

the Gadfly

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THE STRUCTURE

Logos typically holds news reports and narratives of immediate relevance to the Polity. The purpose here is to develop a shared reservoir of information relating to campus life and the community. The Managing Editor for *Logos* is El'ad Nichols-Kaufman. His email is eanicholskaufman@sjc.edu

Symposium offers the opportunity for our readers to thoughtfully consider contrasting opinions regarding a particular topic. The Managing Editor for *Symposium* is Luke Briner. His email is lbriner@sjc.edu

Polis serves as a platform for elevating voices in our community. Here we find letters to the editor, columns, cartoons, and submitted pieces. The Managing Editor for *Polis* is Daniel Nathan. His email is djnathan@sjc.edu

THE COVER

Photo of Polis Editor Daniel Nathan, taken by
Craig Koch

From the Editor's Desk:

Dear Polity,

The Gadfly is looking to increase its staff! If you're interested in editing, design, or simply helping to do the work that makes the Gadfly run, please reach out to me at cekoch@sjc.edu. We are especially looking to increase the staff for *Logos* and design.

That announcement aside, there are three notable facts about this issue: (1) *Finds From the Archives* has been interpolated into the Symposium section, (2) the Symposium section is themed around the nature of our academic program and students' experience with it, and (3) there is a contest on the back cover drawn by Cassie Desmond.

Submissions for the next issue will be due on the 18th so that we can get an issue out before Thanksgiving break.

Hope you enjoy the issue!

Sincerely,
Craig Koch

THE STAFF

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Updates From the Newsroom

by El'ad Nichols-Kaufman '25

PANGEA HOSTS GLOBAL POTLUCK: EATING AROUND THE GLOBE

The quad was thriving on Friday, October 21st, with a plethora of flags criss-crossing it over crowds of Johnnies busy eating new foods, arguing over the identification of national banners, and standing in line for even more food. This was no mere Friday on the quad, but a special potluck hosted by Pangea, our campus international student organization, to help students share their culture through the universal language of food.

"I would like Johnnies to broaden their view through this and learn different cultures so that we can be more understanding of each other and be respectful," explained Hyojeong Lee, Pangea archon. "The theme of this event was language. For some people, English is not their first language, so they make mistakes, or mispronounce some words. I want polity to recognize that there are diverse cultures and languages and be more understanding of each other. I hope through these kinds of events, we would learn to respect each other's different cultural backgrounds."

PIES MADE GLORY WON: BAKING CLUB HOLDS A PIE OFF

Pastry baking may be a knack according to Plato, but the combined baking forces of St. John's proved that at very least pie making may be an art. A variety of delectable pies were served up to a panel of distinguished judges including our own dean and assistant dean on October 14th, ranging from traditional apple pie to creative varieties with spices and peppers. A dessert consisting of homemade apple compote, ricotta, apples and puff pastry by Regean Yang, A '25, won first place. "I just made a pie that people liked," explained Yang, "and it made me happy that people liked it."

BED BUGS INVADE: A LEARNING OPPROTUNITY

Bed bugs recenety attempted a seige on Pinkney. Signs point to their defeat. Read more on page 8.

DELEGATE COUNCIL PASSES BUDGET

At the meeting on Tuesday, October 18th, after weeks of budget hearings, the Delegate Council approved the Budget Omnibus Bill for club spending in the Fall 2022 semester, funding 28 clubs for a total of \$36,369.96. This was substantially less than the Spring 2022 budget of \$58,474.82, but spread more across more clubs. The average budget for this semester was \$1,298.93, and the median budget was \$841.35.

Waltz Committee: \$4000
Energeia: \$3908.38
King William Players: \$3659.69
Polo: \$3510
Reality: \$2587.81
The Gadfly: \$2050
Platonic Players: \$1805
Prank: \$1500
Gardening Club \$1400
Jiu Jitsu: \$1400
Sewing and Mending: \$1257.87
Film Club: \$1150
Yearbook: 978.36
Insect Club: \$975
HEMA: \$721.7
Tea Eater Association: \$682.40
Project Polity: \$534
Alexander Hamilton Society: \$515
3D printing Club: \$500
Board Game Club: \$486.38
Sinfonia: \$452.48
Purls of Wisdom: \$451
Orthodox Catholic Fellowship: \$430
Gaming Club: \$370
Baking Club: \$344.99
Shammai: \$319.9
Storytellers Guild: \$300
Pangea: \$80

Some Captains Don't Even Need the Water

A Dispatch from the Boatshow

by Daniel Nathan '24

It was just past noon on Saturday, October 8th, and the skies were mostly clear as the sun peeked through just enough to warm the crisp autumn chill. Hurricane Ian had made landfall about a week and a half prior, devastating much of the Florida coast, while higher than usual winds and a steady onslaught of cool rain blanketed much of the eastern seaboard for days on end. After nearly a week of cruel, oppressive weather, the sky had finally opened up just in time for opening day at the 50th annual United States Powerboat Show.

My editor Craig Koch and I made it down to the docks and bought our tickets, running us \$25 apiece. There were very few of the typical upper-crust, boat shoes and white-sweater-tied-around-the-neck, Republican Party donor WASPs that you would expect to find at an event centered around a hobby strictly for the affluent, or at the very least, well-off.

Exasperated parents with alcohol in hand (almost every adult in attendance is already drinking by half past noon) were followed by their children. Some younger parents, including an inordinate amount of blonde men, had noticeably more energy and life in their eyes, and brought along tantrum-prone toddlers—who screamed at the top of their lungs or violently cried while their guardians ignored them without a care in the world. Meanwhile the more seasoned parenting vets, including a crazy majority of bald guys with beer guts, slight limps, and thousand yard stares, brought along their obviously forced-to-go, extremely bored-looking teenagers, ranging from obvious lacrosse players to kids in Dickies carrying skateboards

and wearing Bladee sweatshirts.

Staring out into the tranquil harbor, at around an hour past noon, Craig pointed out an out-of-water powerboat to me, maybe a twenty or thirty footer, sitting atop a parked trailer. Towering ten feet or so off the ground, a bearded, heavyset man in sunglasses wistfully sat near the cockpit of the boat. His face had the raw determination of a man in control of his own destiny: solemn, upright, stoic, and proud. Craig turned to me and out of a brief silence, said to me “I guess some captains don't even need the water” in a soft deadpan. His comment, banal as it may have been, was striking at the core—at the nerve center—of the subconscious of those submerged in the deep blue American middle and their reliance on the aspirational fantasies of leisure and luxury. It shot through, piercing the symbols and trappings, the status that came along with the storied, mythic ethos of the boating lifestyle, “Come for the show and leave with a lifestyle,” a slogan of the show goes.

As we headed back through the main drag of the grounds, we cut our way back towards the tents. At one of these tents, two middle-aged blonde women sipped coffee from Yeti brand mugs. They're suntanned and have big aggressively white, dentist's office smiles painted on their faces. Studying the pair, their salesmanship is an art of seduction—subtle and friendly and without a hint of the usual loan officer's sleaze and shiftiness. From the outside looking in, the success of their approach seems to be predicated by the fact that they present themselves as peers to the “Boat People” i.e., well-mannered, educated, and wealthy. I



couldn't help but see yoga moms with deep pockets who wanted to dive back into the workforce after a messy divorce, whose choices for their new career path were between either multi-level-marketing Keto diet supplements or this. They were eager to talk to anybody who had any degree of that unmistakable, impossible to describe look of disposable income in their eyes. That is to say, they did not wave, nor smile, nor acknowledge in any way our presence as we approached. Craig and myself were not, it seems, visibly “Boat People,” to say the least. We had each tried to dress relatively sharply to blend in to the Boat Show crowd, but I still ended up with muddy Nikes, a ratty sweatshirt, and wind-tossed hair.

Feeling adventurous, and somewhat slighted by not being waved at, I wanted to antagonize these almost-definitely predatory lenders. I approached the two bank representatives and asked them “C'mon, how many people ruin their financial status by financing a boat?” They looked up and one of the two ladies replied flatly “Not very many, no.” in a deep, almost southern-sounding, Marylander accent, her lips

puckered almost all the way shut to enunciate the tightness of the long ‘o’ sound like ‘oowh.’

“You have to be pretty financially set to even get approved. And it really is such a great investment,” the lender continued. Even through her polite tone, I sensed her indifference. I thought she’d at least scowl at me; I mean, I was leading her on. I wanted her to tell me to “screw off,” or at least sigh and roll her eyes in annoyance. But no, she was cheerful and direct as was her professional, public-facing duty. Caught off guard in my failure to properly incite mischief, I found myself suddenly feigning genuine interest and experience in boating to her as I replied “Oh, so they have to vet you then?” The lender responded in the affirmative, somewhat unenthused, and it became apparent that talking to the marine lending ladies wasn’t gonna be as much fun as I’d hoped it’d be. No “gotcha” journalism here, only “unwarranted antagonism and compulsive lying” stuff around here.

After that, we found ourselves in the tents again, ticket holders and vendors blurring together, all of them vaguely and uncomfortably smiling. The customers and salespeople at the booths swayed awkwardly, their knees locked and their arms crossed at their chests, their shoulders hunched



and stiff, and their eyes nervously darting around the hostile, dimly-lit fluorescents of the FEMA-relief-styled canopy. It felt cramped but vacuous, and the looming shadow of the vaulted ceiling looked like the sky does in Montana.

Everyday household necessities and appliances were being sold as ways to improve your boating hobby, like the way toy train enthusiasts “ooh” and “ahh” at tiny, scale model replicas of windmills. The tents were selling the sort of merchandise one would expect to find at any large big-box store: attachable back massagers for the back of your captain’s chair, high-tech electric grills, air conditioning units (do boats not have central AC?), humidifiers, supply kits of emergency rations filled with non-perishable canned foods and freeze-dried, military-style MREs (Meals, ready to eat), Roku-capable smart TVs, toilets and holding tank systems, closet organizers, Irish wool blankets, themed wallpaper, hand-crafted faucets, door knobs, and cabinet handles, etc., et al. What was promised here seemed to be a home away from home: a place or, more accurately, a “thing” that you enjoyed predominantly because it wasn’t home. It was somewhere where all the comforts of the suburbs met all the thrills of the sea; a place where you could finally drink and drive.

One of the more boat-centric booths belonged to a business called Nauticalite, which advertised “steel backlit, BlueTooth controlled signs & custom lighting solutions to yacht owners,” according to their webpage. I asked the man standing by the booth if there was anything he wouldn’t print for a customer and he told me that as long as they paid him, he’d make whatever the customer wanted. Now, to answer your question, the dirtiest boat names the company’s owner had ever been requested to make signage

for were “Wet Dream” and “Dirty Oar.”



Unimpressed with the vibe in the tents thus far, Craig and I decided to make our way across the gangway to the other side of the City Docks, where the porta-potties and food and drink options were outside Pusser’s Caribbean Grille and the Fleet Reserve Club. Plastic tables and chairs outside the restaurants were filled with an energy unlike what was happening back at the tents on the main drag. Older couples, obviously drunk and only questionably in love, leaned on the restaurant’s outer walls and slurped chilled oysters that were doused with hot sauce and lemon from paper plates. The smell of smoked beef filled the air as patrons buzzed and shouldered their way through the thickening crowds. Showgoers traded in their cash for draft beers and Painkillers, Pusser’s signature three-level cocktail. Craig and I walked up to the bar and ordered two level threes: two drinks, with three shots each. Craig got the orange crush, and I got the Painkiller. The bartender looked us up and down suspiciously as we handed our IDs over—just another instance of our visibly not belonging at the Boat Show.

With drinks in hand, we headed away from the restaurants and towards

the back lot of the show. Along the way, we spotted another tent, this one comparatively busy and seemingly well-visited. This was the tasting tent: holy house of free samples, boutique liquors, and wines. Inside, they offered tasting from a handful of start-up brands, including a small batch gin from California that “didn’t taste like a christmas tree,” as one fellow showgoer noted; a chardonnay, pinot noir, and a rose petal-flavored rosé from the up and coming winemaker Josh Cellars; and Moscow Mules made with a premium house-distilled vodka.

Not all too ripped, but getting there, we left and walked past the cigar truck, which seemed to be already shuttered for the day, and finally, tucked all the way in the back, Craig I stopped at yet another large tent. A first for the Boat Show, the Fishing Spot which sold poles, lures, reels, aquatic-styled art prints, and marine life-themed drift shirts (which are abundantly and unfailingly sold in every vendor tent at the Boat Show). Just why people would want oversized, lifelike fish

posing in action shots printed on their SPF t-shirts and outerwear beats me.

Otis Redding’s “(Sittin’ On) the Dock of the Bay” was playing softly from the speakers overhead as we approached a man smoking a cigarette. Craig mentioned something to him about how this was the only fishing-related part of the show, and how he’d thought fishing would be a more featured part of the Boat Show. I asked him something about smoking a cigarette. He proceeded to emphatically complain to us about how there’s no more cigarette smoking in hotel rooms even though he’s always smelling pot smoke in them, and about how everyone these days think cigarette smokers are just “deplorables,” his pitch rising, as Craig and I hesitantly nodded our heads and tried to repress our cracking grins. A lively conversation all in all, we expressed to him some not-all-that feigned solidarity and bid him adieu.

I was hungry now, so we headed back to the food options to grab a pit beef sandwich. After waiting in a short

line, with the good omen of smoked meat being carried through the air, I paid my \$12, grabbed a tinfoil-wrapped sandwich from the tray, and looked around for an empty table. It was around 2:00 PM now, and the outdoor seating options outside the restaurants were still buzzing—not to mention their patrons buzzed—and there wasn’t a free table in sight. So, finally, after scanning the patio, I caved and asked a lonely, pleasant looking, middle-aged woman in a red polo shirt if I could join her at her table. She told me to help myself and introduced herself to Craig and myself as Christine. We exchanged some thoughts on the size of the crowds—she comes every year due to her job and this was the lowest turnout she’d ever seen. Christine told us her job was with BoatUS, one of the nation’s largest recreational boating advocacy and services group and an annual sponsor of the United States Powerboat Show. I asked her about changes that have happened to the world of boating since the pandemic had started, and Christine said that her employer had actually seen an increase in recreational boaters after Covid hit. On the other side of that increase, she also told us that many of the boats that were purchased during the pandemic had been repossessed soon after. Many new boaters that could no longer pay their leases (or just didn’t care to) didn’t even bother to put up a fight; they knew they couldn’t keep up with their payments, and sometimes even called BoatUS to come repo the boats for them so they could scurr the docking fees.

Both Christine and myself were finishing up our sandwiches by this point and her lunch break was almost over, so we decided to head our separate ways. Since the sandwich was less than filling, Craig and I popped outside the Boat Show grounds and over to Chick



& Ruth's for a quick, more substantial lunch.

Back at the show, Craig and I walked along the docks, looking for the perfect mega-yacht to take a tour of, the sun launched high in the mid-afternoon sky. On the docks, beside each of the dozens of top-of-the-line behemoths, was a podium and a velvet rope, where showgoers could line up for a tour of the yachts. Onto the unholy conflagration of affluence, privilege, and time to kill, visitors excitedly waited in line to experience the Leviathans, to imagine themselves casually manning the cockpits and cinematically staring out from the deck into the empty Chesapeake skyline.

Many of the boats for sale looked similar, though extravagant: imposing in presence, sleekly designed, sheening white exterior, dark tinted windows, and two story high sails. But one stood out: a brand new 61 foot Sirena 58 luxury yacht with max speed of 30 knots and an asking price \$2.4 million.

I waited in line with a man named Steve who looked to be in his late forties, early fifties maybe. After no less than five minutes, a family of four with two toddlers descended down a narrow flight of stairs and hopped off. Steve and I kicked off our shoes and the sales rep led us aboard. We headed up to the cockpit, and Steve regaled me with the superiority of Volvo boat engines—the one the Sirena had—and its built-in Dynamic Positioning Systems. I had zero clue about boat engines or boats altogether, and tried to say as much, but Steve carried on with his spiel, admiring the thrusters, joysticks, Garmin electronic Fishfinder, and navigational displays. Deciding I'd keep following Steve, my guide kept on, eyes wide—a cross between a rural, one-room museum curator and a kid in a candy shop. We went to the front of the yacht, where Steve tested the tactile security of some ropes and

opened storage hatches, assuring me that they seemed airtight and that he was overall impressed with the Sirena but not all that blown away.

Down two flights of stairs, we checked out her interior cabin. The inside was tight but immaculate down to each detail, a sort of modern, minimalist luxury micro-hotel room you'd expect to find in Hong Kong or Helsinki. Stylish teak lined the cabin walls, and two chic, off-white sofas and a pear-shaped faux wood coffee table centered the room's feng shui. Off from the main living room were two bedrooms, one with a master bed and the other with double fold out twin beds, both with dimmable LED strip lighting. Tucked into a corner was a washer dryer unit, and one of the Sirena's three (!) bathrooms.

While Steve and I were jumping on the king-size master bed to test the springs, I asked him how he knew so much about boats. He stopped jumping, climbed down from the bed. He pulled out his phone, and after a long, awkward minute of scrolling through his camera roll, he showed me a picture of his very own boat. It was his baby, he said, flipping through carefully lit shots like a proud dad showing pictures of his son in a little league baseball uniform. She was 30 feet long, he said, and he had bought her for just under a million dollars a little over 10 years ago. It was his baby indeed; a source of pride and care and hard work paying off. Steve didn't seem like some entitled, wealthy CEO-type at all; he was humble and proud and he spoke of his boat like it was a trophy—a trophy he'd earned. I congratulated him on his beautiful boat and we headed back upstairs to the main deck. As we left off the yacht and back onto the dock, I wished him all the best and told him to enjoy the rest of his Boat Show. As much as I had wanted to knock the boaters

for all their excessive materialism, environmental indifference, and their posturing and status-seeking, I couldn't find it in me to knock Steve. Steve wasn't one of these people, I told myself. Steve was different. Maybe, even, more of the boaters at the show were different; maybe they all were.

Around 5:00 PM, as the sun was hunkering down, and the Painkillers had nearly killed all the pain, Craig and I walked away from the tents in the main drag, through the gates, and away from the Boat Show—comfortable, at least, if that's all I could say. I may not ever be a captain on the water, but I will be the master of my domain.

What I realized, then, after leaving, was that the boating lifestyle was really more of an idea here, rather than a true product. Ads here show, they don't tell. The boats themselves are a blank slate; a sturdy, white hull nearly devoid of real substance. A boat, then, was nothing more than just another place where something akin to relaxation can take place, a symbol of status that tells us you A.) own a house, and B.) also own a much smaller, floating house that also moves.

But it makes sense that after nearly two years of watching our lives play out before us on zoom and our smartphone screens, people seem to be content now more than ever with simple voyeurism. Spending tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars on an unnecessary expense, like a boat (not including upkeep and accessories) is a swing big enough to financially ruin you if the markets don't tip your way, and the sense is that people are just increasingly not up for the risk. Craig and I, like many others it seems, came for the show, and left with the lifestyle we already had.

Bed Bugs

What are those?

by Louis Rosenberg '25

What's the difference between Cimex lectularius and a vampire? There's no vampires at St. John's!

On Oct. 24, a smattering of students from across floors 2, 3, and 4 of Pinkney Hall received an ominous email from Jennifer Cline, the Coordinator of Student Services: "Important Notice! Please Read." In it, Cline explained that a professional service was being hired to treat rooms affected, or at risk of being affected, by bed bugs. Students were informed that they would have to launder all of their fabric items on high heat — using a provided 50 dollar balance to their OneCards, which would be sufficient for 20 loads of laundry — and then stay out of their rooms from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Oct. 26 as Home Paramount Pest Control treated the rooms. The Conference Room in Mellon Hall was reserved for affected students, with snacks and drinks also provided.

Although the infestation is an unfortunate occurrence, it does provide the polity with an excellent starting point for learning about bed bugs. It is first important to establish that the common name "bed bugs" technically describes not any one species, but rather all bugs in the family Cimicidae. All bed bugs are wingless and have a flattened, oval body shape; as hemipterans, they are also known as true bugs. They are considered ectoparasites, meaning that they harm the organism they rely on for survival but dwell outside their host. Of the over 100 known Cimicidae species, which fall into 24 different genera, most do not use humans as their primary host, instead feeding off of birds or bats. Indeed, only two species routinely use humans as their

hosts: *C. hemipterus* (the tropical bed bug) and *C. lectularius*, the most likely candidate for the Pinkney infestation and the species most laymen mean when they talk about bed bugs.

Obviously, for a group of insects to become a true infestation (as has developed on our very own campus), they must reproduce. Cimicids are interesting in this way, for they all reproduce by way of "traumatic insemination," an uncommon form of copulation that has nonetheless evolved independently in a variety of invertebrates, though it has been most extensively studied in *C. lectularius* and related species. In traumatic insemination, rather than impregnating the female directly via her genital tract, the male pierces her body cavity using his hypodermic-style genitalia. Female cimicids have developed a spermatheca to make this approach more successful — that is to say, their abdominal wall has evolved to redirect the males' sperm from their body cavity back to their genital tract. Even though the spermatheca reduces the risk the insects face during copulation, traumatic insemination inherently comes with danger, and thus *C. lectularius* females have been observed to travel away from groups including a disproportionate number of adult males, leading to (assuming an ample food supply) the expansion of the bugs' range.

Thus, in part due to this strange way in which they reproduce, bed bugs and their offspring can create major infestations, especially in close quarters. Due to their distaste for heat, the bugs usually spread via fabric items which are carried from room to room, rather than traveling on human clothes

or bodies. And as the unfortunate St. John's students who reside above and below the affected rooms were informed, the bugs are apparently also able to navigate between floorboards to avoid extermination efforts. Indeed, getting rid of bed bugs is no simple task. "Bug bombs" (devices used to fill a room with a fog of insecticides to control an infestation) are usually ineffective for bed bugs, and the bugs themselves can survive for multiple months without food. Thankfully, professional exterminators — like those being called in by the administration — do have several effective techniques for getting rid of bed bugs, such as heating surfaces to at least 120°F and applying insecticides on a smaller scale.

Though it might be just a small comfort to the affected Pinkney residents, bed bugs are considered neither dangerous (barring an uncommonly severe allergic reaction to their bites) nor a vector of disease. And, if all goes well following the extermination, the infestation on our campus will finally be controlled, and all members of the polity can rest easy at last.

Sources:

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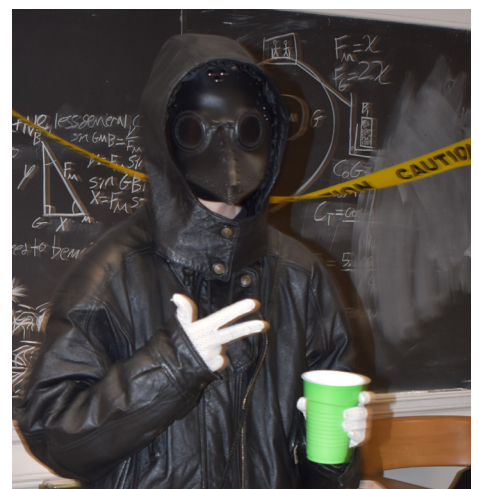
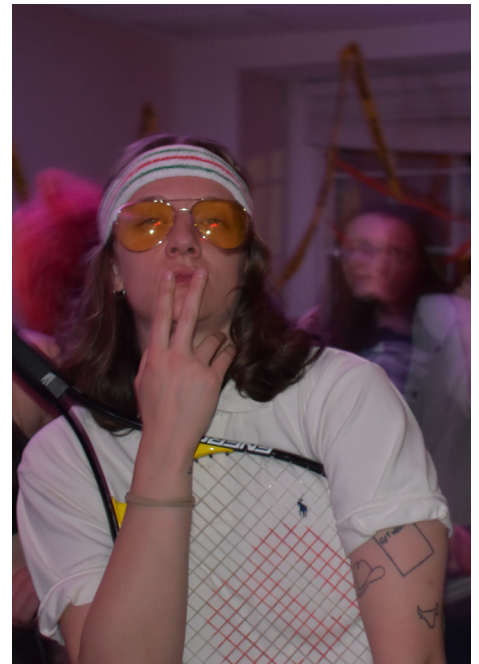
"Important Notice! Please Read" email by Jennifer Cline

{CAMPUS SOCKHOP}

Hop to It!

photos by Liz Dowdy '23







PHOTOS BY LIZ DOWDY

The Part and the Whole: Conversation for Connection

Nalini Venugopal

In his “Notes on Dialogue,” Stringfellow Barr makes the bold assertion that “the most relevant sort of dialogue, though perhaps the most difficult, for twentieth century men to achieve and especially for Americans to achieve is the Socratic.” Conversation is an integral part of the day to day interactions of human life, and in a way that has only become more true since Barr first penned these notes about St. John’s College. It feels as though our generation has been oversaturated with discourse—growing up with the internet means finding an answer to a question simply by typing it into a search engine. But just as I’ve found reading physical books to be whole and comforting and real in a way that reading online never could be, I’ve been touched by the beauty of undistracted physical conversation in the classroom. There’s something powerful in face-to-face communication. But the problem is, classes haven’t been as wholly satisfying and freeing to my mind as I expected them to be based on my thoughts on conversation. That’s partly due to the fact that Socrates is a high standard to be holding anyone to for conversation, but there’s another aspect to it that also puzzles me. Most of the time the conversation seems to hold a tension within it that confused me, but I found that Barr illuminated it best in his comparison of Thrasymachus and Socrates in the Republic. He frames them both as making “a choice of weapon appropriate to his purpose.” Thrasymachus brings “the rising voice, the personal accusation, the withering scorn, the crushing sarcasm, the panic at the possibility of being out-manuevered, the sweating, the unaccustomed blush of a normally unblushing champion sophist, the volubility that tries to shore up a crumbling argument and to ward off the disgrace of refutation, the love of one’s own opinions precisely because they are one’s own, [and] the vanity that replaces love of truth with love for victory,” while Socrates brings “courtesy” to Thrasymachus. This laying down of weapons in the name of a common aim is an admirable one, but one hard to realize when faced with what can easily be seen as blatant sophistry.

He highlights the importance of experience in improving our conversational skills, writing that “experience brings a sixth sense” to Socratic dialogues as the “will of self-insistence gives way to the will to learn.” To truly be able to engage well in conversation, we have to focus on it rather than only on ourselves. To me, one of the most poignant things Barr advises us to let go of is the “subconscious suspicion that we are really saying precisely nothing, and that this nothing will stand up as conversation only if we say it elaborately.” We need to trust that what we have to say is valuable, and likewise treat others like what they have to say is valuable. Barr says in one of his rules that students must learn to be good listeners for each other, and that if we do so we are likely to “attain a level of friendship that not many men attain to.” This is a friendship based on mutual respect, on the idea that everyone’s ideas are equally worth hearing.

When we come to the classroom, we are united by a shared goal of truth, and conversation is a beautiful means towards that end. But then each individual is called on to do the hard work of becoming good at dialogue, an experience we’re all having together. Barr highlights the need for the “will for self-insistence give way to the will to learn. Learning is the goal that we share, and when we walk into a classroom not only do we have to embrace the shared goal of learning, we have to release ourselves from the desire to be right or to know more than the people around us. One of the easiest lies to believe is that intelligence is a measurable trait, especially if one grew up in the typical educational system - grades and comments and feedback from the teacher are everywhere, and it can be really easy to slip into a competitive mindset. Here, though, at least on paper, there’s no curve to be graded on—everyone is equal in class, and all of a sudden we’re being graded on skills like confidence and eloquence. But listening is more than just passively letting other people talk while you formulate your next thought or flip through the book. It is an act of friendship, of *philía*, or love (specifically among friends). What does it mean to listen from a place of love?

In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis meditates on *philia* and identifies it with a moment of connection, “when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden).” This, to me, is the beauty of Philosophy. I still find pieces of my soul reflected in words written by people who are long dead who looked nothing like me, people who, if they knew me, would be shocked and upset at the idea of me having opinions on their work. But ideas and words can transcend perceptible differences like race and sex, and I can have rich conversations with the text in spite of the fact that I live in a different cultural context than them. Reading the Great Books is already a practice in looking at the ideas of the past, the ideas that shaped Western culture as it is today. But as an American with a hyphenated identity, I find that there are Indian parts of me that don’t fit with Western culture, and that when I look at the history of the West and America I see it differently because I see the ideas that were used to justify the oppression of women and people of color, and sometimes engaging with these texts seriously feels like a disrespect to the people who fought for my right to be in the classroom. I have to learn how to hold the ideas separate from how I feel about them to be able to engage with them seriously to a degree that makes it really clear. But that’s true for everyone to some degree - even if you are privileged, the program covers enough topics that there will be topics that make you feel things strongly - whether it’s an author validating a belief you already hold or challenging something you thought to be true - our emotions will be part of the process of conversation, and that’s ok. But when it comes to the classroom, each of us brings our own personal conversation with the text to a room where we team up with fellow thinkers to seek truth and answers and beauty and knowledge for the sake of itself, and that’s a powerful thing, because we each have a wealth of different experiences that have impact the way that we think and interact with texts. But how do we keep ourselves from that self-insistence that Barr speaks of? How do we keep our feelings from inhibiting our search for truth.

I believe we must begin with earnest self-reflection. If we are to free ourselves from self-insistence so that we can be free to engage with delight with learning, we must remove competition and comparison. That frees us to listen to others more effectively and openly, because rather than focusing on the judgements we’re making of their points, we can focus on how their points contribute in their own unique way to the shared destination we’re traveling towards. At the end of the day, the things we say in class

should only matter as stepping stones towards a goal. They are not merely reflections of us or our intellectual abilities. Tutors are there simply as sharers in the same goal who have more familiarity with the ideas than us, so they have more wisdom in guiding the conversation. There’s something scary about learning as an active process after the rote “knowledge in, knowledge out” experience of academia that many of us had. We are being asked to engage with ourselves, the text, and other people, to learn through experience and reflection rather than showing up with our finest work to be judged.

Academic validation was really important to me growing up. On top of the fact that I simply wanted to do well, many people just assumed my intelligence because I was Indian rather than lauding it the way they did with my peers of other races. I see that on countless levels, just in the field of academia. As a woman, when I expressed my intelligence assertively, it was discouraged by teachers who were holding me to higher standards of kindness than the boys in my class simply because girls are expected to be kinder than boys. My little brother is nine years old and tells me stories of how he talks to his teachers in school that shock me, both in his audacity in saying what he says and the positivity of the teacher’s response. I have to unlearn the complex image of myself that I have in the classroom, and because I’m a woman of color I have a lot of social lenses I can examine that through. But it’s dangerous to think that if you have been more privileged in the classroom that exempts you from these issues. Everyone comes into the classroom with baggage, simply by nature of living and learning for any amount of years before joining higher education. It’s hard work to leave that baggage at the door and simply engage, but it’s vital if the class is to be truly unified in pursuit of truth.



Students Performing an Experiment with Suspended Weights; n.d.

The Pursuit of Selfless Learning

Catherine E. Greer

It is easy to mistake the St. John's education as a thing founded upon the acquisition of book-knowledge. More often it is something so much more than that: a thing founded upon human knowledge. It is not that this book knowledge, our reading and examination of the Great Books, is any less significant or integral to our program. But our collective drive to build a truly meaningful relationship with and understanding of these texts is only possible alongside a desire to understand those who came before us, those who are around us, and those who will come after us. We must strive not only to study a text well, but through studying it to also study other people: how we live together, and learn together, and grow together.

Without this simultaneous sensitivity to those around us our education at St. John's would, effectively, be meaningless. When we sit down together around a table, whether it be in seminar or lab or music, we are committing to learning as a group. We are no longer individuals pursuing knowledge

out of self-interest. We take on the responsibility of being present and engaged for the whole class, tutors and students alike—and our search for knowledge must not seek only to propel our own selves forwards but to be an offering for all else who desire to learn. To remain self-concerned and apathetic towards the learning of our peers cripples the very core of our program, the method of discussion-based learning that is meant to dissolve the barrier between learning and teaching and unite them as a common pursuit.

This way of learning and engaging with others is a skill that can only be strengthened through genuine effort to understand how best to learn alongside others. Much of our program confronts questions about human nature and human interactions. These questions must not remain cold and removed from us, merely words on paper to be discussed with superficial interest. They are questions that could push us to better understand the people around us, to continuously question and reform how we treat others and understand the human mind and spirit. It is through this pursuit of understanding human beings that we can learn to listen rather than simply to speak, to become open to differing perspectives, to gain patience and compassion for those who have fallen behind or those who have not yet learned to bring others along with them.

The focus on learning together rather than individually is vital to the spirit of the program, but also the most challenging to practice. Each of us upon entering St. John's has some goal that propels us forwards and sets us apart from other students. It is easy to become consumed by the self-interest of knowledge, to desire your own growth and expansion more strongly than you desire the same for others. Even more dangerously are we plagued by competitiveness, to not only be motivated by self-growth but by a drive to become better than those around you, to become the best. But these motivations are a hindrance to true learning and engagement with our program. We must focus on prioritizing the success of each student sitting with us around the table. Their learning becomes our learning, just as much as ours becomes theirs.



Students Building Peace Corps Huts and the Beneficial Hodson

Boathouse; 1965

In our classes, and in seminar especially, there is a necessity for selflessness in a way that many other methods of learning do not ever demand. We must come to understand that our presence in class, our careful reading of the texts and the conversations we conduct on them, are not for our own sake alone. Each time we speak in class it is to further the understanding and knowledge of every person present in the room: and we must present our ideas selflessly, with the hope that we might build upon not our own knowledge but the collective knowledge that forms when people seek to learn together. There must be an ego-death of sorts: the “I” dissolves and is replaced by the “we”, represented by the class itself as a living subject and a single force of knowledge-seeking. It no longer matters whether it is you who asks a certain question or makes a significant point—it becomes important only that it was said, not that it was said by you or by another. And in this relinquishment of a selfish pursuit of learning, we become infinitely more

open to growing in our understanding of those around us. It is only in this mindset that a seminar can truly create a depth of knowledge that is collective and inclusive rather than individualistic and exclusionary.

We have a unique opportunity here to focus our learning on far more than the acquisition of knowledge or the improvement of skills. Our learning encompasses human things as well. As we read the Great Books and engage with these texts and our peers simultaneously, we must seek to strengthen our knowledge of human beings so that we might better live and learn alongside one another and work collectively towards positive growth and mutual understanding. The pursuit of this human knowledge is a companion to the selflessness required of seminar. One grows from the other, and together they strengthen not only our study of the Great Books but our personal spirits as well, building a foundation of compassion and sensitivity to human beings.



Students Pulling Other Students in Wagons on Back Campus during the First Real Olympics;
1951

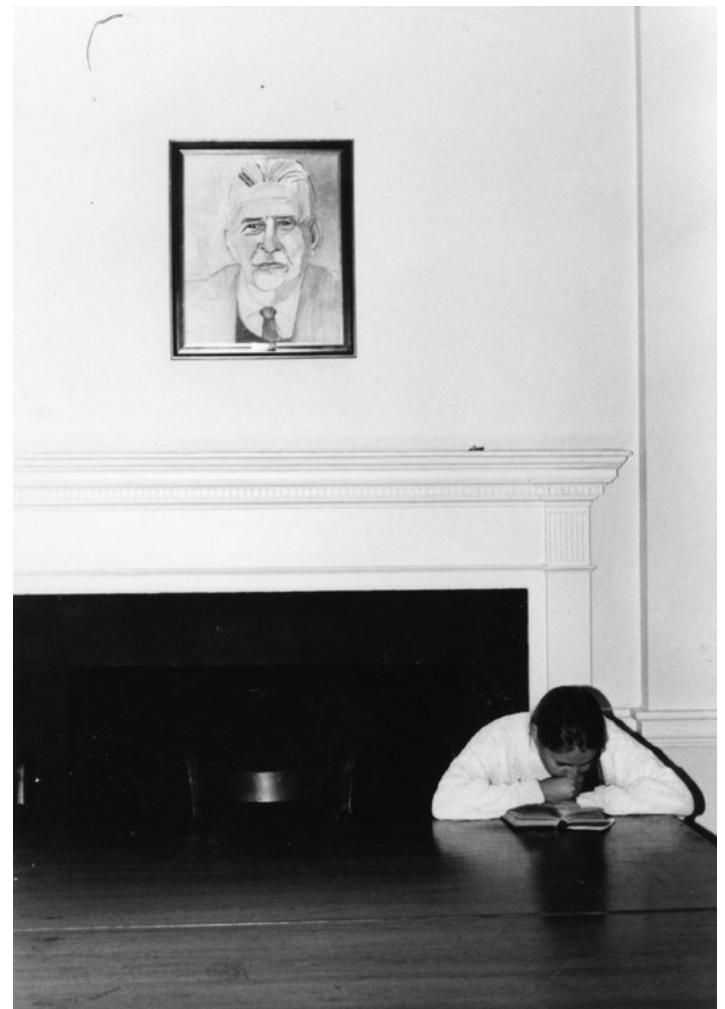
To Those Who Have Suffered a Crisis of Meaning

Dolan Polgaze

It is difficult to explicate the full meaning of what I am about to say without divulging the story of my own personal life over the past three years here. Yet, because such a story would be both too immense and too personal, I will simply begin by saying this: I have suffered from, and most likely will again suffer a crisis of meaning during my time at the college. There are various reasons why one will inevitably come to find themselves, at least once, in front of the formidable face of utter un-inspiration. I confess that when I found myself at such a moment, it was terrifying, in the fullest sense of the word. For, somewhere in the course of pursuing my deepest questions, I exhaustedly ground to a halt, only to look around and become aware that the horizon before me was entirely devoid of meaning. It felt as if the innumerable questions I had been pursuing—questions of goodness, evil, bodies, and God—had only led me to despair. The events of my own life which brought on this crisis of meaning were most likely different from the events of your life which have perhaps stirred in you the same intellectual and emotional apathy. The Program, I've come to realize, is a complete mirror of who you are at any specific moment in your life. The more earnestly you engage with the books, the more clearly you are reflected back—not only because of the content of a reading, but also because of the sheer difficulty of the work. For from difficulty of any kind arises an invitation for one to behold themselves exactly as they are, not as who they imagined they had become. Thus, if one day you look in the mirror of these books and the image that looks back at you is one of personal despair, where do you turn? I ask this question with utmost sincerity, for I believe this is something seldom discussed here.

Yet, crisis or no crisis, the world at the college goes on. And so, when I found myself confronted with this crisis of meaning, I knew, however painful, that it was a calling for me to change my thinking. In an attempt to regain inspiration, I spent months circling in vain around this question: can one really make themselves interested when there is no will to be interested? I say that this was asked

in vain because I realized far later that this question was pointing me in the wrong direction. I believed then and still believe now that the act of true interest—of focusing one's attention completely—is a spiritual activity. Yet, I had somewhere gone amiss in how I was defining interest. To explain, let me take you back to my senior year of highschool: then, I was overjoyed with the prospect of coming to St. John's because I had a love of community and earnest conversation. However, the driving idea which inspired my coming to the college was a faraway notion that I was somehow going to become a better human being by being here; I had lofty ideas of the self I wanted to attain.



And throughout my first two years here, these ideas still inhabited my convictions. The aspiration of wanting to be a better person by being here is not itself unadmirable, but I realize now that such ideals are wholly incomplete. If one is only guided by a vague expectation of becoming a better human being by studying Euclid, or Leibniz, or reading by the Bible, or by singing Palestrina, I will venture to say that such a transformation of self will never come about. I am realizing now that the way to be changed by the program is to fiercely and fully take interest in the particulars at hand, and for now, to leave aside expectations of bettering oneself. In the aftermath of the crisis of meaning which struck me last year, I had nothing to hold onto, because I had never let myself be completely vulnerable in the face of the particulars. The universal idea of becoming a better person is not a substantial idea, and in times of despair, you won't be able to hold onto it. Yet, if you truly take interest in the work for the sake of itself, eventually and without even noticing it, you will be changed, but only because you relinquished the very hope and expectation of being changed.

I am not trying to merely draw a pedantic distinction by encouraging the act of turning one's attention onto the particulars in order to find inspiration. Perhaps this is the effect of Junior year on me, but I realized recently that if I don't have the courage to be vulnerable with the details,

I will drown in the vastness of my ideals. But what does it mean, for example, to be vulnerable with mathematical particulars? I am thinking of Leibniz's calculus and the fact that we are asked to suspend our imagination of all that we know in favor of considering the endeavor of a single point. If we are to follow Leibniz's prompting, we have to think of the point as having a primary desire, a want to move in a certain straight line. In order to turn my attention to such inconceivables, I must surrender myself wholly to the particulars at hand: faraway ideas of who I want to become won't help anymore. Likewise, the same applies to God: it is not that God is simply found in the particulars, but rather, that if you surrender to the particulars, you are as likely to sense the Divine in Genesis as you are to sense him in the endeavor of a point. This nakedness of mind and heart, which I call vulnerability, is the courage to let go of your hope of becoming a better person in favor of a much truer striving: the striving to care, with all the depth you can muster, about the specifics of this world. I am not trying to claim that this is a complete antidote to a crisis of meaning, for nothing is ever easy, and life always gets in the way. I am only writing this to share what I have learned through my own encounters with despair: you will, with grace, become stronger if you take the time to turn your attention off yourself and towards what is small in the immensity of experience.



Emily Martin (Kutler) and Three Female Students Studying in A Dorm Room in Campbell Hall; circa 1954

Thoughts on the St. John's Class

Luke Briner

What's the nature of the St. John's class, and what attitude should we, as members of the St. John's community, take toward it? These two questions are points of great dissent among students and faculty alike, and the way in which each person answers has radical effects on how they behave in their classes and what they intend to get out of them. Recognizing this, I've felt the desire to formally work through both of them, looking to the philosophy of the College itself as well as the firsthand experience of myself and others. I hope that by setting out on this inquiry, and by attempting to shed light on the principles upon which our classes seem to be based as well as their natural consequences for our own behavior, I can help the Polity come to a clearer and more beneficial understanding of them, or at the very least deepen the discourse surrounding them.

I take the first and ultimate principle of the Program to be "the liberation of the human intellect."¹ This liberation is not simply freedom from previous ignorance or bias, but is, more profoundly, the achievement of a self-consciousness, mental autonomy, and intellectual virtue through the sincere application of one's mind to what's most essential and worthy within itself. Our method for achieving this ultimate kind of liberation is the study of Great Books. Since these books, as Buchanan observes, "communicate with great skill ideas that human experience has taught us are important,"² and thereby allow us to "tune in on the Great Conversation that we call civilization,"³ The hope of the program is that their sincere and sustained study will produce in the student the eminent qualities of "an educated man—that is, one who has learned to read, to use his mind imaginatively and rigorously."⁴

I take the second principle of the Program to be that this liberation is to be pursued communally. "Liberal learning," as Brann observes, "is by its nature conversational....the student is not the passive recipient of knowledge but an active participant in a common search."⁵ By participating in this search, we do more than simply "tune in" to the Great Conversation the each text is a part of; instead, we actually simulate our own conversation around the

Books themselves, and thereby give our ourselves a the opportunity to exercise our minds in a way that surpasses the limitations of solitary thought. Since classes thus centered around dialogue and intellectual community can "reach insights far beyond the views of any of its members,"⁶ the Program makes them the sole vehicle of our education; our colleagues are made our very means of liberation, and we're made theirs.

Accepting these principles, the ideal nature of the St. John's class seems to me to take a clear shape, as does that of each individual student. Recognizing that their ultimate objective is the liberation of their own minds and that communal dialogue centered around Great Books is the way to achieve this, the ideal student will work as hard as they can to promote the health of that dialogue. They'll understand that the conversational Whole is greater than themselves and that their good is to be found only within the Whole, and will therefore always act in accordance with what's best for that Whole. If each student submits themselves to this responsibility, the class becomes its own organism: a living, breathing order where insights spring forth as naturally as water from a font, and where "harmony is actual and immediate, and where its sustenance and growth seem possible."⁷ Such is the ideal of every class, and each student should recognize working toward the realization of that ideal as their highest responsibility.

However, by virtue of the very communal and voluntary nature of our classes, many if not most classes will fall short of this ideal. Nevertheless, if liberation remains our ultimate end, and if communal inquiry around Great Books is our only means to achieving that end, then the fact that this very achievement is rare and unreliable puts our entire education into jeopardy. An understanding of the natural fragility of communal learning seems to be the foundation for the Programs' reasoning behind the institution of tutors. Just as a polyphony, in order to achieve the supreme interpersonal and suprapersonal Beauty it's so capable of, requires a conductor to keep each part in its place and preserve the *nómos* of the whole, so too the intellectual

polyphony of the St. John's class requires an authoritative presence capable of setting and enforcing its own necessary *nómos*.

If this is right, then it seems to me that the identity of the tutor as a *laissez-faire* facilitator is usually greatly overemphasized. Tutors should not, as Luchene notes, “merely facilitate conversations.”⁸ Rather, they should “guide the conversation, sometimes steering it in a particular direction, sometimes listening and letting it take its own course, and occasionally, steering it around an unpromising detour.”⁹ If tutors were merely facilitators or democratic participants, then they would be just another student; but the tutor should be an authoritative figure capable of acting outside the specific context of the conversation in order to always steer it in the right direction. If they aren't, then the intellectual chorus of the class will lack a true conductor, and will therefore be exposed to the danger of falling into anarchic cacophony without any clear direction or correction. We should, then, resist the temptation to interpret the Statement's assertion that “the primary role of the leaders [tutors] is not to give information, nor is it to produce the ‘right’ opinion or interpretation” (p. 5) as claiming that tutors simply shouldn't assert anything in class, but instead carefully distinguish between the two modes of assertion that the tutor is capable of operating within. While tutors should of course avoid dogmatic assertions about the text insofar as they are simply another participant in the conversation, they should actually at the same time quite dogmatically assert the bounds within which that very conversation must take place, e.g., keeping it “cooperative and respectful, not competitive,”¹⁰ and ensuring that no one person takes away from everyone else's education by their obstinacy or negligence.

I want to add to this my conviction that students who participate too much in class are worse than those who participate too little. While both cases do a disservice to the class, the nature and intensity of the two are entirely different. For while silent students harm the class passively by withholding contributions they might have improved the conversation with, the student who dominates conversations actively derails and often outright destroys the very communal cohesion and equity which a successful class requires. If this is true, then I can't help but question why many tutors and the College itself tend to review and grade silent students more harshly than toward students that refuse to ever be silent, given that the latter is farther from being a good citizen in an intellectual *pólis* than the former. The “sons of pride”¹¹ in our classes should be humbled, not enabled.

On the same principles, we should view with

skepticism Barr's suggestion that interrupting colleagues in conversation can be acceptable or even beneficial.¹² Perhaps in some exceptional cases a few quick interjections might really be a “point of order”¹³ in dialogue; but this is a dangerous precedent to set generally. Internalizing the idea that interruption is acceptable will inevitably lead most of us to feel bolder in crudely interrupting others, which only causes disorder, and resentment.

Likewise, we should be very careful about how we take Kalkavages' exhortation to “not despair”¹⁴ when conversational degeneration occurs, since, he claims, it's a part of the way in which “we learn the art of using our freedom.”¹⁵ While certainly some space should be given in which classes may do better or worse, since openness and spontaneity is the lifeblood of dialogue, this must be kept firmly within the realm of genuine dialectic rather than allowed to degenerate into eristic. Our freedom, our liberation consists not in the ever-looming threat of devolving into anarchical bickering, but precisely in the sustained and enforced existence of a real *pólis* between ourselves and our colleagues.

What I want to communicate through all of this, and above all to myself, is the necessity of taking responsibility for our own education. What we give to the Program is what the Program will give back to us, and if we wish to have better classes, we must begin by holding ourselves to the supreme and universal standard of academic and conversational excellence. Let me, and let us all, then, aspire to this standard, and to more liberating classes for everyone.

notes

- (1) Statement of the Program, p. 3.
- (2) “Now and to Come: Liberal Education: A Common Adventure,” *The Antioch Review*, Autumn, 1955, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 302.
- (3) *Ibid.*
- (4) *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- (5) *A Manifesto for Liberal Education*, 2015.
- (6) Statement of the Program, p. 5.
- (7) Luchene, *Beginnings of Community*, 1999, p. 4.
- (8) *Learning Through Conversation at St. John's College*, 2015.
- (9) *Ibid.*
- (10) *Ibid.*
- (11) Job 41:34.
- (12) *Notes on Dialogue*, pp. 3-4.
- (13) *Ibid.*, p. 4
- (14) “Winged Words: On the Importance of Reading and Discussing Great Books,” 2003, p. 15.
- (15) *Ibid.*

Defenestrate Your Timepieces: An Invitation to the Present Moment

Helen Wagner

Any observant (i.e. good) Johnnie is aware of the absence of clocks in College classrooms—perhaps painfully aware, during long moments of morning lab; perhaps blissfully, when an exhilarating seminar runs overtime. Maybe you’ve also given some thought to the value (or lack thereof) of this practice. For my part, I think it’s wonderful. The lack of timepieces during class allows us to be fully present to our work, without the distraction of checking the clock — in other words, without the distraction of the future. But the mere practice of clockless classrooms is not enough. It’s too easy to surreptitiously check your watch during seminar, or to disengage from your tutorial as you wait for the 11:30 bell. If we truly want to embrace a clockless academic experience, we need to change the way we think about time. That is, we need to think less about it. Perhaps an awareness of time is actually antithetical to doing good work.

We can all agree that we do our best work when we are most focused. We must be free of distraction—and the future is one such distraction. If we want to enjoy the present (the only real time in which we exist), we must think of the future as little as possible. In fact, this was the topic of a recent Saturday morning seminar hosted by Professor Patrick Deneen. The reading was an essay by Wendell Berry called “Leaving the Future Behind.” Berry argues more eloquently than I. “Actual work that is actually good,” he writes, “requires us to give our minds entirely to the present... to be distracted by the thought even of finishing the work, or by the thought of the clock or a deadline, is to work badly, and often to be in danger.” Good work requires presence in the present moment.

This timelessness should extend beyond our classrooms and into our personal studies. Although we have deadlines, we will actually work better and more efficiently if we give up all thought of reaching them. J.D. Salinger would agree: in his novel *Franny and Zooey*, he quotes the Bhagavad

Gita, saying, “[w]ork done with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done without such anxiety, in the calm of self-surrender... They who work selfishly for results are miserable.” It’s counterintuitive: to achieve our goal, we must forget about it. We must make our work more about the process than about the results.

We all know how it feels to lose track of time. Since we’re Johnnies, it was probably thanks to a good novel or a particularly thrilling geometric proof. Maybe it was a two-hour phone call with a friend that felt like 20 minutes. Maybe it was such an exciting intramural game that you were surprised to hear the whistle for halftime. Whatever it was, though, you were fully engaged in the activity in front of you—that’s why you never thought about the clock. It feels good, doesn’t it? Forgetting time also seems to come along with a sort of refreshing self-forgetfulness: your eyes are open to the living world around you, and you look outward instead of in. Wendell Berry puts it this way: “To be dead to oneself is to be alive to the work. It is to be alive in the present, the only time we are alive, and to continue to live there, so long as we don’t look at the clock.”

Consider this article an exhortation to forget about the clock. Embrace the empty space on the classroom walls. Take off your watch for seminar. When you read, put your phone across the room from you. If you need to stop at a certain time, set an alarm and forget about it until it goes off—allow yourself to get lost in the book. Trust that your morning lab will end at its appointed moment, then banish the thought from your mind. You are here, now, with work in front of you and thinking to do. Strive, then, to forget the future. Do not let it steal you away from the present.

ξένος, pt. 1

Paz Daniela Ortiz Santa María

Seemingly endless F-1 VISA documentation. An airplane flight that can last anywhere between four and thirty-six hours. The first footstep into uncharted land that quickly morphs into a new life. Ask any international student and they will have different answers to the question: “when did you first begin to feel like an outsider?”

Although officially our student VISAs would label us as non-immigrants, we are aware of our status as such—I am, at least. During my time here I have been called an immigrant, an expat, a displaced; all of these used to point out the foreignness they perceive in me. An outsider, a ξένος.

Yet, I wonder, what lies underneath this notion of “the other”? Is there intellectual curiosity, perhaps? Or is there a need for validation that the unknown is unknown for a reason?

The current political climate in the United States makes this discussion more relevant than ever due to the presence of previously silenced voices and perspectives. Social justice causes such as anti-racism, intersectional feminism, indigenous environmentalism, heavily rooted in philosophical and political theory, are finally occupying the space they deserve at the center of the conversation.

What does that mean for a “talking college” such as ours?

Coming to St. John’s, I was aware of the richness of its curriculum as well as the extent of its limitations. It is not novel to point out the lack of BIPOC, non-cis male perspectives in the reading list. Nonetheless, when a large block of the college’s brochure is the percentage of the student body that is made up of international, non-white, or non-cis/heterosexual students, I believe that administration and the student body itself should make more efforts to counter the non-diverse perspective of the curriculum.

Curiosity should be the center of any education, and especially of a Great Books education. Curiosity for what is presented, yes, but also—and more importantly—for what is not. It requires curiosity for the hidden, the purposefully not-shown. The absence of historically silenced and underprivileged voices needs to be seen as an opportunity to amplify those voices in the present time, to create spaces for them to be heard in our community, to celebrate the diversity of our student body.

Social notions such as race, gender, class (among others)

aren’t contemporary. They have always been present because the notion of “the other” has always been present, and they deserve a place during class discussions and seminars. Being critical about the way these notions are portrayed and handled by the authors of great classics, in my opinion, has for too long been seen as taboo, or wrongly perceived as a violation of the rule of not bringing any outside knowledge into the conversation. We are a school with one major taught to all students in the same way for several decades. The grandness of the experience lies in the unique twist one can give to a debate.

And it mustn’t end there. As an international student, and having spoken to many of my international peers, I can say with certainty that there is infinite passion to be found in us when it comes to the places we grew up in, our cultures, what we call home. Dare to be the guests for a change, if not physically, then in conversation, and ask questions about that which you don’t know. We are all someone else’s other. What that means and whether it is a pleasant experience for either party involved depends entirely on you.



Students Sending Messages by Morse Code; n.d.

An Incomplete Guide to Local Second Hand Stores

Helen Felbek

The seasons are changing and perhaps you are looking for a new fall wardrobe. Or you realized that a themed event is just around the corner and have to come up with a creative costume. Before you rush to order something on Amazon with the hope of receiving it the next day due to their prime delivery services, you should consider buying second-hand. The environment and your wallet as well as B&G are going to thank you.

While the most affordable and sustainable option would be to just re-wear clothing, this is not always an option (particularly when an event calls for items that are more likely to be used once than they are to become closet staples). Of course, you could try to come up with a so-called “closet costume” that doesn’t require you to buy additional costume pieces (that you might never wear again) but if you can’t or don’t want to do this, you can refer to this (incomplete) guide to local second hand stores.

The most affordable options in Annapolis are most likely the LMS Compassion Place on West Street and the Goodwill Superstore (also on West Street). LMS is located 0.7 miles away from campus while Goodwill is farther away (1.6 miles). Goodwill carries everything that you would expect from a big thrift store of its kind meaning a big variety of women’s, men’s, and kid’s clothing. They also carry decoration and furniture (which might not be too relevant unless you want to dress up as Lumière from Beauty and the Beast). Goodwill also carries bedsheets in case you want to just go as a ghost or maybe sew your own costume. They are however lacking in the accessories department. Also, note that there are no changing rooms anymore.

LMS is significantly smaller and has a more limited range of clothing. Their assortment also changes less often. They do, however, have a wide variety of interesting ties and lots of shoes that are often in a better condition than at Goodwill. They also often have a nice variety of formal wear. But shoppers beware: LMS has quite limited opening hours and usually closes at 4 pm. They also seem to lack a changing room. Note, that they have rather limited opening hours (it usually closes at 4 pm), and they apparently lack a changing room.. To my knowledge, they also do not have a changing room.

If you have a bigger budget, you could consider some other second hand consignment stores in the area. In and around Annapolis there are three of them: Honeysuckle quality consignment, Return to Oz, and New To You

Consignment Shop.

Honeysuckle is the farthest away as it is located in Arnold on Governor Richie Highway (4.2 miles from campus) which means that you would need a car to get there. I personally do not think it is worth the hassle as it mostly carries very basic items. They carry quite a variety of items (including bags and shoes as well as outerwear and formal gowns) but given the rather high prices nothing really stands out. They also only carry women’s and children’s clothing. It is probably not the place to shop for an event.

Return to Oz on 2011 West Street is still walkable if you are willing to walk 2.6 miles. They sell women’s, men’s, as well as children’s clothing. They sell slightly more ‘higher-end’ clothing compared to Goodwill but still at a reasonable price point. The shopping experience is a bit annoying as all of their racks are so full that it is virtually impossible to look at a piece of clothing without something falling off its hanger. They are relatively size-inclusive. Usually, they have interesting jewelry. Note: they close relatively early at 5 pm.

Lastly, there is New To You Consignment Shop on 1916 Forest Dr which is like Return to Oz approximately 2.6 miles away from campus. I would say that this store is in terms of price-performance ratio the best option in Annapolis if you are interested in women’s clothing (because they only sell women’s clothing, shoes, accessories, and decoration, and homeware). They have a huge selection of shoes that are in good condition and have very interesting-looking hats. They have a special rack with special deals which do not differ from prices at Goodwill. Out of all the stores I visited, this might be the most size-inclusive one.

On the pricier side, we have two consignment stores: Belle me and Muse on Maryland Avenue (0.1 miles from campus) and One Petticoat Lane (0.9 miles from campus)

Belle me and Muse resells designer goods like Chanel and Dior. Their sizes are very limited (mostly XS and S) but they have a big variety of shoes in pristine condition as well as sunglasses and berets. They only carry women’s clothing.

One Petticoat Lane is in West Annapolis (close to Graul’s Market) and is slightly more affordable than Belle me and Muse. Over two stories the store presents women’s clothing as well as accessories like jewelry, bags, and shoes. The owner organizes special events for seasonal changes or holidays.

If you are more interested in vintage pieces and are also willing to spend a bit more, I have three vintage stores for

you that also carry clothing. Evergreen Vintage and Treasure vintage are right next to each other on Maryland avenue (0.1 miles from campus). Both of them offer a student discount for St. John's students. Vintage Treasure does not have an official changing room as of now but if you ask the owner, she will allow you to use her storage room which is obviously a bit messy but does the job. Vintage treasure has a large assortment of women's headwear as well as jewelry. They do not carry a lot of men's clothing but usually have some military jackets. The pricing is a bit more affordable than evergreen, however, the pieces are usually not sized at all.

Evergreen carries men's and women's clothing but the women's wear selection is bigger. They also carry some shoes and hats as well as gloves and scarves. They have a nice (but smaller than Vintage Treasure's) collection of jewelry. Evergreen has a changing room, and the sizing is very clear as they write the measurements of each garment on the price tag.

The vintage store with the biggest assortment of clothing is clearly All The Rage Vintage on 208 West Street (0.8 miles from the college). They carry women's and men's clothing and have a big selection of western boots. It is the most expensive of the three vintage stores. They have a nice selection of belts and jewelry too. Further,

they have a nice selection of outerwear as well as kimonos and undergarments. The owners organize special events for seasonal changes or holidays. If you are looking for a place where you can spend a lot of time in and care about the shopping atmosphere this might be ideal for you.

On campus, student activities sometimes organize clothing swaps which are a great option too since they are truly circular. They are also the most affordable and the most accessible because you do not even need to leave campus. If you missed the last one, you might think about trying to organize one yourself with friends or people on your floor because: "One man's trash is another man's treasure".



From left to right: Rage Vintage, Return to Oz, Goodwill, and Evergreen Antiques/True Vintage

An Italian Menace Descends on Annapolis

Audrey Fox

I've always been wary of "high dining" Italian restaurants. If it's not the family run joint on the Main Line—the kind I've been to at funeral receptions—I have pretty low expectations. The "family owned" restaurant is a concept lost to the Main Street Annapolis dining scene. No one seems at home in the storefront sprawl of downtown restaurants—none of that Olive Garden "When you're here, you're family," am I right? Jokes aside, what sort of impression does this lack for a welcoming dining experience leave us? Some of you are away from home for the first time ever, trying to find spaces that you feel welcome at and build a new sense of community. For those of us who are seasoned veterans of the Annapolis lifestyle this is an ongoing struggle—I can't even say I've truly found a place to eat here where I truly can forget I'm at a restaurant. Eating together is one of our most important social habits. However, that does not mean that it is always explicitly for pleasure that we eat with each other. Sometimes, an important business meeting will take place over lunch—which does not add pleasure to the eating, but will (hopefully) add pleasure and anticipation to the meeting. Going out to eat can serve a practical purpose, but primarily it is an occasion! It is meant to be fun, to take up a few hours of conversation, and make me forget I'm spending money (to my social, and the restaurant's economic benefit). Stave off Marxists! There is always space for criticizing the restaurant industry, but if it's here to stay I at least want it to be worth my time.

I'm remembering a story: I was going somewhere unimportant while my Uber driver went into detail about how to go crabbing off the campus docks. He told me that when he was younger he would do this all the time, but now they no longer permit such activities. I may have been coming home from a party actually, I think it was dark out. All that I remember is the expressions of his voice, methodically explaining how to tie up a whole raw chicken to lure the crabs. Emphasis on methodical, but with a hint of nostalgia and pleasure. Why am I thinking of this? a difference between going to a restaurant compared to seeking food relying on your own devices. On one hand it seems much more of a practical experience, yet the soft, inward joy in his voice suggests otherwise. Maybe it's similar

to when I would go huckleberry picking and fishing with my family. Oftentimes there would be no huckleberries to pick. We always returned the fish to the water. Why does this feel the same? It is more primary. Not primitive, but primary. There are numerous social levels that contribute to a dining experience, while seeking food on one's own requires little structure in place for its enabling. But we don't do it just for nutrition—there is socialization and the pleasure of the food. Food plays a different role during the hunt versus the restaurant, yet it seems to be a primary center for the activity. In other words, the food is not the main aim but rather the common ground we base an activity off of.

My apologies to the reader for such high brow tangents! Let me get to what you really are here for, my thoughts on the restaurant. The interior was comfortably crowded as my party arrived there around 9 pm. The lighting was soft and relaxing, and the decor, while very nice, was not overwhelmingly nice. Appropriate for the Annapolis audience in my opinion. We started off with a bottle of San Pellegrino to set the mood and the Strozzapreti Al pomodoro. For those of you unfamiliar with the Italian language, those are fresh ricotta cheese balls with a tomato sauce over them. They were rich yet not overpowering, and went wonderfully with the house made bread. I got the Fusilli Lunghi ai Mascarpone e Funghi—a corkscrew pasta with a mushroom and parmesan sauce- which I think is best described as warm and rustic. The flavor was simple, but simple in the way most amateur cooks could never aspire to. Others at the table got the house made Gnocchi (the Topini Sugo Verde) with a pureed parsley basil rosemary sauce. It was a refreshing sauce paired with the pillowy Gnocchi. Overall the prices were very reasonable for the pasta entrees. Around \$16 was the average. The other entrees were more expensive, but the pasta options were vast and definitely more than filling. On the other hand the espresso we got after our meal was \$5 each, a little overpriced for just Illy. We ended the meal with tiramisu, which was well made and had the distinct flavors I expect from the dessert. It was a surprisingly homey experience wrapped up in the guise of fine dining. I recommend this place for a special night out (perhaps graduation) or to take visiting family members.



The sign for Acqua Al 2. It (and the restaurant) can be found on Main Street at door 236.

THIS MONTH IN HOROSCOPES—SEPT 2022

Madame T

ARIES

(March 21 - April 19)

Fall means velour, Aries!!! We love to see it! Not only is it a wonderful texture, but the way light is reflected off of it makes you look like a beautiful, exotic fish. Better yet, due to the blue corn moon that is fast approaching this November, all Aries' are required to have a secret sexy velour day. Wear your velour inside out, no one else deserves to know what you're wearing. November dictates that it is just you, alone, with the chafe of polyester against your sweaty, naked body.

Of Nebraska, but your new face as a young philosophy major in Annapolis has thrown everyone off your trail. Where once a full grown, grizzled man with a body count of 19 stood, now stands a 20 year old lad who has much to learn about the nature of things. Isn't it funny? This Halloween you can be an escaped lunatic dressed as a Johnnie dressed as a gaping minion.

TAURUS

(April 20 - May 20)

The weather may be frightful, Taurus but your wardrobe naught be! This season both the position of Mars and the most recent Vogue say that high waisted pants are all the rage. Pair this with a very small shirt, creating a fleshy vortex above your naval. That millimeter of skin is where fashion happens!!!! The mites in your skin are using this strip as a runway for all this season's hottest microscopic fashions. They want to thank you for contributing such a vast and beautiful venue.

GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)

Vests are going to look so good on you this fall, Gemini! A humble puffer vest let's others know that you are hiding many fun and naughty secrets (mostly foreign oil). Let others know that your torso is cold but your big, tough, brawny arms are strong and impervious to cold with a dashing little leather number.

CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)

Bring it on, big boy

LEO

(July 23 - Aug 22)

It's a balmy 60 degrees this November, Leo! Leather is all the rage this season, but you're a man of principles, a man of ethics. You are haute couture. And what is high dressmaking if not an outfit that is made only for you? Why slaughter a cow? Cows are all so similar, but you've never seen two identical people. Authentic leather is a rare commodity but you'll make it work. This season skin is in! Other peoples, your own, second hand or custom made, the Haus of Bubba Sawyer is QUIVERING.

VIRGO

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

The sun sets across the vast, dry wasteland that once was Annapolis. Anything that once lived here is long gone. Except you. In your government issued sweaters and your cutest pair of dungarees you brave the desolate world outside your bunker. The ash burns your skin as you emerge from your den, your gun weighs you down as you set foot outside for the first time in what feels like weeks. It's warm. It's unbearably warm. You feel your skin burning, you go to take off the sweater, its woolen weight is crushing you. The burning is intense, you go to retreat to safety, but the bunker is closed. Despite your screams, despite the pounding, they can't hear you. The heat is overwhelming. Your skin blisters as the ash raining from above burns holes in your clothes. This season, dress for the worst.

LIBRA

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

You've been walking these streets so long, Libra. Singing the same old songs, you know every crack in these dirty sidewalks of Broadway, where hustle is the name of the game and nice guys get washed away like snow in the rain. There's been a lot of compromising on the road to your horizon, but you're gonna be where the lights are shining on you like a rhinestone cowboy; riding out on a horse in a star-spangled rodeo, receiving cards and letters from fans you don't even know and offers over the phone. This November is serving Glen Campbell's 1975 hit country-pop single.

SCORPIO

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Happy birthday, Scorpio! Here's to another year of raising hell on earth. Another year older means you should try something new. This is the year you feel like an adult. Let's get you some professional clothes, maybe a suit. The orbit of Saturn and also the most recent runway by Moschino dictate that you should absolutely not buy anything in your size. This month, big is beautiful! When you go for your suit fitting, do not let the haberdasher measure you, instead, pull out the polaroid photograph of David Byrne in 'stop making sense' video that all

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Fall is a time of change, Sag. You've been doing a lot of reflecting recently, and you're starting to finally realize what you really want. No no, not that stupid day dream where you have a loving wife and two beautiful, well behaved children. Not the one where you've finally paid off your philosophy major debt, either. You want spice in your life. Stability is for chumps. They say dress for the job you want, and you should take this to heart, Sag. You want to make art! You want to dance! Your fantasy is to live the life of a clown. You want the oversized shoes and the undersized car, you long for the comradery of other silly, goofy jesters. You deserve to commit to this career, Sag. Let's get you a flower that sprays seltzer water.

CAPRICORN

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

You're abstract, Capricorn. Just because other people don't know what they want doesn't mean that you don't, and you refuse to slow down for those who won't catch up to you. Your fall wardrobe should reflect this. This season, jumpsuits are in. Black and white, long sleeved jumpsuits are the most fitting thing for your body type as dictated by the epicycle of Mars in relation to the moon. You also know you can't dress for success without a statement piece though, which is why this season brings in both capes and masks. A pop of color is also a MUST, try a red tie for that real 'business bitch' look. Do not let others tell you you're dressed like the Hamburglar. You know in your heart they are wrong. I'm lovin' it.

AQUARIUS

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Colder weather means it is time to finally shoot your shot, Aquarius! You've been planning this a very long time, and based on the position of Venus I've been told that you are more likely to succeed than you think. You were built for attrition, Aquarius, your battle prowess and bloodthirst guarantee that you're destined to conquer the residents of Paca. Your past attempts have left many dead and more wounded, but this time the stars are on your side. Dress for the spoils of war, you're going to want all the loot, wine and women you can carry (cargo pants maybe?)

PISCES

(Feb 19 - March 20)

This season in couture is giving nature. You are the Gardens of Versailles. You are the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Monet himself is moved to tears by your beauty. You are full of so many new and exotic animals, beautiful plants blessed with flowers and strange fruits. You are fertile and there are secret trees that contain so much knowledge within you; but it is a deadly knowledge. You are vines, you are birds, you are the abstract concept of a 'mother nature' we have long since abandoned. This month the stars dictate you should wear only strategically placed oak leaves. Adam and Eve are GASPING!!!!



Fill in the speech bubbles and send us a picture of your creation to enter the running for a \$15 gift card! The winning submission and meaningful runner-ups will be printed in the next issue.



Excavation by Willem de Kooning

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Founded in 1980, the Gadfly is the student newsmagazine distributed to over 600 students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the Annapolis campus.

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