

“I was attached to this city by the god—though it seems a ridiculous thing to say—as upon a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by a kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. I never cease to rouse each and every one of you, to persuade and reproach you all day long and everywhere I find myself in your company.”

- Plato, *Apology*

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

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

Opinions expressed within are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The *Gadfly* reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish a professional, informative, and thought-provoking newsmagazine.

Submissions sent to the *Gadfly* should either be in Microsoft Word or JPEG format. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

The *Gadfly* meets every other Sunday at 7 PM in the BBC. We always need editors, layout designers, illustrators, and organizers. Contact us at sjca.gadfly@gmail.com for more information.

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Freshman Bodies, Freshman Souls

This reprinted article first appeared in the Gadfly on September 2, 1982, and appears annually in our first issue. Without a doubt our athletic director, Mr. Krueger, is willing to stand in for the first person voice used in this article—and to answer any questions about our athletic program. -Ed.

Bryce Jacobsen A '42

The reasons, both physical and metaphysical, why everyone ought to join in our sports program are many. I list a few:

1. We have the best athletic program of any college in the country.
2. Exercise is good for the body...unless you sprain an ankle or something like that.
3. Most of us feel better, are more alert, and can get more work done if our bodies are healthy and our souls are relaxed.
4. Friendly competition is one of the really fun things in life. It is good for your soul.
5. Your circle of acquaintances will be greatly enlarged. This is good for the soul, provided you can separate the wheat from the chaff.
6. You will learn to accept, and bear with, thousands of split-second decisions from the officials, a few of which are wrong. This is very good for the soul.
7. Do you like to strive for, and achieve, specific goals? If so, consider our college blazers. They are much sought after, and the pathway is clearly laid out. Striving for goals is good for your soul.
8. It is probably true that the more pure fun occurs in the athletic program than in any other area of the college. Fun is good for your soul.
9. If you get involved in team sports, and become a "good team player," you have realized that there are things in the universe that are more important than your own ego. This is a great good for your soul.
10. The benefits of exercise and friendly competition, learned while one is young, should be maintained for the rest of your life...i.e, they should become habitual. For virtue, as the Philosopher said, is a habit.
11. You will get to know numerous alumni, tutors, and staff members who participate in the program. This is good for your soul, or ought to be...provided that they are the proper sort of role models.
12. Our showers are the best at the college; always plenty of hot water.
13. Are you bothered by, or worried by, tobacco fumes in the air? Come to the gym. The whole building is a nicotine-free zone.
14. If you perform some sort of heroic deed on the athletic field, your name will be mentioned in our weekly column. Heroes are always acclaimed. But do not be carried away by this. Remember that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave."
15. A high percentage of our best students are active participants in our program.
16. Those who play, stay.
17. The gym is not particularly well-equipped, as gyms go. But it has washers and dryers, and a coke machine...and I will explain to you, if you ask me, how you can get yourself in tip-top physical shape, without any equipment at all.
18. You can sit in an old-time barber's chair in my office...you can pump yourself up and down, and adjust the slope high or low. Where else can you do that?
19. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
20. It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

So there you have it: twenty good reasons why you should participate in our athletic program. If you are not convinced by all of this, come and talk to me. I can probably think of some more good reasons. Or better yet, talk with the upperclassmen. They will tell you all sorts of strange, interesting, and wondrous things. ◆

From the Editors:

To the upperclassmen: welcome back to another year of seeking virtue and truth. The Gadfly would like to extend a warm hello to all new students on campus, freshman or Fe transfer alike. We would also like to remind the freshman and a number of upperclassmen that basin isn't king. Please drink and party responsibly.
- The Gadfly

On the Gadfly

Rose Pelham A'20

At the beginning of each academic year, we publish the first issue of the *Gadfly* with the following excerpt from Plato's *Apology* on the cover:

I was attached to the city by the god--though it seems a ridiculous thing to say--as upon a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by some kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. I never cease to rouse each and every one of you, to persuade and reproach you all day long and everywhere I find myself in your company. (30e-31a)

The tradition serves two functions. The first is to introduce the paper to new members of the campus community through a discussion of its name. The second is to renew our commitment as a publication *to live up to that name* insofar as we are capable. It is this latter purpose that I think is uniquely important, as it situates the paper within a historic tradition of critical dissent, that is: in being a social gadfly. The tradition of the social gadfly, of challenging authority and questioning the ideas taken for granted within public opinion--that is to say: of confronting $\delta\omicron\chi\alpha$ --is something we all should cherish as an integral part of a living polity. The expression of dissenting opinions is key both to social change (be it reform or revolution) and the maintenance of an equitable society, through the challenging of assumed norms. It is a means by which new ideas are introduced and old ones challenged. It is an engine of social transformation. Last, the way in which we go about it, drawing upon the example of Plato's Socrates, makes the *Gadfly* an inherently St. John's institution.

The *Gadfly* is a news-magazine, run by students, that publishes the writings of all polity members. The articles you may read in these pages are the works of your classmates, in some cases, your tutors, and even administration officials. We publish all manner of writings, critical or otherwise, from news articles, to book reviews, to satires. The critical writings you may read here are from within the community, written by individuals you may have class with, and are as much a product of the polity as a commentary on it. I point this out because it is the way in which the discourse of a community, no matter what it may be composed of, becomes self-conscious through self-criticism. To that end, we invite responses to the articles we publish, passionate disagreements, concurrences, and critiques of critiques. So if you dislike an argument and want to publish a response to it, or wish to defend an article you think has been unfairly maligned, we invite you to do so, provided that it does not descend to name calling or advocate prejudice.

The *Gadfly* has had a hard couple years. We have been through frequent transitions of leadership. Our staff members have faced social ostracism for the articles we have published. Our funding has been threatened. Nonetheless, we are still here and still dedicated to serving the polity, whether we may be judged guilty of corrupting the youth, or denying the gods of the city. We are still *your* publication. We are still here to serve you--by publishing your writings and covering topics important to your campus community. We are a part of this social ecosystem and we fulfill an important function within it, even if it may be a contentious one.

This is a year of momentous change for the *Gadfly*. For the first time in our history, the leadership of the publication is entirely transgender. This is an important matter to note on a campus where there are very few LGBTQ institutions, and at a time when trans people are being fought over in the so-called "culture wars." We are so often the subjects of the news and not the writers of it. I hope this will be an opportunity to rectify that, even if only on a small scale. I hope, in particular, that the *Gadfly* this year will be not only a tool to help trans people realize a more equitable world, but also a tool for other marginalized groups on campus to amplify their voices. I can imagine nothing that could be more in keeping with the concept of a gadfly. ♦

An Appeal to Freshman

Kira Anderson A'18

Freshman,

St. John's has no guidebook. We have a handbook, yes, but that exists to tell you what is or is not appropriate behavior in our polity. A guidebook, however, tells you what things are of interest and how you may reach these interesting sites. St. John's has no guidebook, because truly everything here has a facet that will interest you. You may not yet know of your burning passion for improvisational acting or of your fiery dedication to your intramural basketball team. What interests you have now are limited to your experience outside of the college. Therefore, I am here to encourage you as a senior who knows that she has not experienced enough of the college in her three-going-on-four years; I address you as a student and as a club leader myself, as a lab assistant, and as someone who wants to see you succeed.

Coming to St. John's is a transformatory experience. You will learn many things here (and forget just as many perhaps), but I wish to impress upon you that this is a place of change. When you graduate, diploma in one hand and champagne in another, you will be a different person from the one who set foot at convocation and received a copy of Euclid. Of course, you will be older, because time waits for no one, but there will be a change of spirit as well. What you know and think you know before St. John's are merely stepping stones.

Thusly, I encourage you to take a full survey of what St. John's has to offer, detailed to you by someone who has in fact already started panicking about a life outside of the Johnnie Bubble. I will present my solicitation in the form of a list, as pleases me and the average reader. "Listicles," though universally despised, should be given the commendation of at least being succinct.

1. Join a club. In fact, join four or five, and when you realize you can't balance them all with your class work and your burgeoning friend group and need for down-time away from people, drop your least favourite or least favourite.
2. Explore every building on campus (when they are open of course, not after hours.) I have personally discovered many of my favourite hiding spots by taking a Johnnie safari and trekking about for a while. Your dorm is interesting, I'm sure, but I dare you to try to find the illusive Gadfly office or determine the age of Temple Iglehart (the gym, for the uninitiated.)
3. Make friends with people who are different from yourself and your normal group of friends. This may be self-explanatory, but often the best friendships are forged in the celebration of differences.
4. Know your tutors. I did not have a meeting with a tutor of my own volition until the summer after my junior, perhaps sophomore year, and I know that now that was a mistake. I feared that tutors would think me stupid; I thought that I didn't deserve their time. I learned, however, that I could not be more wrong. Tutors work at St. John's because they love discussion and teaching, and every tutor that I have asked to meet with has accepted the offer with grace and kindness.
5. Know your administration and do not be afraid to speak up. This is a lesson I learned only after much experience at the college, and I fear it may be the most important that I relay to you. Know who you can report things to. Get to know who the Title IX coordinator is. Get to know the assistant dean. Meet our new President. Know your RA, and if you don't feel comfortable with an RA, make sure to get to know one of our several (FREE) school counselors. If something occurs that you are uncomfortable with, report the incidents as soon as possible. College is a time for learning, and that cannot be done in an unsafe situation.
6. Enjoy yourself. You will hear from many upperclassman that freshman year is the easiest year at St. John's. It is, however, the hardest. Coursework is different from anything you have experienced in highschool, and adjusting will be tough. Balancing and managing one's life is also incredibly difficult. If someone belittles your problems with school work, saying that the year is easy, feel free to spit back some sort of biting comment like "Did you feel like being a freshman was easy when you were a freshman?" Or perhaps ask in a nice manner. My biased concept of communication is already quite evident.

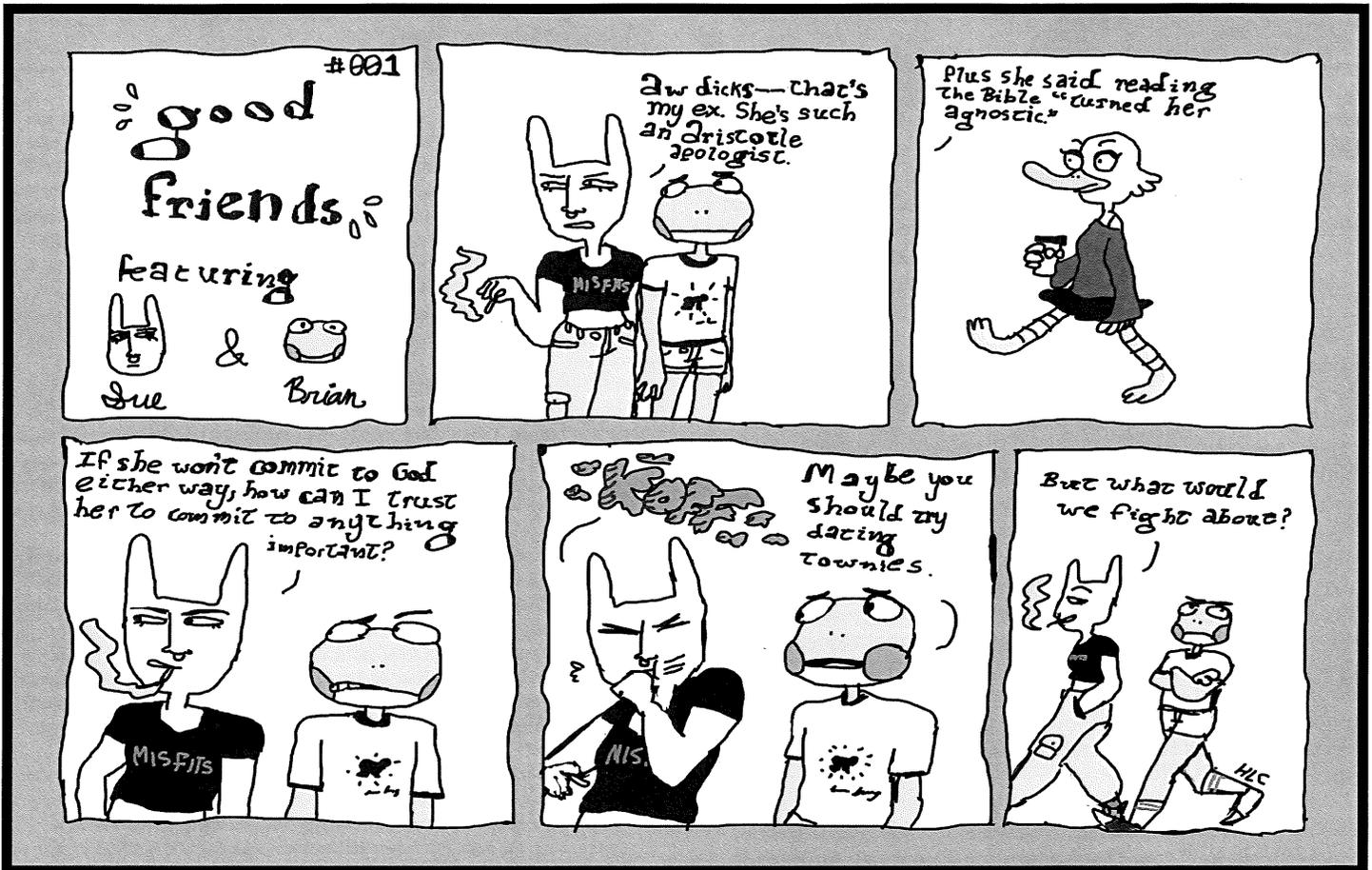
Along with this article worthy of a mediocre buzzfeed link, I also extend something else to you: words by which to live perhaps. This quote is now on t-shirts, and bags, and leather bracelets (which I will neither confirm nor deny that I own,) but I feel that it is nonetheless relevant.

"Not all those who wander are lost," JRR Tolkien reminds us. Freshman year is a year to wander, to discover and adventure. Ask questions and look stupid sometimes. Everyone does, even if they pretend they don't.

So, go out and wander, budding Johnnies. Try clubs and meet people and talk to leadership figures. Go and pour forth much. ♦

Good Friends, Vol. 1

Hamilton Christian A'21



Looking for ways to help your trans polity members? Here are some steps you can take:

- If you hear someone misgendering them, whether or not they are present, correct the offender.
- If you don't know what pronouns/honorifics someone uses, ask.
- Hear someone making transphobic jokes? Tell them it's not funny.
- Ask administration for a gender neutral bathroom.
- Express interest in changing the way we think about gender on campus.
- Don't ask stupid questions.
- Don't ask trans people anything you wouldn't ask a cisgender person.
- Understand that all we want in life is to lie on the ground.

