



THE GADFLY

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Class of 2015:



You're free.

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.

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Articles for the next issue should be submitted to sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

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From the Editors:

When we took the reins of the *Gadfly* last spring, we inherited a newspaper that, at the hands of the previous editors, had become exactly what they had hoped: an expression of the Polity's voice, and an integral part of the St. John's community.

We hope, a year later, that it remains exactly that. If it does, that is entirely thanks to our diligent staff and all those in the community who took the time to help fill our pages. To you all we offer our heartfelt gratitude.

And so, we began the year with our freshmen, and we end with our seniors. To the Class of 2015, congratulations and good luck! To the rest of you, see you at Convocation! ♦

✓ To the Class of 2015

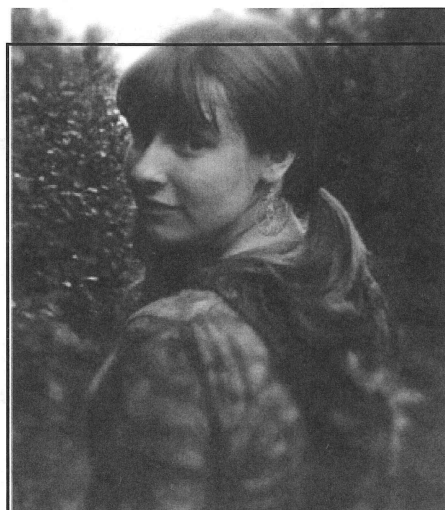
Seniors,

A week from now, I will be wishing you well as you are hooded, diplomas in hand, prepared for new adventures into the wider world. You will trade being full-time members of our community to becoming permanent members, joining thousands of fellow alumni, taking St. John's College with you wherever you go.

We wish you to know that thoughts of you and cares for your happiness will be with us who remain behind. We will hope to hear from you, wanting to learn how you are faring and what the future brings as you venture forth from here. St. John's College will always be a second home to you, and we will be pleased see you back among us from time to time.

Congratulations and Fare Well!

Christopher Nelson, President



Kristen Luchsinger

Hometown:
Palmer, AK

Senior Essay Title:
The Role of Beauty in Science as Seen in the Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen Paper and Responsible to It within the Context of Quantum Theory

Post-Graduate Plans:
Kick a**, go to space, represent the human race (aka, MA Program in Astronomy at Wesleyan University).



Lin Qiu

Hometown:
Hainan, China

Senior Essay Title:
"Do You Really Love Me?" An Inquiry into Faith in Philosophical Fragments

Post-Graduate Plans:
Study philosophy of science at Tufts University

A Love Letter to the Student Committee on Instruction

Cora Davis A15

One may wonder why it is necessary to have a Student Committee on Instruction at St. John's, and ask what function it has here at the college. As a member of the committee for four years, I would like to give a few reasons for why I think the SCI is a particularly wonderful slice of life at the college.

1. We have the unique opportunity at this college to actively reflect on what end we are trying to achieve with our education and how our program makes this possible. The open forums hosted by the SCI provide students and tutors a place to candidly discuss questions like: Why do we say that the seminar is the heart of the program? What is the role of demonstration in the classroom? And my personal favorite, how is music a part of a liberal education?

2. The all-college and extra-curricular seminars that the SCI organizes were a fundamental part of my education here at the college. Not only did these seminars allow me to engage with tutors and students outside of my classes, but it was from them that I first learned one of the most important lessons of being in a conversation: one learns by listening, not speaking.

3. During my time on the SCI the school went through a long process of accreditation. The tutors who led this tremendous undertaking would send drafts of the self-study and accreditation reports to members of the SCI to seek our suggestions. I think this anecdote says something really important about the St. John's community. Our school is a place where students are passionately connected to their education and this passion is recognized and respected by the faculty both inside and outside of the classroom. Other places where we see this mutual respect is in activities like the St. John's Chorus and the Intramurals program.

Perhaps the simplest answer as to why the Student Committee on Instruction is a necessary part of this college can be explained by a quote from Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*: "Even if we can't do anything with it, may not philosophy in the end do something with us, provided that we engage ourselves with it?" Thank you, St. John's College, for the gift of engaging in philosophy. ♦



Cora Davis

Hometown:
Baltimore, MD

Senior Essay Title:
"Better well hanged than ill wed": The Necessary Downfall of Philosophy, and the Grace it Receives through Faith in Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments

Post-Graduate Plans:
Je vais aller en Europe pour pratiquer mon français et de manger beaucoup de fromage



Alice Loofbourrow

Hometown:
San Jose, CA

Senior Essay Title:
The God who dies to conquer death: Exploring the meaning behind the music and text of the Passion chorale in Bach's St. Matthew Passion

Post-Graduate Plans:
I am attending Goucher's Post-baccalaureate Pre-medical program to complete my requirements in preparation for medical school. I am also getting married to Charlie Allen Bruce.

I Love Seniors

Anonymous

Finally, I'm beginning to understand what Reality is all about.

My darling seniors, you've given me countless hugs and love beyond measure. I have watched you grow and felt the pain which accompanied that growth. You inspire me. You remind me of the beauty in the world, the beacon of friendship that can guide back home even the most lost of wanderers. Inexorably, we were pulled together, and forever we will be intertwined. For a moment, the entirety of the threads of our lives ran down the course of time and space together. Your laughter, your tears, your determination, your joy, your pride, your enthusiasm, your dedication: these are things that draw me to you, that make me pause, that bring tears to my eyes because loving you is painful. I love you so much it hurts. At times my love for you overwhelms me, hits me in the solar plexus with the force of a solid punch. You have cherished me, guided me, laughed with me, facilitated my own growth and allowed me into your hearts and I will be forever grateful. ♦

I WAS AN IDIOT IN HIGH SCHOOL

Sebastian Barajas

A'17

How St. John's has and hasn't changed us

Whenever high school comes up at the lunch table, everybody feels obligated to say, "I was an idiot in high school." Written, these words have no smile in them, so I've never quite understood why we smile when we speak them. And why is this sentiment so pervasive, even among Johnnies who seem the least mature? Why does it please even the most childish of us to call our past selves idiots? Are we proud of our past idiocy, the same way we're sometimes proud of drinking until we get sick? Clearly not: while we might gladly go out drinking and getting sick every weekend and then brag about it, we would never willingly return to high school, nor do we think anything in high school worth bragging about. So in our culture, having been children is infinitely more shameful than making drunken oafs of ourselves in public.

Consequently, most of us see college as our chance to get as far away from childhood as we possibly can in four years. If by senior year, we can't turn on our high school selves (if not all younger people) and say, "You are an idiot," we think we've somehow failed to grow up. We're terrified of this failure, and as a result it's hard to find an experience or an increment of time so small or insignificant that a young person won't point to it and claim to have been fundamentally

matured by it.

I ask people why they feel the need to be distant from their high school selves, and they reply, "Because I was an arrogant little shit, that's why. I fit every stereotype you can think of for the angsty Holden Caulfield knockoff. That was me. An arrogant little shit."

Similarly, many of us used to be the sorts of characters we ourselves would not want to read about. We fell into tired, self-indulgent clichés, possibly saying things like, "No one understands me," and "Everyone in the world is so stupid." We read these things in the present and say, "You were wrong, you little shit. It wasn't the world that was stupid, it was you."

But to call anything "stupid" is to say that we don't, in fact, understand it: that we're so overcome with emotion, we can't face it. So when we call our high school selves "stupid," we neither teach nor learn from them, but only contradict them—as though we were locked in an endless schoolyard argument like Creon and Antigone—and no understanding is reached. And we all know that the least interesting and insightful explanations we find for these characters' actions is "They were just idiots," or "They were being possessed

“Are we to dismiss that choice as chance: that our younger selves only happened by accident to choose exactly the right tiny obscure liberal arts college to attend?”

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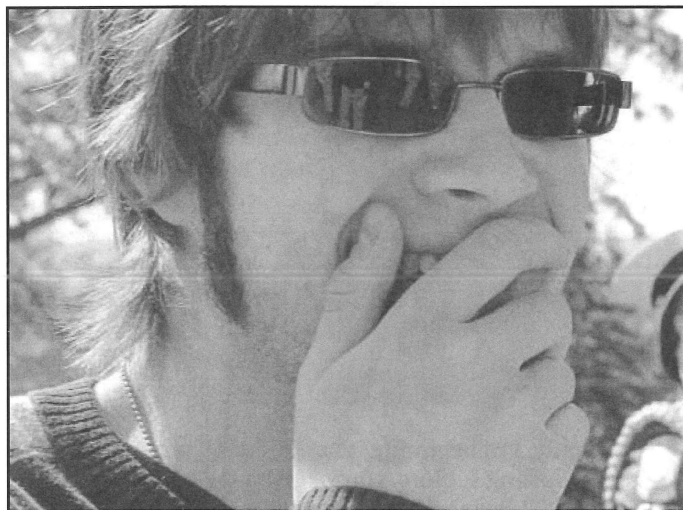


Jennifer Shumpert

Hometown:
Reston, VA

Senior Essay Title:
Ships That Pass in the Night: Or, the Duplicity of Narratives in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

Post-Graduate Plans:
Construct elaborate cardboard cutouts of my friends so that I can pretend we still get to hang out every day. Mourn heavily. Maybe get a drastic haircut? Eventually move to DC and work for a non-profit focused on women's issues.hotspots.



Josh Avni

Hometown:
Woodstock, VA

Senior Essay Title:
Nothing: Seeking Self-Annihilation in Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*

Post-Graduate Plans:
Writing and directing movies, ideally even ones that people like!

Continued From Pg. 4

by the gods." So how can we possibly be satisfied with such explanations for our own actions?

I ask these questions, and people reply, "You know what? It's really not that important. I've learned my lesson, and it's over now. I can move on with my life. I don't want to deal with high school or high school kids anymore. I'm done with that shit."

From this, it's clear to me that adulthood (which most of us have enjoyed only very briefly) hasn't so much humbled us (as we think) as put a fake moustache on our arrogance so that we no longer recognize it. Instead of saying to ourselves, "Everybody is stupid," as we did in high school, we now say, "My entire past was stupid, and so is anyone else who's young or idiotic enough to think the way I did when I was in high school": a difference of little consequence.

The plain truth is that we're not as different from our high school selves as we pretend to be, even by senior year. If we doubt this, we would do well to remember on whose account most of us became Johnnies. Who else but our high school selves chose this school for us? And unless we've found our time here unpleasant (in which case we have more problems than simply not valuing the past), this person we look down on made the right decision. Are we to dismiss that choice as chance: that our younger selves only happened by accident to choose exactly the right tiny obscure liberal arts college to attend? What remarkably good luck to befall the majority of the Polity.

Of course, we might have made many changes since our

high school years. We might have done things then that we now regret. We might have grown or overcome personal flaws or challenges. But all of that strife was necessary to make us who we are. If we had a misguided Goth phase in 10th grade, this played its part in shaping our present. If we once got in trouble for egging our school, this played its part as well. But if we deny that this chain of events is valid, and say, "That was just idiotic, I shouldn't have done that, and I would be better off if I hadn't," we are, in a sense, denying our own existence.

Because of our childhoods, our heads are full of things. And if we had not been alive and experienced a colorful variety of things for roughly eighteen years before coming here, our heads would not be full of things, and we would all be drooling infants. But we are not drooling infants. And this is manifestly because we have many years' experience as thinking, learning beings.

In fact, we can easily look on personal history as a Program book: one that no other Johnnie has access to. As Johnnies, we owe it to ourselves and to others to read that book, to take it with us through all four years, and keep reading it after graduation. We must read it closer and more thoroughly than any of the books on the Program—since it's longer, more important, and contains, as Montaigne calls it, "the whole stamp of the human condition." Try to understand your high school self, even if that person makes you angry, or hurts you, or seems to defy understanding. To smile your most precious book away and insult it is an inexcusable sin for a Johnnie. ♦

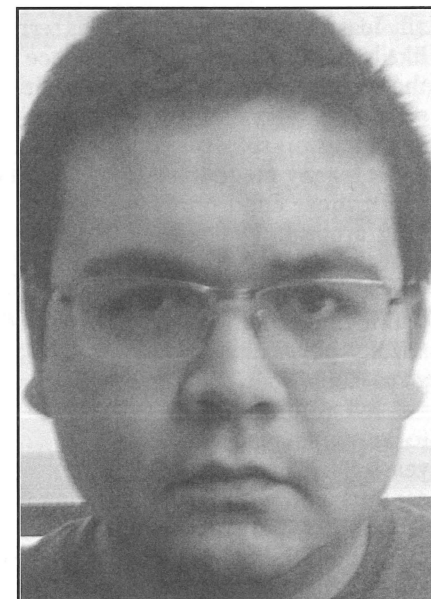


Shayna Jenkins

Hometown:
Litchfield, CT

Senior Essay Title:
The Man of Many Faces: The Search for Self-Knowledge in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*

Post-Graduate Plans:
Re-reading the entire Gossip Girl series-shot-spots.

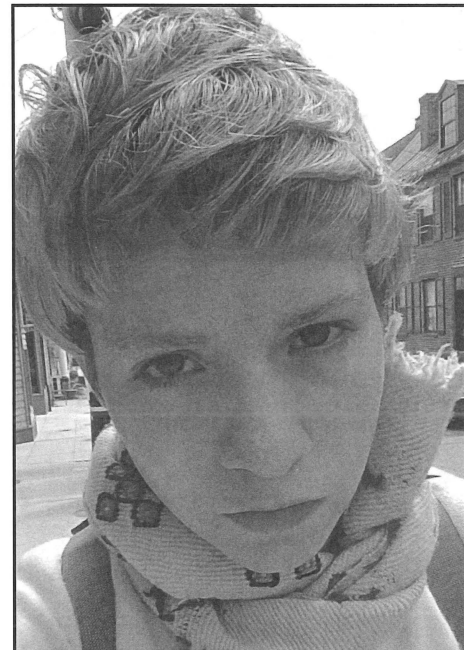


Dioscoro Blanco

Hometown:
Leesburg, VA

Senior Essay Title:
Abraham's Argument: Faith as Human Fulfillment in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*

Post-Graduate Plans:
Moving to Lexington, VA and attending law school at Washington and Lee University.

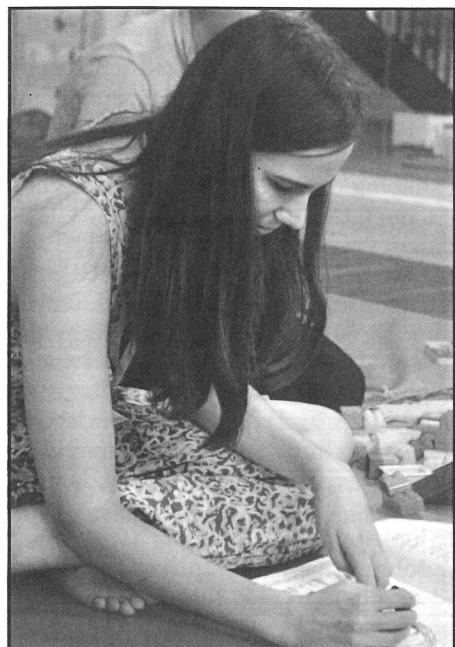


Josephine LaCosta

Hometown:
Oldwick, NJ

Senior Essay Title:
Faith and Freedom, in honor of Emma Bovary, the child, the artist, the hero

Post-Graduate Plans:
Gonna be a chef.

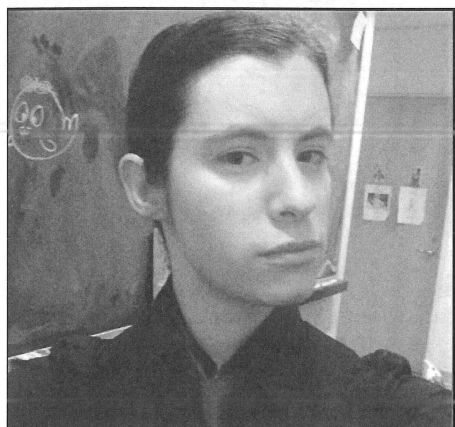


Joy Perry

Hometown:
Corbett, OR

Senior Essay Title:
The Receding Figure: Sublime Moments in Three Landscapes by Caspar David Friedrich

Post-Graduate Plans:
I'll be spending this summer interning for a non-profit art school in the Berkshires.



Molly Kirkpatrick

Hometown:
Orono, ME

Senior Essay Title:
Round Perdition's Flames: Madness and Obsession in Moby Dick

Post-Graduate Plans:
Touch and care for old books.

A Word of Non-Advice

Joy Perry A'15

I don't think there is any parting advice I can give that will do a fraction of the good that comes from learning through experience and mistakes, so I would like to make a parting wish for the Polity instead: I hope that our mistakes will not sour our experience of life but will instead teach us a light-hearted humility as painlessly as possible. And, from that humility, I hope we gain an expanded capacity to forgive and extend kindness to our fellows. Goodbye, and thank you. This experience has meant the world to me. ♦

Thanks to Kunai

Melanie Swiecicki A'15

Kunai has been an athletics program and also a support group to me. I played some sports in high school and I knew that when I came to St. John's I wanted to continue being active. So the minute I heard about Kunai's existence I knew I wanted to participate. It was one of the best decisions I have made during my time at St. John's. With Kunai I was able to learn sports I had never played before, like Netball, or actually learn how to play ones I was terrible at, like basketball. I also got the chance to play the sports I have always enjoyed with other girls. The opportunity to clear my mind and just focus on something physical has been great for my mental health. And don't discount those endorphins you get from running around! The knowledge that if I go to Kunai I will finish it having let go of my stress and happy is what motivates me.

But that is something you can feel from all/any physical activity, the real reason I go to Kunai specifically is the people. Without it I would never have met and gotten to know so many amazing girls in other years. Sure, I would have seen them around campus, and with St. John's being the tiny school it is, I'm sure I could tell you some facts about them. But I wouldn't have really known them. Kunai enabled me to make friendships with a wider variety of girls



Melanie Swiecicki

Hometown:
Warsaw, Poland

Senior Essay Title:
Quo Vadis? Christianity

Post-Graduate Plans:
Relaxing in my sauna.

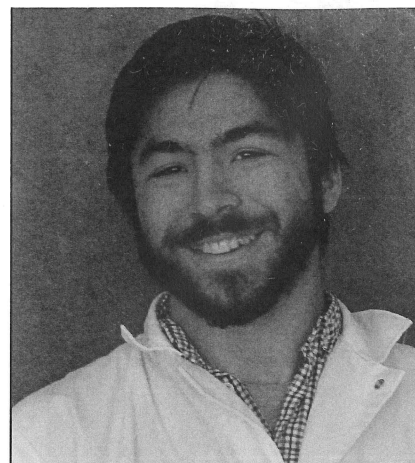
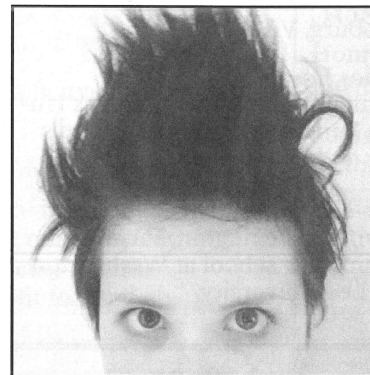
than I would have otherwise known. And those friendships are, of course, what makes me go to each Kunai game, every Tuesday and Friday. ♦

Madison Galbraith

Hometown:
Chandler, AZ

Senior Essay Title:
Son of Sin, Son of Sanctity: An Exploration of the Character of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew

Post-Graduate Plans:
Medical School (probably)



Sebastián Abella

Hometown:
Miami, FL

Senior Essay Title:
Recreating Reality: The Church of Combray in Swann's Way

Post-Graduate Plans:
Economics

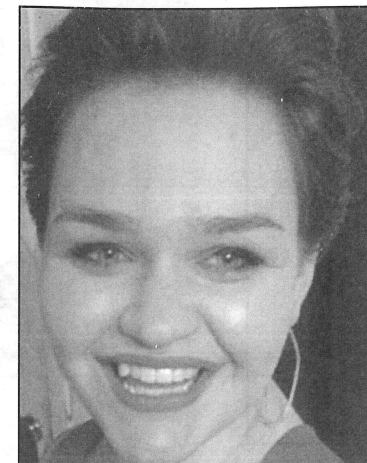


Elizabeth Wootten

Hometown:
Minnetonka, MN

Senior Essay Title:
To Live For The Soul: A Study of the Philosophy and Practical Life of Konstantin Levin in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina

Post-Graduate Plans:
Apply to and attend grad school for a Master's in Russian and Eurasian regional studies.

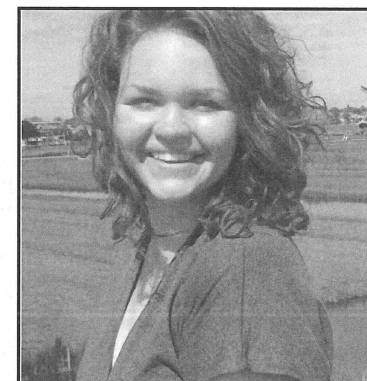


Victoria Wick

Hometown:
Denver, CO

Senior Essay Title:
The Inner World of War and Peace

Post-Graduate Plans:
Paying off my student loans and catching up on the pop culture I've missed these past 4 years.



Alexandra Wick

Hometown:
Denver, CO

Senior Essay Title:
"Kneeling and Decline in King Lear."

Post-Graduate Plans:
Within the next couple of years, I will begin my education in naturopathic medicine in order to become a practitioner of bio-energetic therapy. This year, I'll be working as an Office Manager at Green Life Chiropractic here in town and planning my wedding!

TIPS ON LEAVING THE COLLEGE

Patricia Locke Tutor

Ms. Bartram recently asked me for tips on leaving the College. I was taken aback and a bit inarticulate. But I have been thinking about it and here they are:

1 Cultivate your friendships. Keep in touch with the people you care most about, and leave open the possibility that your shared experience may give you more in common with the guy who drove you nuts in seminar than with any of the people at your next job. You may come to appreciate him more as time goes by.

2 Cut yourself some slack. Done properly, the Program is exhausting. Why not let yourself off the hook? You don't need to read anything on your To Read list right now. You don't have to add German or Russian to your accomplishments. Why not buy yourself a sketchbook and some color crayons (the big box). Hey, add glitter! Why not go to the beach? See what it would be like to be a person who actually takes the weekend (or equivalent) completely off from intellectual activities. Get out there in the natural world. And don't justify your being there by identifying birds. Leave your gun, your compass and your watch behind.

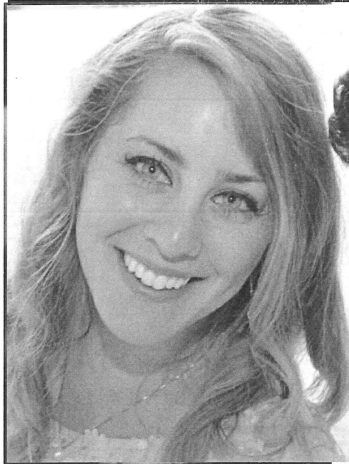
3 Get healthy. Didn't you promise yourself to quit smoking after graduation? I know #2 says cut yourself some slack, but maybe good food, sleep and exercise will help you kick whatever habits are weighing you down.

4 After four years of analyzing, synthesizing, absorbing, etc. maybe it is time to see how you can put your talents to work in making some place—your place—better, cleaner, more thoughtful, or (positive adjective here).

5 Embrace the big world! Take any chance you have to travel, meet people in your town from Elsewhere, and treat strange places as an adventure.

6 Think even bigger! If I could wave my (covert) wand and give you anything, it would be the gift of more self-confidence. You just went toe to toe with some of the finest minds in human history, and have learned all kinds 'o strategies to learn complex things outside your ken. You're GOOD! And if you have the typical mood sag during the first year, so be it. You will bob back up at full power. Support each other, and acknowledge your own maturity, thoughtfulness and mind intent. Get out there: the world needs you!

P.S. Don't forget the College. If you send us \$25/year, we will use it well. Write when you get work. Write when you get happy. ♦

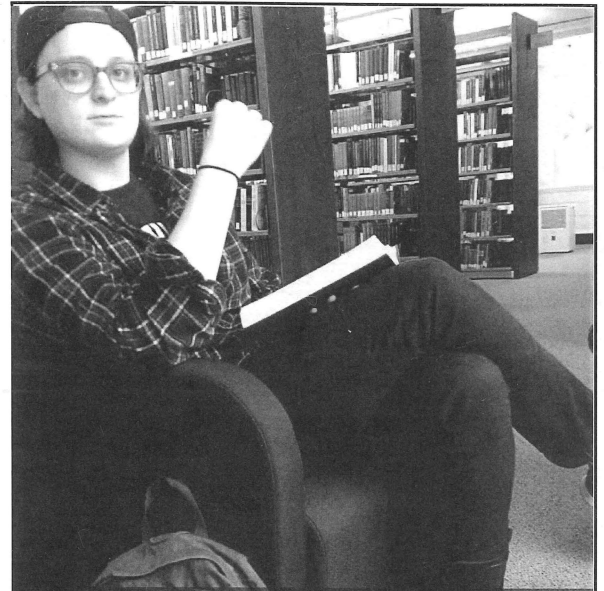


Anna Szumiesz

Hometown:
Concord, NH

Senior Essay Title:
Plonger au Fond: Finding Freedom
in the New Beauty of the Modern
World

Post-Graduate Plans:
Climb, hike, and surf my home
state with the love of my life, read
some non-Program books, plant a
garden, find a job, and apply to law
school.



"I hate reading" - Caroline Snizek A15

Caroline Snizek

Hometown:
Westfield, NJ

Senior Essay Title:
My Mind on My Murder and Murder on My
Mind, Death and Dying in Macbeth

Post-Graduate Plans:
Go home and recover from these four years and
plan my next move.

Leslie Howard

Hometown:
Laconia, NH

Senior Essay Title:
So As a Painted Tyrant Hamlet
Stood

Post-Graduate Plans:
I intend to hang out in Annapolis
and make crepes until I just can't
stand it anymore.



David Lincer

Hometown:
Short Hills, NJ

Senior Essay Title:
Hope Constricts the Heart: Imagination,
Sympathy, and Youth in Goethe's Werther

Post-Graduate Plans:
I'll be doing a psychiatric research intern-
ship at the Austen Riggs Center in Stock-
bridge, Massachusetts with a Hodson
grant. My plans for after that are still un-
clear, but they involve enrollment in some
sort of psychology program in 2016.



Stephanie Morgan

Hometown:
Colorado Springs, CO

Senior Essay Title:
Persuasion: Hindsight is 20/20: Analyzing
the Hows and Whys of Austen's Persua-
sion

Post-Graduate Plans:
Working in Annapolis, ideally in an ana-
lyst position, for the next 3 years, then
becoming a Foreign Service Officer with
the State Department.

Mary Reeher

Hometown:
Saint Paul, MN

Senior Essay Title:
Flesh & Blood: Webster and the
Female Prince

Post-Graduate Plans:
Grad school applications for
fall 2016, and
enjoying the Twin Cities' many
excellent WiFi hotspots.

