



## FROM THE POLITY: Echoing Whispers of a Succession Crisis?

Nestled behind Humphreys Hall and beside the Greenfield Library stands a building shrouded in mystery and myth. This labyrinth of passageways and hidden chambers guards secrets untold, yet some echoing whispers threaten to break free from their brick-walled confines. The gnomes of Paca are growing restless. Venerable guardians of the underquad, they have long concealed its second entrance under the floorboards of this maze-like palace. The gnomes are a quiet people. They wish for nothing more than to aid the Lady of the Underquad, the peaceful mediator between the overquad Johnnies and the mystical underquad realm below. Yet the Lady of the Underquad has not yet chosen a successor, and the gnomes fear the day when the throne sits vacant and silence hangs over the kingdom. If she were to leave the Underquad without a ruler, the very quad may well crumble into the oblivion below.

Still, there is hope! The Lady of the Underquad has met with the gnomes and promised to crown an heir well before the final Sicut is sung. Yet selecting a successor is no easy task, and the future of the Underquad must be secured. Having calmed the fears of the gnomes, the Lady of the Underquad has turned to me, Herschel P. Reuben. I am not and shall never be her heir, but I will gladly serve as a reporter to the polity. My duty is to make known the presence of the Lady of the Underquad to the Polity at large, and urge them to keep alive these true stories of St. John's. For stories are indeed the fragile heart of a community, the flickering candle of life and love.

*Herschel Reuben*

### UPCOMING SCI FORUM

*Courtesy of the Student Committee on Instruction*

**Oct. 30th:** What if my class is  
DEAD?

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

## PAPER OR PLASTIC? Or: How I Fixed Seminar

The college is terminally ill with a disease with no name. While its symptoms are observed by many, no solid diagnosis has yet been identified, nor any course of treatment devised. I thought myself safe, until the Psalms seminar revealed unmistakable signs of that illness in me. Others commented after the fact how intolerable I was: hardly ever shutting my mouth, talking over others, putting down their ideas, and refusing to entertain any but my own; the evil Johnnie incarnate. That behavior is antithetical to who I am, so whatever could be the cause? After much contemplation, I happily discovered that I was not the problem.

There's no doubt that sharing one's thoughts in seminar can be a traumatic and high-stakes environment. The room goes silent and stares at you while you monologue into your book, or swivel your head around, scanning the room for sympathetic eyes. There are none. They all hate you and think you're stupid. People cope with this differently. Some don't risk the pressure and never speak. Others feel obliged to defend themselves at all costs, and do so, terrified that if they don't self-advocate, they and their ideas will be thrown overboard and sink to the bottom of the discourse. The ship of seminar has a helm carved for many hands, and even so, there are people trying to seize it for themselves.

Dear reader, the cause of this is not simple verbosity in the culprit, or their lack of social awareness, or even their boorishness. This behavior bears the mark of that very terrible illness, what I call Affinity for the Self. With many faces around the seminar table, all speaking and trying to get their ideas across, it is easy to associate one person's face with their idea. Think of how fond we all are of what proceeds from ourselves, as a parent is for their child. It's only natural for us to be defensive of our ideas—so long as we know they're ours. If you follow the logic, the cure is anonymity. Through a well-placed bag over the head, the speaker is disguised from others, and from themselves. The ideas permeating the natural fiber- or petroleum-derived membrane, like souls through the Lethe, are deprived of an explicit connection to their speaker and thereby freed.

My theory had to be tested, regardless, and I found the second Tacitus seminar to be the perfect laboratory. As we discussed Rome's readiness to willingly submit to tyrannical proceedings, I despondently noticed an

immediate relevance to my seminar's situation. My peers were the senate, squabbling under the Caesar of the self. I, crowned with a Whole Foods grocery bag, was Cremutius Cordus, ostensibly persecuted but truly free of soul. Without a face to associate my speculations with, my peers had no choice but to name them the product of their collective thought. The kraft paper, filtering my words, even seemed to alter me. I was completely unaware of the things I was saying, and therefore unable to develop that pernicious, arrogant attachment to them. Seminar was liberated for the small price of ten cents.

Following this small victory, I naturally want to apply myself to the study of the other utilities of bag-wearing. I am presently writing under the hood of a plastic freezer bag, which, despite its proclivity for fogging up, protects my fragile brain from pesky Lucretian semblances threatening to interrupt my concentration. The sparing supply of oxygen leaves something to be desired, but I am finding myself increasingly capable of impressive quantities of work before I start hearing colors.

Could such blessed garments find utility in other places, perchance intramurals? I hazard a yes. An influx of sports-related injuries may soon find their relief in the humble insulated grocery tote. Outside of cushioning cranial impacts, they would prevent the players from seeing where they're going, likely preventing them from undergoing injurious behavior in the first place. Goodwill would return, which was often lacking in these games, by making it near impossible for any team to win. The sooner these teams stop trying to prevail over one another, the better for the college and its purported egalitarian mission.

I leave you, dearest polity, with the exhortation to see this invaluable garment universalized. If not advocating it to college leadership, you would do well beginning the change in yourselves. Johnnies would be *philosophers* in the truest meaning of the word, once more pursuing truth together in a spirit of collective insight, abolishing the holding of some that seminar is an event to be won, where one camp of ideology must prevail over the others.

Farewell!

*Jacob Sharpe*

### This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- Thursday, October 24: Plato: *Republic*, IV 427D–VI 502C
- Monday, October 28: Plato: *Republic*, VI 502D–VII

Sophomores:

- Thursday, October 24: *Bible*, Matthew
- Monday, October 28: *Bible*, Luke

Juniors:

- Thursday, October 24: Preceptorial
- Monday, October 28: Preceptorial

Seniors:

- Thursday, October 24: Preceptorial
- Monday, October 28: Preceptorial

### Friday Night Lecture:

Gregorian Choir of Paris

### Upcoming Events:

Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>:

- Guest Lecture: Goya's Theatre of Cruelty  
Conversation Room, 6pm to 7:30pm
- Reality's Halloween  
Great Hall, 9pm

Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>

- Resume Writing Workshop  
Studio Theater, 5pm

CLUB SPOTLIGHT: PROJECT POLITY  
An Interview with Kurtis Bleakley, Archon

**What’s your history with Project Polity?**  
I started coming during my freshman year. At the time, Luke Briner was the archon. It means something to me that there’s a service community here — a volunteering group that takes what we learn about virtue here and acts upon it in the world.

**Why is service important to you?**  
I did a lot of volunteering in the past—I taught ESL for a while and gave food to the homeless— and it always struck me in a very moving way how kind people are to you when you help them. There’s this intense connection. In some ways it’s ineffable

**What’s your relationship to service as a Johnnie?**  
I think of the Greek *arete*—virtue and character—and how Aristotle puts it in the *Ethics*. Virtue is practice. It is involved with continuing and furthering yourself. Leibniz even speaks of this too—perfect things becoming more perfect. So, there’s this overarching motif, I guess, between certain texts, of how we can become better human beings.

**How has your involvement with Project Polity affected your academic experience?**  
When I read, I find myself more attuned to how philosophies can help the world. Certain texts are very abstruse, very metaphysical, but the question that always percolates in my mind is: how can we use this to help others, or how can this affect the quote-unquote “real world” as opposed to the life of the mind? I think that’s a common refrain here, but for me it’s more epitomized when we do stuff like tutoring, cleaning up trash, and so forth.

**What have you read recently that you liked?**  
This is off-program, but this summer I read a book by David Brooks called *How to Know A Person*, where he talks about the art of conversation and listening, which I thought was very moving. On-program, I really do love the *Ethics*. I really like Leibniz and Spinoza and their sense of one-ness. The Irish poet David Whyte has this quote about the conversational nature of reality and I wonder if, the more we read

here, the more we see that all things are interacting With each other.

**How do you think St. John’s does in engaging with the greater Annapolis community?**  
I think we really could expand ourselves. I’ve had many beautiful intellectual conversations with people outside of St. John’s—I talked to a waitress the other day and she had a doctorate. I think there are more opportunities to bring St. John’s students out into Annapolis, and Project Polity is one of them.

**What would you say to people who haven’t come out to a service project yet?**  
I hope this doesn’t come off as selfish, but I really do think that volunteering is good for you as an individual, and for your mental health. Having positive thoughts about your day and seeing your ability to help someone is very good for you. When we go out tutoring, you can see the effect we have on these children. It’s very moving to see how you can help them become better readers and mathematicians. In Meno, the slave boy didn’t do the mathematical work by himself: Socrates engaged him in conversation. We’re taking things like that and bringing them out into the real world.

**What projects are coming up?**  
We have a semester food drive on November 2. If you want to help with that, please email me or accost me in the hallway. Later, we’ll also be making trash cans for dog poop by the creek. We might also organize a 5k in the spring. And we do weekly tutoring with the Stanton Center’s after school program.

*Interview by Helen Wagner*  
Email Kurtis at [kmbreakley@sjc.edu](mailto:kmbreakley@sjc.edu).

Aphorism of the Week

Ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀρχὼν ἀρχοντος ἀρχεὶ τοῦ ἀρχομένου.  
*Tarik Mahmud*

ANNUAL SECURITY & FIRE SAFETY  
REPORT

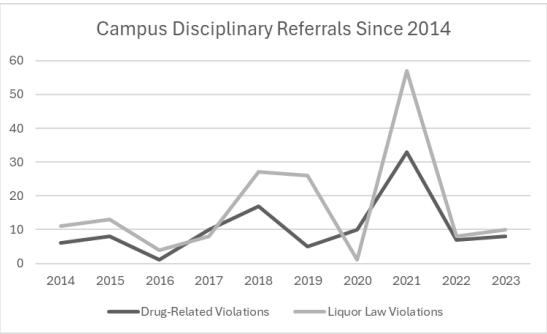
Every year, the College is required by federal law to release a security and fire safety report covering the previous year. These reports include, aside from a detailed record of safety procedures on campus, a record of all the crimes reported on campus, and all alcohol and drug related violations dealt with as campus disciplinary referrals. This year’s report, issued September 30th, covers incidents in the 2023 school year.

In general, the report shows similar numbers to last year, with a reduced number of almost all crimes and violations relative to high peaks in 2021. No particular incidents requiring clarification occurred in 2023. The report, which was emailed to the entire Polity and can be found in a physical format in the Public Safety office, features more in-depth data, but you will find here collected tables of the most frequent categories of crimes and violations across the past ten years, collected from several previous reports.

The report notes that the high spike in 2021 comes from officers being “more diligent in documenting violations of college policies,” than in previous years, as well as residual effects from the pandemic.

|                 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Rape            | 2    | 2    | 5    | 3    | 4    | 1    | 0    | 10   | 0    | 1    |
| Fondling        | 2    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 4    | 7    | 2    | 7    | 0    | 2    |
| Burglary        | 3    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Dating Violence | 0    | 0    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    |
| Stalking        | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

|                         | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Drug-Related Violations | 6    | 8    | 1    | 10   | 17   | 5    | 10   | 33   | 7    | 8    |
| Liquor Law Violations   | 11   | 13   | 4    | 8    | 27   | 26   | 1    | 57   | 8    | 10   |



*El’ad Nichols-Kaufman*

SQUIRREL :)

oh golly gee  
pumpkin 4 mee  
outside on steps  
is lovely treet

i take 1 taste  
i must make haste  
der may be dangers  
i haf to face



mouf full of food  
mus not be rude  
ders not a seed  
i havent chewed

da seeson change  
da weather strange  
so preparations  
i must arrange

i look around  
survey da ground  
for spot to hide  
dis meal i found

still on alert  
i dig da dirt  
a littol deeper  
it cannot hurt

i stand up high  
pawz to da sky  
i thank saint john  
for pumkin pie

*Vivian Miyakawa*

**PLEASE MAKE SUBMISSIONS TO  
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ABOUT THE ST.  
JOHN’S  
COLLEGLAN

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

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

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