs. USNA Croquet Match! Whether your trip to our front lawn began in Randall Hall or across the nation, we hope that your weekend is full of laughter, song, sport, and good conversation (and maybe a drink or three).

The Croquet Issue of the *Gadfly* is part of the time-honored tradition that is Croquet Weekend. We are honored to be a part of that tradition, and we hope you find these pages an engaging companion to the weekend's festivities.

In this issue, you'll find different perspectives on the value of rivalry and sport. Imperial Wicket Drew Menzer (A'13) considers what distinguishes the SJC/USNA rivalry from others, while Connor Callahan (A'14) argues that competition encourages community. Staff sports writer Jonathan Barone (A'13) goes beyond the croquet field and asks how his active role in St. John's' intramural program has allowed him to grow.

But this issue isn't all about games. Elsewhere in these pages, our writers examine St. John's College from within and without. Will Brown (A'16) and Robert Malka (A'15) each reflect on how this past year has shaped them; together, their accounts offer a glimpse into what it's like to live the first two years of the St. John's Program. Keenan Trotter (A'12) and Danny Kraft (A'13) take us off-campus: in a piece from the *Gadfly* archives, Trotter examines a spectrum of outside takes on the College, while Kraft ventures a trip across the street to the Naval Academy to see just what the Midshipmen have to say about their neighbors.

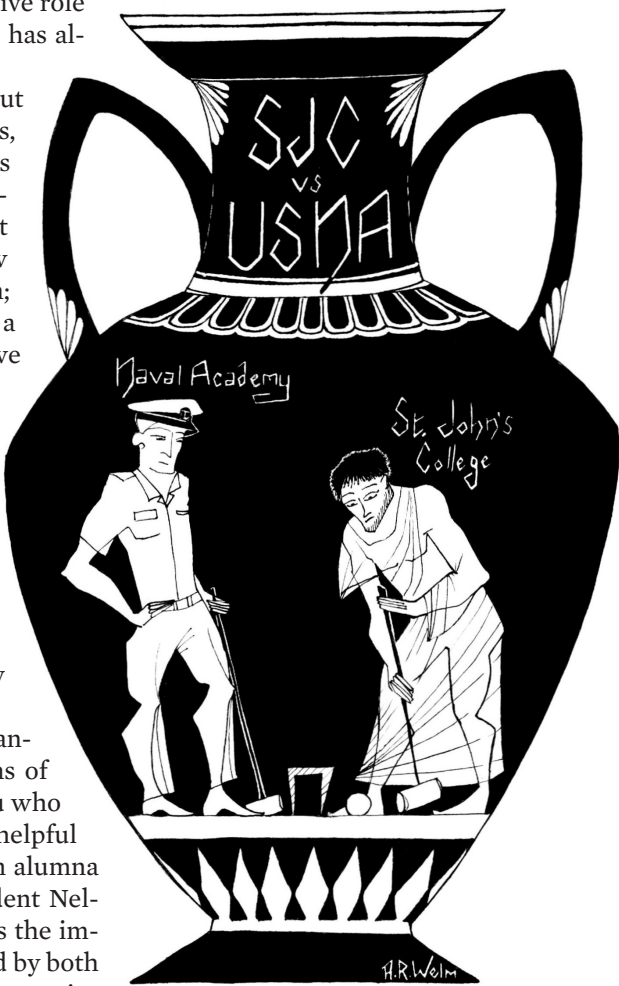
Of course, we also have our annual Q&A with the croquet teams of both colleges and, for those of you who forgot your rulebooks at home, a helpful guide to the rules of croquet from alumna Annemarie Catania (A'97). President Nelson's letter to the Polity considers the importance of the educations offered by both St. John's and the Naval Academy to main-

taining a free nation—and, of course, calls for Johnnie victory today. In a Croquet Issue first, *Gadfly* poet Painter Bob has composed for us two pieces inspired by the match. And, as she has for the past two years, cartoonist Sasha Welm (A'14) has penned elegant, fun-filled sketches featuring the Johnnie platypus and Bill the Goat.

We want to extend our thanks to our contributors, to our tireless staff, and to Hayden Pendergrass (A'14), layout editor extraordinaire. It has been our privilege to work with you all over the past year, and we look forward to doing so again in the fall!

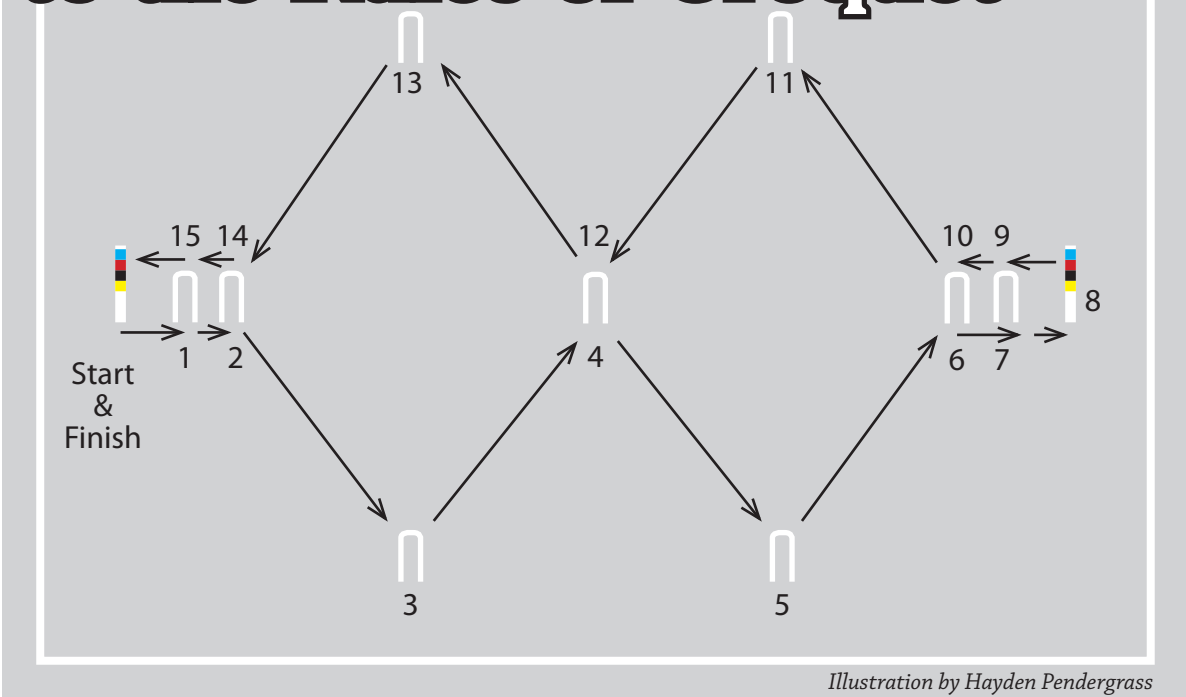
Now, without any further ado—let the games begin!

Sincerely,  
Nathan Goldman and Ian Tuttle  
Co-Editors, 2012-2013





# A Spectator's Guide to the Rules of Croquet



[Editor's Note: This article is reprinted with minor edits from a '90s-era Croquet Issue of the Gadfly.]

by Annemarie Catania, A'97

As you sit in the sun, eating, drinking, and possibly burning, you may discuss the game of croquet. In the midst of this community picnic, your attention may turn to the game. Just in case this happens, you may be interested in the rules of croquet.

Today's game is traditional American nine-wicket croquet, essentially following the rules of the United States Croquet Association. Each of the five matches consists of two Johnnies versus two Middies. One team plays with the red and yellow balls, and the other uses black and blue. The order of play follows the colors painted on the stakes.

The point of the game is to hit both balls of one team through all the wickets, hitting one stake in the middle of the game, and the other stake at the end. The pattern zig-zags through the center wickets and the wickets to the right of the direction of play.

As you watch, you may notice that some players have very short turns. We hope that these turns happen more often for the Midshipmen, since we hope to allow them no other option than to set up for their wickets. A long turn is more advantageous. You may hear someone asking, "How long has this Johnnie been playing this turn?" This question indicates that the St. John's player has been using every opportunity for continuation quite successfully, and probably also means that the Johnnie player has run many wickets.

Two types of shots result in continuation. One is running a wicket (or scoring a wicket, as the USCA calls pushing one's ball through the metal structure). This results in one more shot. Although going through the wicket is always the goal in mind, hitting a ball with one's own ball may be more immediately beneficial, since this type of shot results in two continuation shots.

Our friends from town may ask you about these two shots. As an articulate liberal arts student, you will provide them with the terminology for these turns, which even the players do not bother to remember. The proper name for hitting another ball is "roquet." (You may say, "She has roqueted the ball.") Upon hitting another ball, the striking ball becomes cloaked, which means whatever happens to it before it stops rolling is incidental and does not count. Impress your friends by telling them that it does not exist. The official USCA term for this is a ball in hand. The player places the ball in hand next to the roqueted ball and shoots. This is called the croquet shot. The second shot is called continuation.

Continuation is not cumulative. This means that a ball that runs a wicket on a croquet shot does not receive that continuation in addition to the con-

tinuation gained by completion of the wicket shot.


Scoring a wicket erases whatever effects the player may have incurred by hitting balls prior to going through it. Although hitting a ball has the advantage of two continuation shots from that ball, it also means going dead on that ball. This means the ball struck cannot be hit again before the striking ball goes through another wicket.

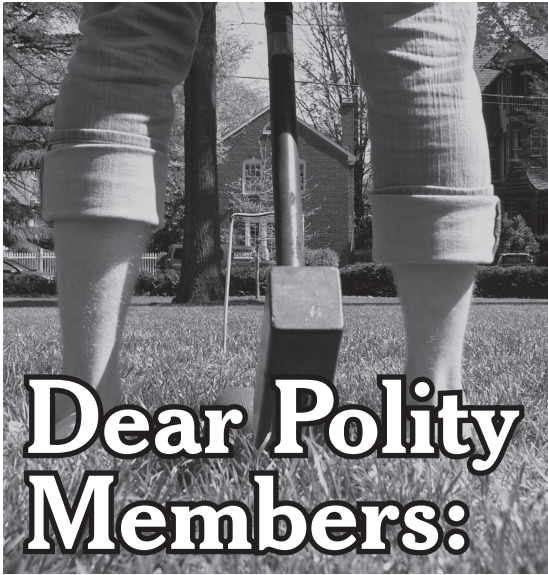
Lest the rules become too complicated for your relaxing brain, take a sip of your drink of choice, sit back, and observe the deadness board. This scoreboard of sorts keeps track of which balls have already been hit. Each ball has its own row with three spaces that indicate which ball it is dead on. At the beginning of the game, every ball is dead on every other ball for the first shot. Any contact between balls on this turn is incidental. After this shot, every ball becomes live on every other ball. Through the course of a game, going through a wicket restores liveness. The deadness board assists the memories of those enjoying too much of their drinks of choice.

This much knowledge will suffice for following most of the game. The basic strategy is to advance one's own ball and one's partner's ball through as many wickets as possible while deterring the other team's balls as much as possible. You may hear the players politely referring to messing with the other team by taking them off their sets, using stop shots to shoot them away from their wickets, and taking advantage of them with split shots.

The most cruelty you will see in this most civilized of croquet matches will be in blocking, or in staking out the rover. The first of these is a simple defensive move. If a player's opponent is dead on her ball, and the opponent is set up for his wicket, she may shoot her ball into a place directly between his ball and the wicket. This will obstruct his shot unless he is able to execute a jump shot over her ball.

Staking out the rover is the most detrimental type of play, and occurs in the end game. When a ball has completed all the wickets and has not yet hit the final stake, it is called a rover. An opponent has the opportunity to hit that ball into the stake on a croquet shot. The staked-out ball must sit out for two turns, and hit the stake at the other end of the field before coming back into play. A rover still in play may go through wickets in any direction to gain continuation as long as it is dead on two balls (or two-ball dead). After going through a wicket, the rover remains temporarily dead on the ball it last hit before going through the wicket until it hits another ball.

Have a fine time sunning yourself, eating, and drinking. Wander off to chat with friends and strangers. If you find yourself with further questions on more complicated strategy or minor rules, ask someone who often plays croquet to expound on the game's intricacies. 



The battle for honor and glory we are about to witness between two great institutions, testing their friendship on the playing fields of our front campus, is a test of the strength and endurance of a liberal education—for whichever side should claim victory today.

Both of our institutions are dedicated to the principles of freedom—to the arts of liberty. This commitment to liberty, to freedom of speech and action, is what undergirds our nation. And it is our national duty to assure that each generation of citizens is well educated in the arts of freedom to protect them from attack and from atrophy. It ought to be the first concern of our schools, from pre-kindergarten through college, that our young acquire the freedom to make intelligent choices concerning the ends and means of both their public and private lives. This requires the cultivation and practice of the art of reason and understanding and discipline in analysis, argument, and interpretation, so that they may be free from the tyrannies of unexamined opinions, current fashions, and inherited prejudices.

Our nation was founded on the idea that good government is grounded in its citizens' intellectual freedom; our strength depends upon this idea. Our economy is grounded in the notion of free enterprise; the freedom we have to test our ideas against the needs and demands of the community has helped build the prosperity we have enjoyed as a society. This too depends upon the intellectual freedom of our citizens. And so it is with our social order and moral character.

For the sake of our country, then, we need our citizens to have two kinds of education that are in a very healthy tension with one another: (1) an education in the political and intellectual foundations, including the economic, scientific and social traditions and principles that have shaped our nation, and (2) an education in the arts needed to question and examine those very foundations and traditions in the light of reason, so that we may keep them vibrant and alive, and so that we may redefine and improve on them when we discover we have good cause. These are called the arts of freedom because they are grounded in the kind of free inquiry that helps us understand our world better and inspires in us a sense of wonder and longing to learn more.

We have given serious attention to questioning and understanding these concerns at St. John's. And the Naval Academy has given its attention to educating our fleet of midshipmen to defend them. Both of our schools are needed to make for a free nation!

Whoever wins this match between our schools will win in the name of an education devoted to freedom.

So, then, as the outcome will weigh equally with respect to the state of our nation, the victory should go to the team that demonstrates its superiority in strategic engagement. Let the victory then belong to our Johnnies! Five Games to None!!

All Honor and Glory Are Due!

Chris Nelson (SF'70)  
President



# A Special Kind of Rivalry

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
We are gathered here today for...for what? We're not just here for a party, but we're certainly not here for the sole purpose of watching an athletic competition either. This event means a lot to St. John's, to the Naval Academy, and to the city of Annapolis, but what we have here is more than a simple rivalry between different teams.

This isn't like the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry I grew up with in Ohio. That kind of rivalry is more vicious; the relationship between the two teams is all

The difference between the rivalry I have with Michigan and the one we have with the Naval Academy is that instead of eroding the relationship between the two teams, the Annapolis Cup strengthens it.

about each asserting dominance over one another. It allows the members of the respective sides to form bonds amongst themselves, but there is no bond formed between Michigan and Ohio, except maybe one of mutual animosity. I get a little cranky just seeing Mr. Higuera wearing a Michigan sweatshirt.

The difference between the rivalry I have with Michigan and the one we have with the Naval Academy is that instead of eroding the relationship between the two teams, the Annapolis Cup strengthens it. The competitive

aspect of the match takes a backseat to the singing, drinking, dancing, and bonding that occurs on the front lawn. We all want to win, just not at the expense of the camaraderie of the Annapolis community. What we have is a spe-



cial kind of rivalry that improves the relations among and between SJC and the USNA. It's an honor to be a part of it, and I hope that everyone makes the most of this day. Take advantage of this wonderful event to remind yourself why we're here and why this event is so special. Johnnies, go meet a Midshipman; Midshipmen, go meet a Johnnie. You'll be glad you did.

Drew Menzer  
Imperial Wicket '13

## Being at the Game

by Painter Bob, Poet-in-Residence

*The word, refined, like twice born myrmidons  
Find love of battle flows like wine in April.  
When our good Johnnies work their love of play  
How shall we know this game, so named...Croquet.  
Will glory make its promise to the spring,  
To raise those souls whose love it is to win  
Else fortunes fate, may...succor Middie whites  
To smite our gentle knights, till we fall prey  
Like knaves deprived of just how fine it is  
That we have come to take sweet glories hand.  
And hold the day's delight...to greet the night  
Where beauty waltzes freely to the music  
As mystery rises up in our Great Hall  
To tempt our nature's wishful siren call,  
Like bottled genies of champagne...Who live  
That each spell cast grows sweeter than the last  
As if there were no future in a past,  
For all's won in this moment...as one dance,  
Becomes us all...as all who love the work...  
We raise a glass, or stein, or else a yawp!  
For those well polished souls...we owe the day,*

## Going to the Game

*The heavens part, for those whose work  
Becomes to make this world of play,  
That one abides much like a creed  
Adjoining such, in deeds...Croquet!  
Where mundane thoughts all turn away  
Like words unbounded from the book  
Where wise ones take that real close look,  
Discovering, to know its worth,  
Croquet, is heaven...here on earth!*



## What's In A Game?

by Connor Callahan, Contributor, A'14

For over 30 years Annapolis has been united across the broadest of spectrums—from the liberal arts to the art of war—by a single civil lawn game. What do we play for? Honor? Virtue? The oldest question still stands: Why? The teams don't play for pure supremacy; to do so would be an affront to community unity.

When we challenge others, we merely seek to establish a binding friendship, because it's easier to create a guise of animosity than to assert that we want to find out more about people whom we are interested in. Aristotle says that man is a political animal, and while I don't agree with much of what he says, I can still agree that we humans seek out the other. And while the other may be a frightening concept, man cannot help but extend his experience to others. Man congregates around his dead fruits of labor (i.e., fermented fruits and grains) to create the most beautiful constructs of time and space (i.e., the croquet field). While once we received much rhetoric of "us and them," the basic establishment of the games that we play presupposes a unity between all men.

Around holidays there's often much talk of

the "real meaning of x," and how we should all be thinking not about the material aspect, but about the story that lies beneath the matter. This is a classic problem of form and matter. Croquet Weekend, as an Annapolis holiday, is something that we do because we like to drink and dance. We like to get dressed up and have a ball. But moreover, the form of the event, the very nature of the game that we are playing, is important. We need to ask ourselves what the true meaning of our holiday is, and how we can always be looking to emphasize those values in our daily lives.

When we challenge others, we merely seek to establish a binding friendship, because it's easier to create a guise of animosity than to assert that we want to find out more about people that we are interested in.

Croquet comes but once a year, but the games we play happen every day. We are constantly bouncing ideas off of one another, helping out one another and fighting with the ideas we encounter. The croquet field is traversed twice, and in its circular play we see that the game doesn't have to end there—in fact, we could envision an endless croquet game that stretches back to the beginning of our tradition and beyond. And while one team at the end of the day will get to say that they've won, the truth is that we are all winning by coming out to celebrate a community that embraces two so apparently different collegiate atmospheres. ☺





# Growth and the Abyss of Self

by Jonathan Barone, Staff Writer, A'13

Recently, as I was walking back to my dorm after a basketball game, I received a text from a friend asking whether I wanted to go out for a beer. The game had been particularly contentious at times, and I had been swept up by my passions and done something I later regretted. I wanted someone to talk to, so I replied with an affirmative, and the ensuing conversation we had at the bar struck me. I realized that even though I had written about sports and our intramural program many times, I had failed to recognize a crucial aspect of why I value the role sports have played in my life. Through this conversation with my friend, I caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror and saw how sports had forced me to grow.

I wish I could come up with a better word than “grow,” because “grow” doesn’t quite capture the essence of what I want to say. Anyone grows physically when they play sports. Someone will become stronger and more skilled with the ball when he puts in the practice. His endurance will increase, he will be able to withstand more tackles, he will perform better. He will grow mentally, too: by watching the game, he will be able to understand the movements of his body and his opponents. He will know when to conserve energy and when to let loose. His mental toughness will increase, and he will be able to persevere even when his body grows tired.

These types of growth are natural results of human activity. They are also not what I’m talking about. Any individual can achieve all these kinds of growth through pure force of will. Through working hard and striving for this growth, any person can become physically and mentally strong. But this sort of growth is strictly personal. Sport itself does not cause this development, since it is an individual’s striving that ultimately produces this growth.

However, we do not live in an isolated world. We live, especially here at St. John’s, in a community. On a fundamental level, we are able to function as a college because of everyone’s work. While each individual has to put in the effort on his own to understand the material, this school could never operate if each person were only looking out for himself and only trying to answer his own questions. We are able to function as a community of learning precisely because we realize that we have to work together. If we were to ignore our peers, this school could not function.

And so this school forces you to work together, to see your fellow man. If you never change your

perspective, if you never try to understand your classmate, you will never grow. You will stagnate, and, eventually, you will die an intellectual death. In this way, St. John’s forces you to grow. It forces you to talk to other people, and ultimately, it makes you stare into yourself. When you gaze into the abyss of self, you must make the choice whether you will stay the same, or humble your indomitable will.

What makes the intramural program here so strong is the fact that it provides an arena to struggle with these same issues in a more visceral way. Hard work and individual talent can only get you so far. Just as seminar cannot succeed as a book club for the educated with everyone trying to exert his own opinions, neither can a basketball team succeed as five individuals trying to make their voices heard above the rest. Sports require teamwork, honest competition, and above all, the humility to decrease so that the team may increase.

I don’t think that I had really appreciated the extent of this growth until that basketball game.

I realized that even though I had written about sports and our intramural program many times, I had failed to recognize a crucial aspect of why I value the role sports have played in my life.

Even though I had hit the clutch free-throw to win the game, I came away from the game staring into the abyss of my soul. I had confronted an opponent and acted in anger, with full recognition of what I was doing. Walking back to my dorm, I realized that the motivation for my action was purely selfish, and in a moment of choice, I decided to exert my individual will over an opponent.

Looking back on that incident and the conversation after the game, the opportunity for growth that the experience provided is not revelatory or redemptive on a cosmic scale. It isn’t a life-changing moment, and it’s only poignant to me because I went through it. But I believe it speaks to what sports have to offer us as human beings. Through sports, through this hand-to-hand competition with others, we are communicating with our teammates and opponents on a fundamental, essential level. As a result of this physical dialogue, we may see tendencies or attitudes in ourselves that we appreciate or dislike. When we see these things, we are forced to make a choice as to whether we will continue to act the way we always have, or will grow and develop. Ultimately, if we are to survive and thrive in community, we must grow. This growth, while painful, is the choice of life. I think we can agree that when we meditate on our time at St. John’s, it is the dialogues we had, the friends we made, the community in which we partook, that truly makes this place special. ☞

## A CONCISE HISTORY OF CROQUET

### An Anachronistic Account of Croquet through the Program

by Hayden Pendergrass, Layout Editor, A'14

The Ancients

#### 1194 BC

Greek ships land on the shores of Troy. A ten-year croquet match ensues.

#### 399 BC

Socrates explores croquet’s virtues. He calls it a sophist’s game.

#### 28 AD

Jesus plays croquet for 40 days and 40 nights against Satan. He wins.

#### 398 AD

Augustine of Hippo disparages the Manicheans for playing too much croquet.

The Middle Ages

#### 1274 AD

Thomas Aquinas’ rotundity makes it impossible for him to play croquet. He writes the *Summa* instead.

#### 1380 AD

Geoffrey Chaucer travels to Canterbury to the shrine of Thomas à Becket with a 29-person croquet team.

The Renaissance & Reformation

#### 1536 AD

Jean Calvin outlines in the *Institutes* that all those predestined for salvation have to learn croquet.

#### 1580 AD

Suffering from a kidney stone, Michel de Montaigne painfully swears that it must be the size of a croquet ball.

The Enlightenment

#### 1739 AD

When philosophical speculation becomes too depressing, David Hume comforts himself by playing croquet with friends.

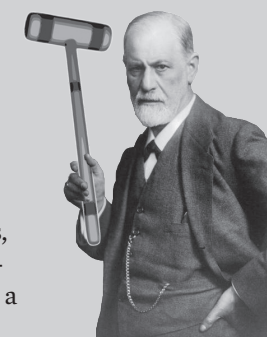
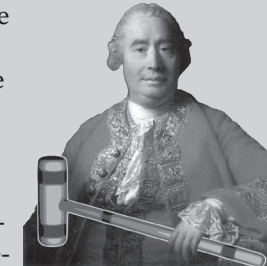
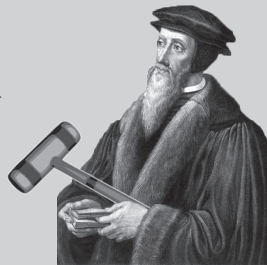
#### 1787 AD

Immanuel Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Croquet*, states that the croquet ball travels “independently of all experience.” No one understands what that means.

The Moderns

#### 1899 AD

After years of psychological study, Sigmund Freud determines, “sometimes a croquet mallet is just a croquet mallet.”



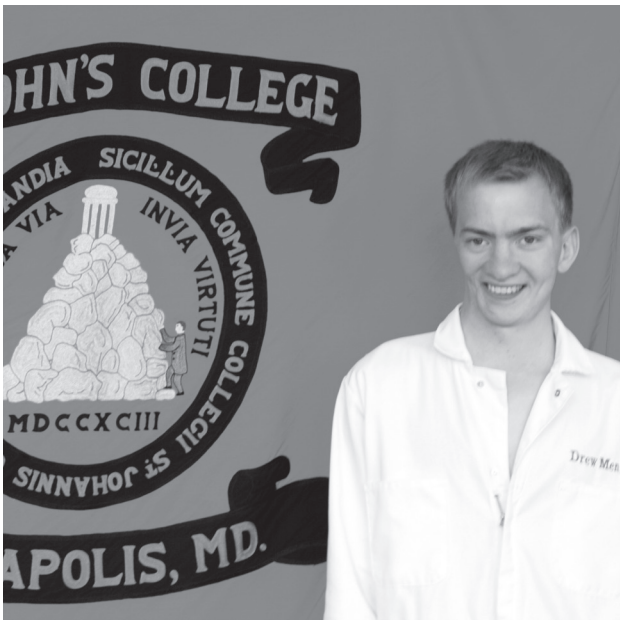












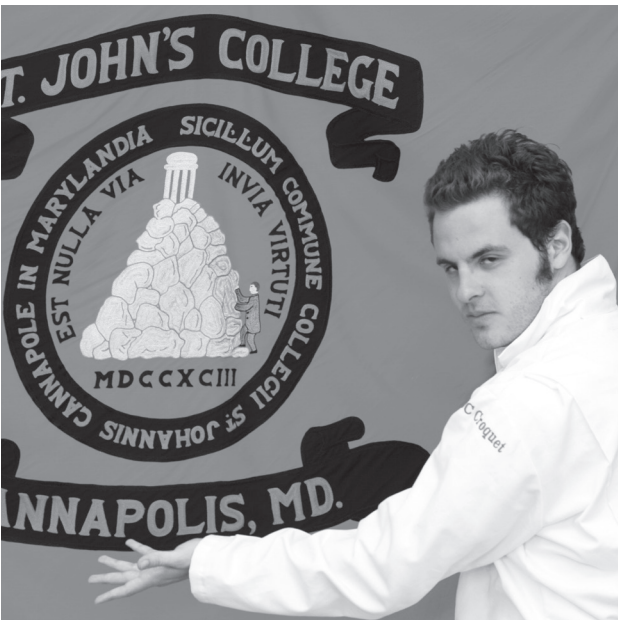
Drew Menzer (Imperial Wicket)

- I play croquet because...of the ladies. On this campus, being on the croquet team is like being a rock-star-turned-war hero.
- In ten years...my financial empire will either be expanding into real-estate or arms dealing. It will depend on what the market is doing.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Mr. Rogers, Zeus (both for fairly obvious reasons), and Bobby Flay, because someone's got to cook the meal, right? I think that's an overlooked, but crucial, part of the question.
- In the shower I sing...Beyoncé's "Love on Top." Are there other songs that people sing in the shower? You can't beat those key changes.
- If I could live anywhere, I would live...in Ireland in a giant castle overlooking the ocean. I have given some serious thought to this question.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a monkeyologist. I love monkeys. There is no joke here, I just love monkeys...a lot.
- One book every person should read is...*Calvin and Hobbes*. They made me the man I am today.
- My teammates say I am...the Imperial Wicket. Pretty straightforward. They also probably say I'm mean to them when we play croquet. I might be guilty of that...
- The Naval Academy is...quite good at croquet. They're like the second-best croquet team in Annapolis.



Phil Schiffrin

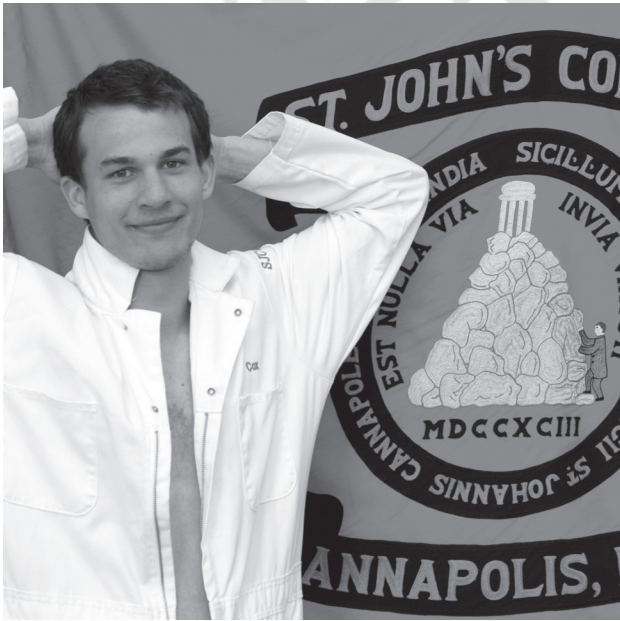
- I play croquet because...chicks can't get enough of the jumpsuit. How else can Hector and I pick up girls?
- In ten years, I will be...prosecuting Brian Warczynsky and Jinyao Zou for securities fraud.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Emma Watson, Emma Watson, and Emma Watson.
- In the shower I sing...anything Tommy Bonn wants me to sing. The show is for him.
- If I could live anywhere, I would live...in Chase-Stone probably, though I always wanted to sleep in the cupola room. You meant on campus, right?
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a wizard. I'm still waiting for my letter though...
- One book every person should read is...*Portnoy's Complaint*. Some things every 13-year-old boy should know.
- My epitaph will read: "He walked through life as he did around the croquet court. Slowly."
- My teammates say I am...the suavest dude on the team! Except for Hector...or Hunter. Crap.
- The Naval Academy is...just not up to winning the Annapolis Cup. Maybe they should work on their athletics program.



Jonathan Barone

- I play croquet because...few things attract the ladies as much as a monogrammed white jumpsuit.
- In ten years, I will be...Batman. First order of business: Make Hector my butler.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Well, I definitely don't want to have dinner with three corpses (even one would be kind of a bummer). I guess I'd have to choose Nathan and Ian, our faithful *Gadfly* editors, with Hector, my butler, serving us.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in a fantastic little blue box that's somehow bigger on the inside.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a liberal arts major with no marketable skills besides a mastery of croquet. I would wake up every night in a cold sweat, having envisioned myself under a tarp on the side of the road with only my customized mallet and memories of distant glory to keep me warm. They were not happy dreams.
- One book every person should read is...a sweet little ditty entitled "Apollonius' Second Letter to Eudemus."
- My epitaph will read: something like A.E. Housman's, "This is for all ill-treated fellows / unborn and unbegot, / for them to read when they're in trouble / and I am not."
- The Naval Academy is...comprised of people who really like mint chocolate chip ice cream. One more reason why they are our mortal enemies.

# ‘Oh, Johnnies, as You Play Croquet,



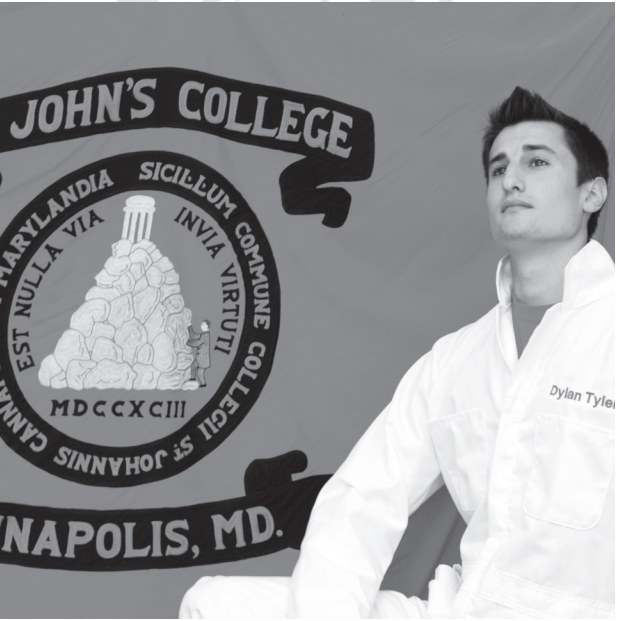
Hunter Cox

- I play croquet...for the chicks.
- In ten years, I will be...kicking ass and taking names.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Linus Feder times three.
- In the shower I sing\*..."Love on Top" by Beyoncé, and "Take My Breath Away" by Berlin, and "Jungleland" by Bruce Springsteen. (\*I take long showers.)
- When I was little I dreamed of being...The Boss.
- One book every person should read is...*The Brothers Karamazov*.
- My epitaph will read: "He Lives."
- My teammates say I am...The Best.
- The Naval Academy is...way too expensive.



Mandee Glasgo

- I play croquet...for the chick(s).
- In ten years, I will be...the oldest undergrad still playing croquet.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...JFK, Marilyn Monroe, and Jackie O.
- In the shower I sing..."Dumb Ways to Die." But that's only incidental, since I sing it all the time.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in Paul Rudd's guest house.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...an owl.
- One book every person should read is...*Frindle* By Andrew Clements.
- My epitaph will read: "Here Lies Mandiey."
- My teammates say I am...carrying the team.
- The Naval Academy is...heroic, but not fearsome.



Dylan Tyler

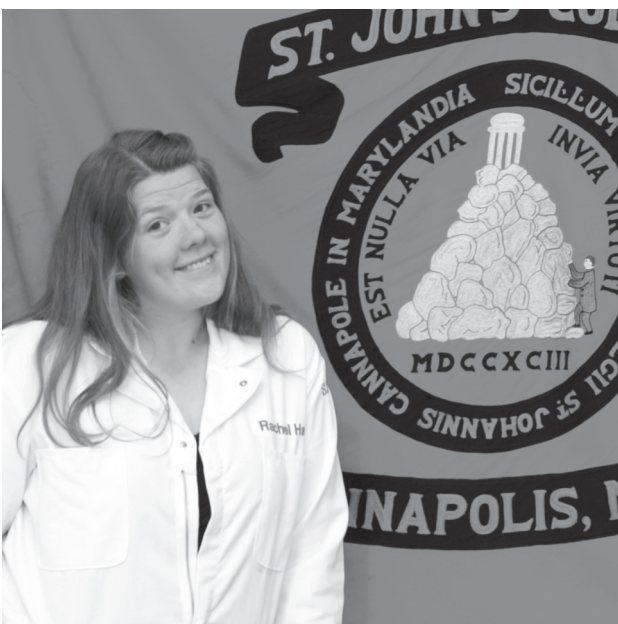
- I play croquet because...of the chicks.
- In ten years, I will be...in the shower.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Rubber Ducky, He'stheone, and Thatmakesbathtimesomuchfun.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in the shower.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...in the shower singing in ten years.
- One book every person should read is...in the shower.
- My epitaph will read: "In the shower."
- My teammates say I am...in the shower.
- The Naval Academy is...wet.





Hector Mendoza

- I play croquet because...it gets me all the chicks.
- In ten years, I will be...not living with my parents.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Kanye West, Jay-Z, and Puff Daddy (P. Diddy, Diddy, whatever he goes by now).
- In the shower I sing...Drake songs.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...anywhere that's 78 degrees and sunny yearlong.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a cowboy.
- One book every person should read is *The One: The Life and Music of James Brown* by R.J. Smith.
- My epitaph will read: "So if the devil wear Prada, Adam/Eve wear nada, I'm in between but way more fresher."
- My teammates say I am...good-looking.
- The Naval Academy is...across the street.



Rachel Hahn

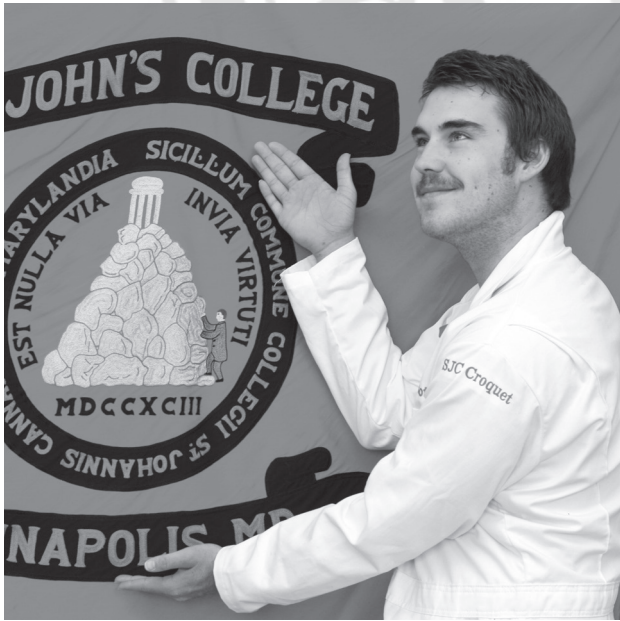
- I play croquet because...of the chick(s).
- In ten years, I will be...ten years older and 50 years wiser.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Ewan McGregor as Christian (*Moulin Rouge*), Ewan McGregor as Catcher Block (*Down with Love*), and Ewan McGregor as himself.
- In the shower I sing...way better than I normally sing.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in a car. It would be a big car, but not an RV; that's too big.
- When I was little I dreamed of...defeating any monsters under my bed, especially when said monster was my little sister.
- One book every person should read is...*Frindle*, but why would you only read one?
- My epitaph will read...Well, I couldn't say, since I won't be there to write it.
- My teammates say that I am...on the croquet team.
- The Naval Academy is...what everyone immediately thinks of when I tell them that I go to college in Annapolis, MD.



Eric Shlifer

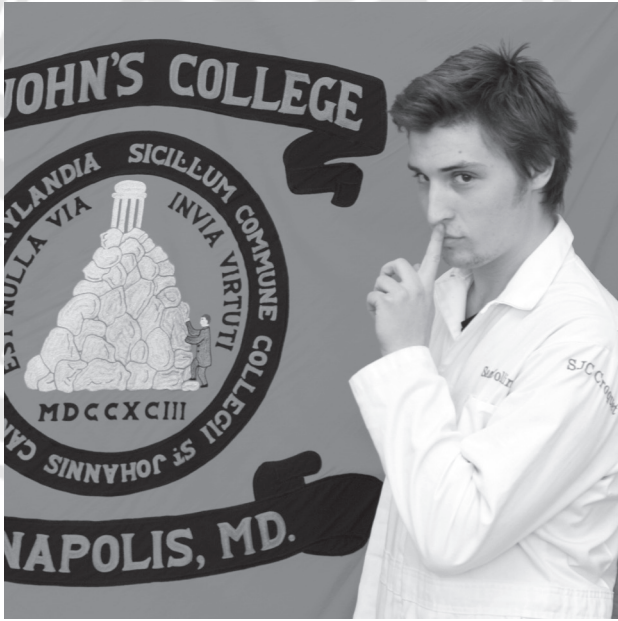
- I play croquet...to get chicks.
- In ten years, I will be...living on Brian Warczinsky's couch.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Mark Twain.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in a castle on top of a hill with a moat.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a professional football player.
- One book every person should read is...*The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky.
- My epitaph will read: "Caring Friend, Loving Husband, Annoying Father."
- My teammates say I am...very good at being myself.
- The Naval Academy is...stronger, faster, better-equipped, and better prepares their students to be productive citizens of the United States. Yet we still beat them in croquet...so at least we have that, right?

# Defend Our Honor on this Day...'



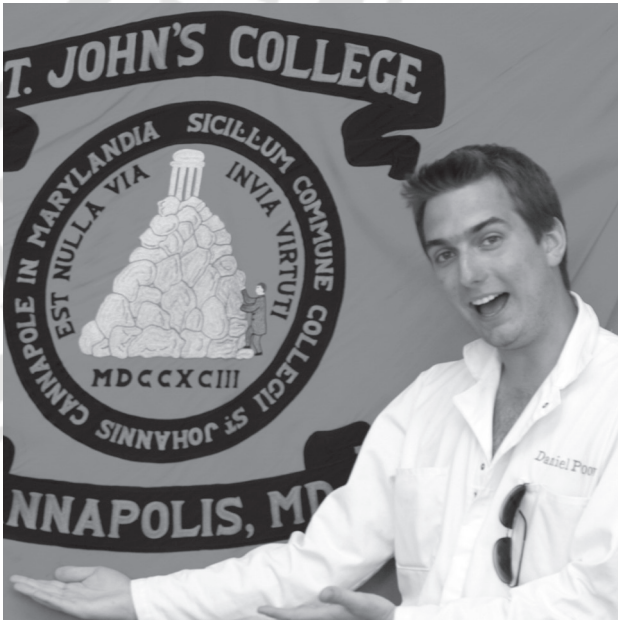
Cory Cotten-Potter

- I play croquet...for the chicks.
- In ten years, I will be...alive and well, God willing.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Ernest Hemingway, Immanuel Kant, Francesca Woodman.
- In the shower I sing...Toto's "Africa."
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...Chilean Patagonia.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...a fireman.
- One book every person should read is...Matthew Crawford's *Shop Class as Soulcraft*.
- My teammates say I am...only on the team to attract more female spectators.
- The Naval Academy is...haunted by the tepid, gruesome shadows of its former defeats.



Sam Collins

- I play croquet because...of Hector's wicket shot.
- In ten years, I will be...working at a pizzeria trying to get enabled.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead), they would be...Hunter S. Thompson, LBJ, and Ke\$ha.
- In the shower I sing..."Just A Friend" by Biz Markie.
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...off campus, but that's not going to happen. #housinglottery-problems
- One book every person should read is...the one that leads them to the next one.
- My epitaph will read: "The most important thing in life is BUCKETS."
- My teammates say I am...the best vice-archon ever.
- The Naval Academy is...party central.



Daniel Popov

- I play croquet...for the ladies.
- In ten years, I will be...emperor of space.
- If I could have dinner with any three people (living or dead)...I would go to the pub with Shakespeare, Socrates, and Lincoln.
- In the shower I sing..."I Just Can't Wait to be King!"
- If I could live anywhere, it would be...in the White House.
- When I was little I dreamed of being...legen—[...wait for it...]-dary!
- One book every person should read is...*Everybody Poops*.
- My epitaph will read: "He died with his mallet in his hand."
- My teammates say I...make a great Little Spoon.
- The Naval Academy is...going down down down Navy's going down!



# How to Live a Good Life; or, In Over My Head

by Robert Malka, Staff Writer, A'15

Montaigne tells us that the “great and glorious masterpiece of man is to live appropriately.” Plutarch tells us about the “empty name and invidious glory” of Caesar. The author of the Book of Job tells us that the titular character, after suffering apparent injustices, remarks after seeing God: “I heard You with my ears and now see You with my eyes, and...I recant, being but dust and ashes.”

Sophomore year, it seems to me, is a time when we examine not just what it means to be great-souled, but *how* to be great-souled. We are bombarded throughout the whole year with stories of great men and their tragic ends, examples for us to contemplate, emulate, or reject as models of the Proper Life. And what timing, too: sophomore year is considered the calm before the storm of junior year, a rare and brilliant luxury given to us to evaluate our lives and examine whether we should take a break from the Program, or push our way through it.

Perhaps I am alone in this, but as a sophomore I have struggled immensely with the Program and the evaluation it seems to ask of me. Questions that seemed distant to me as a freshman are coming into focus at an alarm-

ing speed: How are we being prepared for the outside world? Are we really serious about these texts and the tough questions that they ask? Are we equipped to handle these questions on both an intellectual and an emotional level, or have we ended up in over our heads? I have succeeded in answering none of these questions, so I have settled with hoping for the best.

But it gets more complicated: Where I was self-absorbed as a freshman, I have now begun to look outside myself to find those who

are on the same page, able and willing to traverse together the journey that these questions pose. In this, I have found both some success and some failure. While these texts do not change, the people reading them do, and at times the campus and the Program can feel like it is stifled by those who are not serious. (By “serious” I mean those who try to receive both intellectual and moral virtues from these texts, and not just intellectual virtues—debate on whether this is an adequate definition merits another whole article, so bear with me here.) This is compounded by the fact that many students who are serious are often withdrawn by nature, keeping their enthusiasm behind closed doors, revealed only to their close friends, to the text, and to themselves.

On the other hand, I have seen that Johnnie alumni have much to teach us on how to answer these questions. I consider that discovery a success, because for current students, the Johnnie Bubble ends where the campus ends and the Real World begins. This paradigm is wrong. When we graduate, we take a little bit of it with us.

This article, then, is a call-to-arms to current students and alumni. Current students: Take advantage of today to ask those who have graduated how they answered these questions—if they have. Make new friends from different eras. We do not have to see alumni simply as people who can give us a job, mere exit ramps out of the Bubble. We can and should use this special event as an opportunity to find out how other Johnnies examined (and continue to examine) their lives. And to alumni: I hope you will help us out. Because, let me tell you, as a sophomore, I’m in way over my head here. ☹



## Don't Define 'Justice' in a Paper, and Limited Other Advice

by Will Brown, Staff Writer, A'16

So by the time that this is read, I'll have nearly finished up with my classes for freshman year. I'm sure I speak for most of my class in saying that this is a bizarre feeling. It's been a difficult, informative year, one in which I did a lot of great things and made a lot of mistakes (about a 20:80 ratio, I think). Here are some of the things I wish I had known last August, when a younger Will sauntered up the steps of Campbell Hall thinking he was attending a year-long book club.

For one, I wish I had known how difficult seminar was. Seminar is the class I had the most difficulty with for much of the year, and I subsequently worked less on it. It seemed like a new issue confronted me every week: whether I was spending enough time on the readings; whether I was inquiring often without depending on the opinions of my classmates; whether I was making constructive comments that had any relevance to the discussion; whether I even knew what the reading was about (the legend goes that if you say *Timaeus* three times in front of a mirror, I will still not know anything about it).

I'd like to say that I have informative advice on the social front of St. John's, but I really don't. Every experience is different. If I could have told my August-self anything constructive, it would likely be this: just because the Admissions Office called this “the school for me” doesn't mean that it's filled with students I'll make friends with. It's a jarring experience that never goes away: I walk across the Quad, see a person who couldn't be more different from me, and realize this is just as much The School For Them. Such a feeling initially gave me discomfort, but I have come to realize that a diverse campus isn't just a slogan for prospective students—I am quite lucky that I have such differing perspectives in each of my classes. I've heard that this has to do with “maturity,” but I don't know what that is.

I am quite lucky that I have such differing perspectives in each of my classes. I've heard that this has to do with “maturity,” but I don't know what that is.

Finally, there's the issue of exercising regularly. My RA told me at an intramural game in October that I “can't just drink and do homework all the time; that's not a good way to live.” Now, I have yet to take this advice, but that doesn't mean that it's not valuable. Other than that, though, I'm simply bereft of any useful considerations for an incoming freshman. Actually, don't neglect your Greek homework. Take your tutors out to lunch. Don't throw up at parties. Don't drink before the *Symposium* seminar. Be polite in class. Don't talk in class if you haven't done the reading. Don't define “justice” in a paper. And don't fall asleep in public places; it's obnoxious. ☹





# Weird, Pretentious, Druggie, Racist

[Ed. Note: This article from the Gadfly archives is reprinted with minor edits.]

by Keenan Trotter, A'12

Last Sunday, The [Annapolis] *Capital* reported that Joshua Cohen (SF'94) was nominated as the new Democratic candidate for mayor of Annapolis. He replaced Zina Pierre, who was forced to drop out of the election due to concerns about her residential eligibility (the *Capital* found evidence suggesting she did not actually live in Annapolis) as well as problems with her finances, campaign, and otherwise. The *Capital* mentioned that Cohen was "kicked out [of St. John's College, Santa Fe] for not applying himself." (Cohen later went on to graduate from the University of Maryland. He is still considered an alumnus, however, since he was enrolled for at least one semester.)

This comment set off a good deal of invective on the *Capital's* website, a chunk of it directed at St. John's itself. Here is a sampling, which may have been edited for grammar and clarity:

*I hear St. John's is an easy school to graduate from, not like MIT or Caltech (or the Academy). Just a lot of talking.*

- Neill H., Annapolis, MD

*Anybody who doesn't think St. John's College is a Hard school should go there, seek out a Tudor [sic], and ask him or her for the "Great Books List." I was in the coffee shop located in McDowell Hall one day and happened to come upon someone's copy and couldn't even read the titles. I can't imagine reading the books. For anyone who isn't familiar with this list, it basically contains the student's year (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and explains the required books they are to read for that year.*

- Steve G., Annapolis, MD

*You get what you put in at SJC, so for some people, it is a life-changing experience. But there are plenty of trust-fund hippies there, and it is elitist, no matter how hard it tries to convince itself (and others) otherwise. One of its mottoes is "we make men free by means of books and a balance" but I guarantee you 90% of the school and tutors (not "Tudors") voted liberal and for Barack Obama; not really the sign of an ideologically "free" environment.*

- Neill H., Annapolis, MD

*"...I guarantee you 90% of the school and tutors (not 'Tudors') voted liberal and for Barack Obama; not really the sign of an ideologically 'free' environment." I think that statement would be fairly accurate when discussing the political leanings*

*of the majority of institutions of higher learning in the United States these days. Maybe places like the Naval Academy and West Point could be some of the few that could truly be considered "an ideologically 'free' environment." ...Although I would suspect most at SJC lean a little further left than most others.*

- Fred Flintstone, Unknown Location

*Here's the thing: (1) Johnnies consider themselves superior to the rest of the liberal academies, because they consider themselves SUPER-RATIONAL, and they sneer at the US News & World Report rankings, and with many other signs indicate their contempt of other colleges; (2) they have this Great Conversation that is forever going on (even at night, what boors!) in which all sorts of delightful ideas are advanced and (via the dialectical escruminata [sic]) tested against the tender foreheads of these young interlocutors! Haha!!*

*But it is all a deceptive ILLUSION (that's a big concept at SJC) because at least as far as politics and social theory goes there really is only one answer Ha HA!!*

- Neill H., Annapolis, MD

*St. John's is a tough school and you have to be both bright and willing to read a heck of a lot of books so that you can actively participate in the daily discussions. It is far more demanding than a typical university class.*

*St. John's students are all above average in intelligence and must possess a keen interest in thought produced primarily in Western civilization. You do have to actively apply yourself because each student must actively participate in the daily discussions, and if you are not prepared, it is obvious to everyone at the table. That said, I have personally known many people (mainly young men) who have flunked out of*

*their first semester or first year at college and have come back home to finish up their degree and they have done just fine. It's very typical.*

- Jennifer C., Annapolis, MD

*Weird, pretentious, druggie, racist, rapist, elitist. This is what I hear about the College, I am glad Mr. Cohen has found something better to do.*

- Christopher L., Annapolis, MD

*After reading that last comment, I sent a nice letter to the *Capital* for some much-needed clarification:*

*In response to an article about Joshua Cohen's nomination, an anonymous commenter on the *Capital's* website going by the name of "Christopher L." described St. John's College as "weird, pretentious, druggie, racist, [and] elitist."*

*I would like to add that we are also cannibals.*

Sincerely,  
Keenan Trotter  
Sophomore, St. John's College







# Over the Wall: One Johnnie's Adventure Behind Sort-of-Enemy Lines

*Ace reporter Danny Kraft crossed King George St. to find out what our Academy rivals think of the hippies on the hill. Here is the story of his encounter on the Yard.*

by Danny Kraft, Contributor, A'13

St. John's College loves to brag, in press releases and alumni newsletters, that *Sports Illustrated* once described the St. John's-Naval Academy croquet match as an event "without parallel in intercollegiate sports." Lobachevskian concerns aside, what could this mean?

The original *Sports Illustrated* article, published in 1987, offers no clear explanation. But it does provide tiny, tantalizing details that give some clue as to what an outsider might think distinguishes this event, and this community. The Imperial Wicket of St. John's, for example, wears "possibly the only dashiki left in this part of Maryland, and his hair is held in a ponytail by a sparkling blue clip." The rest of the St. John's team dresses "with studied eccentricity," and the Johnnie fans are described leading bizarre, bookish chants: "You can keep your deep blue sea, we have our philosophy!" In the eyes of *Sports Illustrated*, we are unparalleled most of all in our strange nerdiness.

With this in mind, I set out to discover how our rivals from across the street, the Midshipmen, think of us. Do they, too, consider us to be little more than a "colorful, heterogeneous mix" of weirdoes? Or do they perhaps, as every Johnnie secretly fantasizes, fear and respect our uncompromising commitments to truth and virtue?

The only way to answer these questions was to talk to the Midshipmen. But I had to blend in; I didn't want to be just another Johnnie reporter snooping around the Naval Academy, looking for the next big scoop. The only way I could be sure I was getting the truth was if I went deep undercover, so deep that the Midshipmen themselves would mistake me for one of their own.

To that end, I got a buzz cut. I was sure this would suffice, but somehow I was still clearly a Johnnie; my bookishness shone through. I knew then that I needed to commit to my undercover reporting. I couldn't just shave my head and expect to be mistaken for a Mid. In order to understand

the Midshipmen, I would have to become one. And so I went to Main Street and bought a tank top for sale at one of those t-shirt shops for tourists. The tank top was emblazoned, proudly, with one word: NAVY.

I set out to discover how our rivals from across the street, the Midshipmen, think of us... [But] to understand the Midshipmen, I would have to become one.

I spent several hours on the Yard, dressed in my new "uniform," and spoke to dozens of Midshipmen. Surprisingly enough, most of them did mistake me for a Midshipman, at least until I showed that I knew nothing of their lingo. I found out that about half of the students at the Naval Academy don't think or care about St. John's enough to ascribe any kind of reputation to us, good or bad.

Samuel Johnson once said that he "would rather be attacked than unnoticed," and I caught myself hoping that these Midshipmen, whom all of Annapolis knows by sight and reputation, would consider St. John's worthy even of a moment's scorn. I couldn't help but be delighted when a plebe, after I asked him what he knew about St. John's, responded immediately with what can only be described as patriotic pride: "I know that they're our rivals, and this year we're going to beat them at croquet!"

When Midshipmen were familiar with St. John's, their responses varied wildly. The adjective "hippieish" came up more than once, as did the participle "pot-smoking." One midshipman told me that he liked Johnnies, even though they're "kinda theological and out there, and it's hard to talk to them about tangible things."

Many Midshipmen unabashedly admired the bookishness and apparent intelligence of us Johnnies. "They're really smart," I heard several times, from Mids who did not yet know my identity. "They have to learn Greek, and they read all the time!" One young man admitted that his percep-

tion of Johnnies had changed in the few years he'd been in Annapolis. "When I came here," he said, "I thought they were all spoiled or hippies. But now I think they're just a bunch of nerdy private college kids." He said this with nothing but affection.

I also asked several Midshipmen whether they could think of any sports other than croquet at which St. John's could beat the Naval Academy. Chess and computer games were both suggested, but for some reason the sport with which most Mids responded was racquetball. Is there something I don't know about racquetball?

The truth is that I had a great time during my afternoon on the Yard. Every Midshipman I spoke to was pleasant and polite, and I had long and interesting conversations with many of them. The whole experience, to be honest, made me feel a little bit wistful: I'd never really spoken to any Midshipmen before, and none of the ones I talked to had ever spoken with a Johnnie.

Why is it that, for most of us, we only meet on Croquet Day? In a haze of alcohol we compete against each other, without really interacting, and then we return to our campuses.

Why is it that, for most of us, we only meet on Croquet Day? In a haze of alcohol we compete against each other, without really interacting, and then we return to our campuses. There is a Johnnie-Middie seminar once a year, but even then just a few dozen students participate, and again it takes a formal and irregular event to bring us together. Forgive me if I'm getting

too preachy, but I think we—Johnnies and Midshipmen alike—should take it upon ourselves to get to know our fellow students in Annapolis.

I really enjoyed many of the conversations I had, which fortunately ranged beyond the gimmicky interviews I planned. So Midshipmen, the next time you walk through our campus, feel free to strike up a conversation with those of us you see. And Johnnies, the next time you see a Midshipman on Main Street or by City Dock, why not say hi? After all, we're all relatively new to Annapolis. Maybe we could learn something from each other. I know that I learned a lot from the Midshipmen I met. Maybe we could even become friends. ☺